The Fatherhood of God in Fourth-Century Pro-Nicene Trinitarian Theology

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by D. Blair Smith

Abstract

Not until the fourth century did the fatherhood of God become an issue of sustained analysis in Christian theology. This thesis explores the distinctiveness of the Father within four representative Trinitarian theologies: Athanasius of Alexandria, Hilary of Poitiers, Gregory of Nazianzus, and Basil of Caesarea. It will be shown that Athanasius presents problems in offering a coherent account. I will argue, however, for a subtle progression within his thought and across the chapters, which reaches maturity in Basil's integrative theology of fatherhood. The Father-Son relation served as the starting point for discussing the shape of the Godhead. Within that relation, the logic of the eternal birth affirms the Father as source while also creating theological 'space' for understanding the Father's 'loving gift' of himself. The consequences of the perfect gift within divine simplicity lead to emphases on the coinherence and inseparability of operations of the divine persons. Strong notes of unity are struck by such teaching, yet they lead back to the source of that unity and, thus, to the mystery of the Father. Within pro-Nicene thought, attention eventually turned to the Holy Spirit. While the Spirit does not possess a filial relation, he, too, was conceived of in terms of an origin in the Father. A mature doctrine of the Spirit brings about a robust understanding of the inseparability of the Trinitarian persons in God's redemptive purposes. One movement of grace extends from the Father, through the Son, in the Spirit, so that worshippers are enabled to return back to their source. The tension brought about in speaking of source and inseparability highlights the mystery of the Father whose 'loving gift' not only eternally constitutes the shape of Trinitarian relations – it also is the genesis of his own 'perfection' as through it the fullness of the Father is understood.

Declaration

This thesis is the product of my own work and does not include work that has been presented in any form for a degree at this or any other university. All quotation from, and references to, the work of persons other than myself have been properly acknowledge throughout.

Statement of Copyright

Acknowledgements

This study grew out of a longstanding desire to understand the Trinitarian theology of the Church Fathers. From our very first correspondence, Professor Lewis Ayres helped in refining my focus on a primary-text driven account of the fatherhood of God, and, as my doctoral advisor, encouraged and modelled a patient attentiveness to the Fathers' arguments on their own terms. If this project has any strengths, it stems from this priority. I am deeply grateful for Lewis' patience with me and guiding this project with his characteristic wisdom and wit.

In 2014, when Lewis received a fellowship at the Institute for Advanced Study at the University of Notre Dame, I moved to South Bend with my family. The bulk of my time there was spent on the 13th floor of the Hesburgh Library overlooking a giant hole in the earth—a hole slowly being filled by the substructure of what is now McCourtney Hall. This building became a metaphor for my own project as I spent long days toiling in texts largely away from view. These days were punctuated by conversations with and invaluable feedback from Lewis. The core chapters of this thesis took shape during this formative time. I am thankful for Notre Dame's generous scholarly resources that were afforded me as a Research Visitor, including conversations with Andrew Radde-Gallwitz. Andy especially helped me in untangling parts of Nazianzen and Basil.

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Table of Contents

Abbreviations

All abbreviations of ancient literature, academic journals, and monograph series follow the forms indicated in the *SBL Handbook of Style: For Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical, and Early Christian Studies* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2006).

Chapter 1: Introduction

κύριε, δεῖξον ἡμῖν τὸν πατέρα[1]

In this thesis I will draw out the centrality of the Father in fourth-century pro-Nicene Trinitarian theology. However, while teaching on the Father was fundamental to an emerging pro-Nicene Trinitarian theology, the debates of the fourth-century were not *primarily* about the belief that God was Father. Whether it be the "from the substance of the Father (ἐκ τῆς οὐσίας τοῦ Πατρός)" or the "of one substance with the Father (ὁμοούσιον τῷ Πατρί)" of the Nicene Creed of 325, or the "who proceeds from the Father, who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified (τὸ ἐκ τοῦ Πατρὸς ἐκπορευόμενον, τὸ σὺν Πατρὶ καὶ Υἱῷ συμπροσκυνούμενον καὶ συνδοξαζόμενον)" of Constantinople in 381, the Father occupies a 'background' position and carries an 'assumed' status in these statements. True, a statement affirming his mighty nature manifest in creation heads the Creed. Nonetheless, what is true of the Father in the Creed – where fatherhood is not dealt with as a formal theological topos – is true of the overall discussion concerning him within fourth-century Trinitarian theology. Debates about the status of the Son and, later, regarding the Holy Spirit take center stage. Yet, these debates suggest much, in the words of Peter Widdicombe, "about *the way* in which the Father is Father."[2]

Widdicombe himself explored this question in the 1994 revision of his Oxford thesis, *The Fatherhood of God from Origen to Athanasius.* In his opinion, "Origen was the first theological writer to have his imagination struck by the wealth of the biblical references to God as Father, particularly by the Son's use of the term to address God, and by what this implied for our relation to God."[3] Widdicombe notes, however, that Origen's theological system was loosely knit and the fatherhood of God did not receive sustained analysis within his work. Much like Plato in philosophy, what his writings provided, rather, were sets of problems and fruitful frameworks for those who followed within which they could begin to ask questions. One set of those questions and answers led in the so-called 'Arian'

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[1] John 14:8.

[2] *The Fatherhood of God from Origen to Athanasius,* Oxford Theological Monographs (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 254 (emphasis mine).

[3] Ibid., 253.

direction within the fourth century. Another set would lead to pro-Nicene Trinitarian theology. After a brief look at the Alexandrian tradition after Origen and before Nicaea, Widdicombe turns to Athanasius and the beginnings of pro-Nicene theology after Nicaea.

It is Widdicombe's contention that in Athanasius the fatherhood of God receives "sustained and systematic analysis" for the first time.[4] What he means by this is that the developing pro-Nicene principles under which Athanasius was operating compelled him to coordinate his understanding of the full divinity of the Son with the Father. With a concern for the salvation only a fully-divine Son can bring, that coordination led Athanasius to an examination of what is suggested by the correlatives of 'Father' and 'Son'. Therefore, fatherhood was naturally considered 'by way of' the Son. What kind of Father must the Father be for the Son to be fully divine? Widdicombe suggests that not only did the bishop from Alexandria fit together pieces previously inchoate within the Alexandrian tradition; in his hands those pieces provided the foundation for how the fatherhood of God would be considered throughout the the remainder of the fourth century.

Scope and Method

This study aims to 'finish the story' of the fatherhood of God in the fourth century. However, whereas for the purposes of Widdicombe's study Athanasius stood at the mature end of an Alexandrian theological trajectory, I will consider him as a 'conversation starter'. What is more, the scope of this study is constrained by the pro-Nicene trajectory rather than a specific 'school' associated with a geographical place. Therefore, I will consider both 'Eastern' and 'Western' representatives. In addition to Athanasius, the principal subjects of this study are Hilary of Poitiers, Gregory of Nazianzus, and Basil of Caesarea. I will consider the fatherhood of God from within the structure of each theologian's thought and how each account contributes to the developing picture of divine fatherhood within fourth-century pro-Nicene trinitarian theology.

But beyond simply differing from Widdicombe in chronology and scope, I will argue that, rather than offering a dense account of divine fatherhood, Athanasius plants many seeds that still await germination. That is, while Athanasius offers categories integral to a robust theology of the Father within the Trinity, and those become clearer

[4] Ibid., 1.

and potentially more fruitful later in his career, they remain somewhat inchoate. This judgment is observed through the very progression of this thesis' chapters. While the chapters contain many points of overlap, they find a subtle progression moving in a more integrative and coherent direction: Hilary thickens an account of the Father through exploring the many dimensions of eternal generation. Nazianzen offers a fuller account that integrates various elements - including the Holy Spirit - through a contemplative vision of dynamic unity moving out from and returning to the Father. Finally, Basil provides an integrative account by moving along the same fundamental lines as Nazianzen yet does so with more incisive vision of how various theological components find their coherence through a robust account of the fatherhood of God.

Context of this Study

A study of the fatherhood of God in fourth-century pro-Nicene trinitarian theology not only has relevance for accurately understanding the theologians of that consequential period, and, with Widdicombe, adding to the relative paucity of literature on the fatherhood of God in the patristic era; it also speaks into the contemporary context where the status of the Father is continually called into question within Trinitarian thought. Not only has the place of the Father been of some controversy, different positions are frequently shored up by appealing to such fourth-century Fathers as those examined in this study. As is evident in his original 1994 Postscript"[5] and, later, his 2000 "Preface to the Revised Paperback Edition,"[6] Widdicombe was concerned with a theological scene that balked at calling God 'Father' due to its gender specificity. He called into question the theological integrity of inclusive language practices with reference to the Trinitarian persons when, as Origen and Athanasius understood, the terms Father, Son, and Holy Spirit were not the result of "drawing on the biological or on the psychological and social dimensions of human Fatherhood"[7] - they were, rather, "God's revealed self-designation."[8] Thus, Widdicombe utilized the theological reasoning of Origen and Athanasius in order to address contemporary questions about the use of Father language.

Widdicombe's discussion of inclusive and exclusive Trinitarian language is one demonstration of the abiding relevance of the fatherhood of God. I would like to note

[5] Ibid., 255.
[6] Ibid., vii.
[7] Ibid., 256.
[8] Ibid., vii.

several others in order to demonstrate further why an investigation into the pro-Nicene foundations of the fatherhood of God continues to speak into the theological concerns of the last half century or so. This will go through aspects of the writings of Scottish Reformed theologian T.F. Torrance, Metropolitan John Zizioulas, feminist Catholic theologian Catherine Mowry LaCugna, and the German Lutheran theologian Wolfhart Pannenberg. Each of these writers utilized variant readings of divine fatherhood to lend support to systematic accounts of Trinitarian doctrine, even as they raised a host of questions regarding the conceptual frameworks of the fourth-century witness. In addition, I will explore the use of fatherhood in more recent American Evangelical discussions concerning both the eternal generation and eternal 'subordination' of the Son.

One of the more significant English-speaking theologians of the last century who regularly drew on patristic material was T.F. Torrance (1913-2007).[9] His most synthetic work on early Christian theology was *The Trinitarian Faith: The Evangelical Theology of the Ancient Catholic Church.* In this and other works he discerns a dangerous trajectory within certain Fathers that sets them apart from 'more Nicene' ones who held indefatigably to the *homoousion*.[10] Torrance's self-admitted theological hero was Athanasius. The bishop from Alexandria firmly grasped, according to Torrance, the purely orthodox position where the monarchy "is not limited to one Person: It is a Unity constituted in and by the Trinity,"[11] which means that "the Trinity as a whole must be thought of as the divine Principle or *arche.*"[12] Torrance sets this position of "*ousia* as *being in its internal relations*" against one that would give undue attention to the 'monarchy of the Father'.[13] Articulations of the monarchy of Father found in such Fathers as Basil and Gregory of Nyssa unsuccessfully attempted to marry the subordinationism of Origen and the Athanasian view of three co-equal divine persons—thus cutting against the Nicene

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[9] In numerous monographs and articles Torrance commented directly on the Fathers, either furnishing studies on specific theologians or discerning what he called the *consensus patrum* (*The Christian Frame of Mind* [Edinburgh: Handsel, 1980], 5). He also used "the classical tradition" and "consensus" to refer to the consensual patristic tradition. See *Trinitarian Faith: The Evangelical Theology of the Ancient Catholic Church* (New York: T&T Clark, 1988), 2ff.
For a recent study that gives an overwhelmingly positive account of Torrance's use of the Fathers, see Jason Robert Radcliff's *Thomas F. Torrance and the Church Fathers: A Reformed, Evangelical, and Ecumenical Reconstruction of the Patristic Tradition* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2014).

[10] Torrance claims to find a trinitarian view of the monarchy in Athanasius, the later Gregory of Nazianzus, Epiphanies, Cyril of Alexandria, and Augustine. *The Christian Doctrine of God. One Being, Three Persons* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996), 182-4.

[11] *The Trinitarian Faith,* 321.

[12] Ibid., 321n94.

[13] *The Christian Doctrine of God,* 181-2.

principles for which the paragon of orthodoxy, Athanasius, fought.[14] This is something Nazianzen was also guilty of, in Torrance's opinion, before he shifted his position later in his career in order to uphold the monarchy constituted by each of the persons of the Trinity.[15] For Torrance, there is a decisive distinction between "understanding the Father absolutely as referring to the Being of the Godhead and relatively as referring to the Father in relation to the Son and Spirit."[16] By 381 and the time of his leadership at the Council of Constantinople Torrance thinks Nazianzen had moved to this latter position, thus securing the 'proper' understanding for creedal posterity.[17]

There is much that could be said about Torrance's views on the Father, both within his own constructive accounts and whether he faithfully represents the Fathers' positions. Torrance has determined that a certain circular "methodological rationale" should guide trinitarian reflection.[18] The trinitarian persons must be dealt with as a 'piece' and one's theological reflection should reflect this wholeness. Thus, trinitarian reflection should move fluidly "in a perichoretic circular movement from Unity to Trinity and from Trinity to Unity"[19] and never overly isolate the particular characteristics of a divine person such as the Father. This impulse leads him to judge patristic sources accordingly. If Torrance feels Fatherly distinction is being overly emphasized in a 'patro-centric' way, this is a sign of an incipient hierarchy deleterious to Nicene Christianity. Athanasius is his hero because, rather than the *ousia* being given by the Father to the Son and Spirit, Torrance determines he holds a position where Father, Son, and Spirit - the whole God - are considered together.[20] The unity of the Trinity, therefore, must be conceived along a "fully

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[14] *The Trinitarian Faith*., 319-322.

[15] "The Doctrine of the Holy Trinity in Gregory Nazianzen and John Calvin," in *Trinitarian Perspectives* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994), 29-30.

[16] *The Christian Doctrine of God,* 145.

[17] Torrance pinpoints Nazianzen's rejection of the monarchy of the Father in *Or.* 40. "The Doctrine of the Holy Trinity in Gregory Nazianzen and John Calvin," 29-30.
What leads Torrance to this conclusion is Nazianzen's reticence to speak of the Father as "greater" with regard to the cause of equals because he knows how "greater" can be abused by his theological opponents, who would turn it into "greater" in nature and not as cause. This is not a change of mind by Nazianzen, however. He is being sensitive to its expression because of the particular doctrinal controversy in which he was involved. Ben Fulford is quite right to say, "The passages he cites…do not require this interpretation and are more easily reconciled with other passages in the same Orations, with closely contemporaneous texts and with the temporal sequence in which they were delivered to the reading of Gregory's doctrine given here." "'One Commixture of Light': Rethinking some Modern Uses and Critiques of Gregory of Nazianzus on the Unity and Equality of the Divine Persons" *IJST* 11:2 (2009): 176n27.

[18] Benjamin Dean, "Person and Being: Conversation with T. F. Torrance on the Monarchy of God," *IJST* 15:1, 58.

[19] *The Christian Doctrine of God,* 181.

[20] There are problems with Torrance's reading of Athanasius on the priority of the Father, which

trinitarian basis,"[21] for God's being is nothing other than "the one identical perfect Being of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit".[22] Rather than the fatherhood of God being seen as something fundamental to Trinitarian understanding, in Torrance's thought its inflection is a threat. What is more, to locate "the seat of supreme power and the original source and primary location of God's Being"[23] in the person of the Father is to introduce the menace of subordinationism and threaten Nicene Trinitarianism.

It has been suggested that Torrance's position, and the strain he puts on certain patristic sources to substantiate it, has more to do with the debates he was facing in the 1980s with John Zizioulos than what was true in the 380s.[24] This is because the Metropolitan's proposal on the Father sits contrary to Torrance's, and both appeal to the Cappadocian Fathers, in particular, to support their case.[25] Torrance and Zizioulos were colleagues for a time and, due to Torrance's extensive ecumenical dialogue with the Eastern Orthodox, they had frequent occasion to interact. Like Torrance, Zizioulous puts a strain on his sources in order to find support for what he largely argues by assertion. Central to his argument is that the monarchy of the Father establishes the interpersonal nature of God's existence.[26] He proposes an ontological revolution sparked by the Cappadocians where being is attributed to person rather than to essence. This is as a result of the person of the Father causing God's Trinitarian being. Thus, in Zizioulas's understanding, all being has a personal grounding in the Father.

Zizioulas translates the personal ground of being into the notion of freedom, so that ontology marries freedom to personhood:

> In a more analytical way this means that God, as Father and not as substance, perpetually confirms through 'being' His *free* will to exist. And it is precisely His Trinitarian existence that constitutes this confirmation: the

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will become evident in my next chapter. Torrance's gloss on Athanasius has not escaped the notice of others: Colin Gunton, *Father, Son and Holy Spirit: Towards a Fully Trinitarian Theology* (London: T. & T. Clark, 2003), 50–2; Myk Habets, "Filioque? Nein. A Proposal for Coherent Coinherence," in *Trinitarian Theology after Barth*, eds. Myk Habets and Phillip Tolliday (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2011), 161-202.

[21] Dean, "Person and Being", 60.

[22] Torrance, *The Christian Doctrine of God,* 182.

[23] Dean, "Person and Being," 61.

[24] Radcliff, *Thomas F. Torrance and the Church Fathers,* 194.

[25] While Zizioulos appeals to the Cappadocian Fathers, his proposals are largely assertions lacking evidence. Ayres, *Nicaea and its Legacy: An Approach to Fourth Century Trinitarian Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004)*,* 313. See also Lucian Turcescu's "'Person' versus 'Individual', and Other Modern Misreadings of Gregory of Nyssa," *Modern Theology* 18:4 (2002): 527-539.

[26] *Being as Communion* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1985), 40-41. See also his "The Doctrine of the Holy Trinity: The Significance of the Cappadocian Contribution," in *Trinitarian Theology Today,* ed. C. Schwöbel (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1995), 40-60.

> Father out of love—that is, freely—begets the Son and brings forth the Spirit. If God exists, He exists because the Father exists, that is, He who out of love freely begets the Son and brings forth the Spirit. Thus God as person—as hypostasis of the Father—makes the one divine substance to be that which it is: the one God.[27]

Zizioulos's claims are controversial on a number of fronts. For the concerns of this thesis, I note his appeal to the Cappadocian Fathers, in particular, in order to substantiate his revolution of ontology grounded in the person of the Father. It is highly doubtful the Cappadocians possessed Zizioulos's concerns, especially with regard to a concept of person that entails freedom. As a result, the conversation over the fatherhood of God is freighted with a number of modern preoccupations that were simply not on the minds of fourth-century theologians. What is more, the conversation of 'person' and the Trinity goes back to Tertullian and not the Cappadocian Fathers, though the latter are certainly important interlocutors on the topic. It is perhaps Zizioulos's antipathy for 'Western' theology that causes him to miss this reality.

A third important modern theologian is Catherine Mowry LaCugna. In her appeal to the Cappadocian Fathers she claimed in their writings a trajectory of mutuality and equality among the divine persons. She then leveraged this trajectory in order to fund her social trinitarianism.[28] As a result she supported communal notions of the monarchy in the divine nature and flagged concerns that if God's *arche* is with a partiular divine person - the Father - it moves in a nontrinitarian direction, which "leads to an anthropology that is derogatory and detrimental because one human being is put forward as normative for another."[29]

As her last chapter in *God for Us* makes clear, LaCugna's primary concern for Trinitarian theology is the way it molds our lives.[30] It is, in her words, "*the* theological criterion to measure the fidelity of ethics, doctrine, spirituality, and worship to the self-revelation and action of God in the economy of salvation."[31] She is concerned that God's trinitarian life possess a particular 'shape', one that cannot be appropriated by those who want to bring subordination within social and personal relations. Yet, she is also

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[27] *Being as Communion* (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press), 41.

[28] Catherine Mowry LaCugna, *God for Us: The Trinity & Christian Life* (New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 1991), 390-395.

[29] Ibid., 396.

[30] Ibid., 377-411.

[31] Ibid., 410.

concerned not to give too much attention to the intradivine realm, to formal considerations in Trinitarian theology, to that which would consider God 'apart' from us. Rather, she would have Christians attend to the economy, to the 'nearness' of Christ and the Spirit. Thus, the use LaCugna finds in envisioning the eternal divine life is in order to avoid anthropological abuse, not to find the eternal wellspring for the economic missions that move from the Father, through the Son, and in the Spirit. As the chapters in this thesis will demonstrate, the pro-Nicene theologians of the fourth century turned to the eternal life of God, and the Father's place within that life, precisely because they thought it important to have right thoughts about God. This will bring them to consider the monarchy of the Father and how it functions within God's Trinitarian life, yes, but also how that shapes the economy and, with the two Cappadocian's considered below, the economy's goal of a vision of God.

Whereas LaCugna found fertile ground in the Cappadocian Fathers for a supposed Trinitarian mutuality, Wolfhart Pannenberg fears they are largely responsible for subordinationist tendencies in Trinitarian thought.[32] Of chief concern for Pannenberg is what he sees as relationships of derivation, the Son and Spirit *from* the Father, which lack any reciprocal dependence. That is to say, Pannenberg objects to a *taxis* in the Trinity stemming from the monarchy of the Father that does not also entail a reciprocal dependence of the Father on the Son and Spirit. Like Torrance, Pannenburg sees Athanasius as more 'pure', in a Nicene sense, over this question, because he stressed the correlativity of 'Father' and 'Son', thus suggesting the dependence of the Father on the Son for his fatherhood.[33] Like the theologians we have just examined, Pannenberg's use of fourth-century sources can be called into question. The following chapters will certainly put into question the notion of a 'fall' in Nicene orthodoxy after Athanasius. Whatever might be the case, Panneberg's reflections on the trajectories he sees in Trinitarian

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[32] Like Torrance, Pannenberg is reliant on a late ninteenth-century German narrative going back to Theodor Zahn (*Marcellus von Ancyra: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Theologie* [Gotha: Friederich A. Perthes, 1867], 8-32) and Friedrich Loofs ("Das Nicänum," in *Festgabe von Fachgenossen und Freunden Karl Müller zum siebzigsten Geburtstag dargebracht,* ed. Otto Scheel [Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1922], 68-82). Aldolf von Harnack picked it up and gave it wide influence in his *History of Dogma,* tans. from the 3d German ed. by Neil Buchanan (New York: Russell & Russell, 1958). The narrative contends that the Cappadocians adapted Homoiousian theology (with roots in Origen), making "threefoldness" the trinitarian starting point; whereas Athanasius represented true Nicene theology with its "substiantial unity of substance" (4:84). On the "Harnack thesis," see Ayres, *Nicaea,* 237-238.

[33] Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology: Volume 1,* trans. Geoff W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 278-279. For a discussion of this point, see R. Olson, "Wolfhart Pannenberg's Doctrine of the Trinity," *SJT* 43:2 (1990): 181.

thought introduces an intriguing question I will return to in the conclusion.

Pannenberg invites discussion of the monarchy of the Father even as he eschews its unilateral manifestation in the divine life.[34] Within this eschatologically oriented theology, he sees "the monarchy of the Father is his lordship over creation which is the *goal* of the three persons' common activity."[35] The three persons of the Trinity are united in their pursuit to see the monarchy of the Father over all creation, which will be realized in the *eschaton.* But because the Father in some sense depends on the Son and Spirit for this realization, Pannenberg believes notions of subordinationism are avoided:

> By their work the Son and Spirit serve the monarchy of the Father. yet the Father does not have his kingdom or monarchy without the Son and Spirit, but only through them. This is true not merely of the event of revelation. On the basis of the historical relation of Jesus to the Father we may say this of the inner life of the triune God as well.[36]

Pannenberg's thought finds a fruitful foil in fourth-century pro-Nicene Fathers in that rather than the monarchy being a presupposition of the ordered relations of the Trinity, it is the result of their common activity. Nonetheless, in his focus on the eschatological revelation of the fatherhood of God, as well as the Father's dependence on the Son and Spirit, I will explore whether his thought was anticipated in certain ways in the pro-Nicene theologians under consideration in this study.

Either by way of emphasis or de-emphasis, the theme of fatherhood has been immensely important to the Trinitarian theology of each of the twentieth-century theologians examined thus far. And in each case, he or she has sought to retrieve the thought of the fourth-century pro-Nicene period as authoritative source or foil. Recently, two distinct but interrelated debates within American Evangelicalism have resourced fourth-century thought in order to substantiate positions within Trinitarian theology that shape conceptions of the fatherhood of God.

The first debate was sparked over the willingness of several theologians to reject the classical doctrine of the eternal generation of the Son.[37] This doctrine was part and

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[34] *Systematic Theology*, 324-326.

[35] Olson, "Wolfhart Pannenberg's Doctrine of the Trinity," 193.

[36] *Systematic Theology,* 324.

[37] The willingness to question or pare down eternal generation goes back to a few stalwarts of Old Princeton: B. B. Warfield ("The Biblical Doctrine of the Trinity" in *Biblical and Theological Studies* [Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing, 1952], 22–59.) and A. A. Hodge (*Outlines of Theology* [London: Banner of Truth, 1972], 182-183). This opened the way for more radical rejection by J. Oliver Buswell (*A Systematic Theology of the Christian Religion* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978], 1:111-112); Lorraine

parcel of pro-Nicene thought and fundamental to its reasoning about the Father and his relationship with the Son.[38] As I will show, while eternal generation emerged from key biblical texts (e.g., Proverbs 8:22-31; John 1:1-18; 5:26; Colossians 1:15-18; Hebrews 1:3), it was not the product of a text here or a text there; rather, it was the fruit of theological reasoning from a whole network of texts and patterns of biblical naming. What is more, theologically it ensured that the Son received the same indivisible substance of the Father even while it upheld the distinction between Father and Son.

The rejection of eternal generation has been based on exegetical considerations, specifically over the use of the word μονογενής in John 1:14, 18, 3:16, 18 and 1 John 4:9. Recently, much good work has been done on the exegetical level questioning the conclusion that μονογενής should be rendered "one and only" instead of the traditional "only-begotten."[39] Be that as it may, there is a broader issue of the way theology is practiced: certain strains of biblicism have constrained theologians so that they tie their doctrines to *express* statements of Scripture. When unable to do so, the doctrine in question falls by the wayside. This has been the story of eternal generation within American evangelicalism.[40] On the one hand, this partially erases the pro-Nicene picture of fatherhood as eternally fruitful and self-giving. On the other hand, the result is a theological vacuum, which has been filled by a variety of views giving alternative accounts on how the Father and Son relate (ESS - 'Eternal Subordination of the Son' or 'Eternal

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Boettner (*Studies in Theology* [Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1947], 121-122); John Dahms ("The Generation of the Son," *JETS* 32:4 [1989]: 493-501); Millard Erickson (*God in Three Persons: A Contemporary Interpretation of the Trinity* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995], 305-306, 309-310); Robert Reymond (*A New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith* [New York: Nelson, 1998], 326-327); Wayne Grudem (*Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, revised edition, 2000], 1233-1234); John S. Feinberg (*No One Like Him: The Doctrine of God* [Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2001], 471, 483, 488-492, 498); J. P. Moreland and William Lane Craig ("Christian Doctrines [1]: The Trinity," in *Philosophical Foundations for a Christian Worldview* [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003], 594); Bruce Ware (*Father, Son, and Holy Spirit* [Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2005], 162n3).
Of these, the most influential in recent years have been Wayne Grudem and Bruce Ware. In an about face from their published material, at the 2016 annual meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society both acknowledged the need for the language of eternal generation.

[38] It is among the three central principles of pro-Nicene Trinitarianism identified by Lewis Ayres. The other two are a "clear version of the person and nature distinction, entailing the principle that whatever is predicated of the divine nature is predicated of the three persons equally and understood to be one" and "clear expression of the doctrine that the persons work inseperably" (*Nicaea*, 236).

[39] See especially Charles Lee Irons, "A Lexical Defense of the Johannine 'Only Begotten'," in *Retrieving Eternal Generation,* eds. Fred Sanders and Scott R. Swain (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2017), 131.

[40] Though there are positive signs of the tide turning in the more classical direction, as witnessed through numerous sessions at recent annual meetings of the Evangelical Theological Society arguing exegetically, historically, and systematically for the doctrine eternal generation. One fruit of this is a collection of papers from these sessions edited by Fred Sanders and Scott R. Swain: *Retrieving Eternal Generation* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2017).

Submission of the Son'; EFS - 'Eternal Functional Subordiantion'; and ERAS - 'Eternal Relations of Authority and Submission').[41] Thus, the controversy over eternal generation has led to the second debate: relating the Father to the Son through language of authority and 'subordination' or 'submission'.

Eternal 'submission' entails a rather straightforward confusion over the one nature-one will understanding of pro-Nicene theology.[42] That is, the Son cannot be distinguished from the Father in eternity through submission, because to 'submit' implies the yielding of one will to another. If God has a singular nature, he has a singular will. To posit the Son yielding to the Father sunders the divine will while also suggesting a stratification in favor of the authority of the Father. The submission of the Son within his incarnate state, as recorded in the Gospels, has classically been understood to be the Son, yes, but in the capacity of his human nature. The question of the eternal 'subordination' of the Son carries with it a few more complexities.

On a strict definitional level 'subordination' communicates 'ordered under'. It is conceivable to construe the Father-Son relation as containing an element of subordination according to the order of the Son generated *from* the Father. Steven D. Boyer has noted this frames an asymmetry within the relations of the Trinity to which all pro-Nicene theologians held.[43] But 'subordination' connotes something deeper than merely an eternal irreversible relational *taxis* within the Godhead due to its historical attachement to *subordinationism*. Historically, 'subordinationism' entails the Son differing from the Father in status, where the Father is ranked 'higher' than the Son.[44] In the contemporary scene discussion of the Son subordinated to the Father has been conflated with questions surrounding gender relations within marriage.[45]

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[41] I owe the observation about the theological mind abhorring a vacuum to my colleague Scott Swain, who made this point in unpublished address "God from God, Light from Light: Retrieving the Doctrine of Eternal Geeration" delivered on November 12th, 2016 at the "Confessing the Triune God: Retrieving the Nicene Faith for Today's Church" conference hosted by Reformed Theological Seminary in Houston.

[42] D. Glenn Butner Jr. has recently examined and helpfully critiqued proponents of eternal submission language pertaining to the Son. *The Son Who Learned Obedience: A Theological Case Against the Eternal Submission of the Son* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2018).

[43] "Articulating Order: Trinitarian Discourse in an Egalitarian Age," *Pro Ecclesia* 18 (2009): 255-272. Stephen R. Holmes has also commented on this asymmetry tied to relational origin and how it does not necessarily lead to an account of authority and submission. "Classical Trinitarianism and Eternal Functional Subordination: Some Historical and Dogmatic Reflections," *SBET* 35:1 (2017): 90-104.

[44] On this question going back to Origen, see J. A. Lyons, *The Cosmic Christ in Origen and Teilhard de Chardin: A Comparative Study* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 111-115.

[45] See various relevant chapters in *The New Evangelical Subordinationism?: Perspectives on the Equality of*

When 'subordination' means something beyond *taxis* and, rather than being an element of a relationship, actually *defines* the relationship, then it is beyond the strictures of the fourth-century pro-Nicene witness on the Father and Son.[46] It is even further removed when discussion of differing authority enters into the Father-Son relationship. For the Evangelicals referenced above, this differing authority grounds their personal distinction. As a result, divine *fatherhood* carries with it greater authority.[47] I will show in the following chapters that the pro-Nicene Trinitarian theologians under consideration were giving "attention to the metaphysical relationships between natures, powers, and operations."[48] Their increasingly sophisticated arguments clarify that the Father's power is given to the Son within a simple nature and 'shows up' in the Son's works. Accordingly, 'power' - or authority - is not intrinsic to the Father; rather, it is intrinsic to the nature shared between the Father and Son. That nature is inherently 'simple' and so cannot be parceled out--whatever is shared is shared *completely*.

Outline of Chapters

Following this Introduction, Chapter Two focuses on Athanasius. I will elucidate the complexity of drawing firm conclusions on divine fatherhood through his account of the Father-Son relationship, but will show that his teaching on the παραδείγματα and the

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God the Father and God the Son, eds. Dennis W. Jowers and H. Wayne House (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2012); and *One God in Three Persons: Unity of Essence, Distinction of Persons, Implications for Life*, eds. Bruce A. Ware and John Starke (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015).

[46] One writer who has been rather stark in characterizing the Father-Son relationship in terms of authority and obedience is Michael J. Ovey. See his *Your Will be Done: Exploring Eternal Subordination, Divine Monarchy, and Divine Humility* (Latimer Studies 83; London: Latimer Trust, 2016).

[47] The question of 'authority' appears to be taking on greater nuance within the evolving nature of this discussion within Evangelicalism. According to a recent dissertation by Ryan Lowell Rippee, written under the supervision of Bruce Ware, the Father's authority is an "initiating authority complementary to the divine *taxis,* rather than superior authority that makes the Son and Spirit inferior" ("That God May Be All in All: A Paterology Demonstrating that the Father is the Initiator of all Divine Activity" [Ph.D. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2016], 20.). Rippee seeks to demonstrate that this is consistent with inseparable operations. Another recent dissertation has looked at the Son's eternal subordination of the Father in role, function, and authority and proposed this is a "doctrinal development" in light of a legitimate contemporary egalatarian context. That is, Scripture and classical theological categories have been applied within a new context producing growth *within* rather than departure *from* orthodox Trinitarian thought. Along the way the author, Hongyi Yang, proposes improvements for relating the doctrine of the Trinity to gender roles. *A Development, Not a Departure: The Lacunae in the Debate of the Doctrine of the Trinity and Gender Roles* (Reformed Academic Dissertations; Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2018). Gerald Bray has incisively demonstrated that quite beside the Trinitarian complexities introduced by these recent debates, there is no straightforward "comparison between the way a man relates to his wife and the way the Father relates to the Son. The two cases are entirely different..." ("The Eternal 'Subordination' of the Son of God? *Unio Cum Christo* 4:1 [2018]: 62).

[48] Ayres, *Nicaea,* 182. For development on this point more generally within the fourth century, see Michel René Barnes, *The Power of God:* Dunamis in *Gregory of Nyssa's Trinitarian Theology* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2000).

Holy Spirit suggests a spiritual vision which helps in understanding the uniqueness of the Father within Triune life. Chapter Three will bring the discussion into the West. The shape given to the fatherhood of God within Hilary stems from the centrality of *nativitas* in his Trinitarian thought. This brings the Father's loving self-gift to the forefront in establishing the Father-Son relation that remains distinctly ordered and equal. In fact, the pro-Nicene principle of the equality of persons is firmly established by the Father within Hilary's thought and to bring it into question casts doubt on his character.

The final two chapters mark a new stage in understanding the fatherhood of God as I examine the contributions of two of the 'Cappadocian Fathers'. Both theologians read those who came before them and discerned strategies needing development—especially those which entailed a robust theology of the Holy Spirit. Beginning with Gregory of Nazianzus in Chapter Four, discussion ensues over the precise place of the Father's monarchy.[49] Gregory was sensitive to the complexities of giving a coherent, pro-Nicene account of the unity and diversity of the Godhead. I will argue the Father is crucial to the coherence of his classical position, especially as he is discerned within human involvement in a Spirit-enabled θεωρία. Though Athanasius and especially Hilary taught the inseparability of the Trinity's works, the unfolding of the doctrine of the Spirit brings about a robust understanding of this doctrine, where the worshipper is enabled to contemplate the Father as the recipient of one movement of grace extending through the Son and in the Spirit only to return back to their source. With Basil in Chapter Five the story is enriched further in that the spiritual vision suggested by Athanasius, and given enigmatic elaboration in Nazianzen, comes to full flower. Basil's vision highlights the Father's 'place' within Triune life as there is a divine movement from the Father, through the Son, in the Spirit that returns to him as worshippers contemplate him. In unfolding his teaching on the fatherhood of God within a holistic spiritual vision, including even a theological anthropology, Basil sharpens the categories that communicate the Father's primacy while deepening human ways of knowing through a nuanced theological epistemology.

I will conclude by highlighting the central components that make up a mature account of the fatherhood of God at the close of the fourth century while also suggesting

[49] When linking 'monarchy' wih the Father below I am referencing his identiy as eternal source, sole principle, or cause of the Trinity.

how these might also serve as trailheads for further inquiry on the fatherhood of God within Trinitarian thought. Specifically, through the various ways pro-Nicene writers highlight the Father's 'fontality' issuing forth in his gift (seen in eternal generation and procession) which constitutes the Triune life, notions of the Father's 'perfection' are communicated. This leads to two intriguing conclusions: First, the vitality of divine life itself finds source in the Father's gift which highlights both personal distinction and abundant equality within the Triune life of God. Plumming the mysteries of God in order to search out God's perfection thus continually brings the seeker back to the Father yet in doing so he or she is faced with an incomprehensible mystery out of which flows the realization of eternal perfection. Second, and more provocatively, while there has been a fear that pro-Nicene Trinitarian thought bends in a subordinationist direction because of its emphasis on the fontality of the Father,[50] in reality an emphasis on the Father finding his perfection through dynamic giving to the Son and Spirit marks his person as 'bestowing love'. Admittedly, this is more of a constructive proposal based on the implications drawn from the theologies presented in this thesis, for the subjects considered here do not consistently characterize the Father's eternal giving through the framework of love. Nonetheless, insofar as Christian love is marked by God's gift and sacrifice for us (John 3:16; 1 John 3:16, 4:9-10), there is conceptual overlap with the gift at the core of divine life. As the Father gives of himself to the Son and Spirit he is identified (just as they are, in a sense, through 'receiving'). Thus, the trajectory of pro-Nicene thought on divine fatherhood suggests the persistent implication of the Father's own 'dependence' upon the Son and Spirit for who he is. Through their perfect and eternal reception of his 'loving gift', the vital mark of the Father's person shines through. His glory is seen in the glory of *others*, which subverts traditional expectations of the Father's priority within the Godhead.

[50] Within the Reformed tradition, such a fear has been projected onto John Calvin by the likes of B. B. Warfield (*Calvin and Augustine* [Philadelphia: The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1954], 230), T. F. Torrance ("Holy Trinity in Gregory Nazianzen and John Calvin," in *Trinitarian Perspectives: Toward Doctrinal Agreement* [Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994], 22, 57-58), and Robert Reymond (*A New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith* [Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1998], 327). Such careless charges are typically informed by an ill-shaped conception of a Latin/Greek dichotomy within the fourth century. See Michel René Barnes, "De Régnon Reconsidered," *Augustinian Studies* 26 (1995): 51-79.

Chapter 2: Athanasius of Alexandria

2.1 Introduction

Athanasius' initial writings in the 'Arian' controversy concern not the Trinity as a whole but the relationship between Father and Son.[1] The correlative nature of this relationship is central to his exposition: the name Father implies the existence of the Son, and vice versa. But, however effective this emphasis is in battling 'Arians', does the correlative press his theology to a point of clarity or confusion in articulating the unity and diversity of the Godhead (2.2 below)? Does it deliver a dense account of fatherhood?[2] I will argue that one of Athanasius's significant theological motifs, attention to the παραδείγματα, is used to reinforce the correlative. Yet, the παραδείγματα also have the flexibility to suggest a fuller notion of divine fatherhood. This flexibility along with some changes in Athanasius' emphases in the middle of the fourth century are signficant for his theology.[3]

In his *Decr.* and *Syn.,* as well as book 3 of *Ar.,* Athanasius argues that the one divine substance is the Father's. Consequently, we can speak of *one* God because there is only *one Father.* As long as the *ousia* is identified with the Father, a discernable and solid *taxis* is in place by which we can understand the divinity of the Son and Spirit, their source of

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[1] Athanasius is one of the most frequently treated figures from the fourth century, so works with biographical detail abound. For helpful recent works, see Khaled Anatolios, *Athanasius* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 1-39; D.W.H. Arnold, *The Early Episcopal Career of Athanasius of Alexandria* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1991); T. D. Barnes, *Athanasius and Constantius: Theology and Politics in the Constantinian Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard), 1993; David M. Gwynn, *Athanasius of Alexandria: Bishop, Theologian, Ascetic, Father,* Christian Theology in Context (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 1-54; Charles Kannengiesser, "Prolegomena to the Biography of Athanasius," *Adamantius* 7 (2001): 25-43; Annik Martin, *Athanase d'Alexandrie et L'Église d'Égypte au IVe siècle (328-373)*, Collection de l'Ecole française de Rome 216 (Rome: Ecole française de Rome, 1996); Martin Tetz, *Athanasiana: Zu Leben und Lehre des Athanasius* (New York: de Gruyter, 1995): 1-60. In addition, see the numerous entries in Peter Gemeinhardt, ed., *Athanasius Handbuch,* Handbucher Theologie (Heidelberg: Mohr Siebeck, 2011).

[2] There are times when it seems the unity of the Godhead for Athanasius is found not in the Father but in the Father-Son correlative. When it is, perhaps nothing more than a negative can be put forth on the Fatherhood of God: that he is *not* the Son. And, when this same logic is applied to the Son and Spirit, a negative again emerges as what distinguishes these two: they are *not* each other. While Widdicombe is more positive than I in conceptualizing Fatherhood in Athanasius, he is correct in concluding how infrequently he makes it a specific topic of analysis in its own right: "Discussions about God as Father arise mainly in relation to [Athanasius's] arguments for the eternal generation of the Son and the Son's divinity"(*The Fatherhood of God,* 159). This is fairly accurate for each of the theologians examined in this thesis. The question is whether their respective theologies provide theological 'space' for reflection on Fatherhood. The Father-Son correlative in Athanasius is generally constrictive of that reflection.

[3] Lewis Ayres examines Athanasius' turn around 350 to the langauge of Nicaea, "Athanasius' Initial Defense of The Term Ὁμοούσιος: Rereading the De Decretis," *JECS* 12:3 (2004): 337-359.

derivation and resulting divine communion, and the eternal grounding for the movements of grace described within the bishop's corpus.

The economy of the Trinity's redemptive acts will provide further clarity on the place of the Father in the Trinity (2.3 below).[4] In his description of the economy of God's acts in creation and redemption a picture emerges going out from and returning to the Father. Such a picture has promise in reinforcing an account of divine fatherhood. Yet, this chapter will conclude that there are remaining challenges in fitting these conclusions with his Trinitarian theology as a whole, specifically, his abiding stress on the Father-Son correlative. That is, the 'place' of the Father that appears clear within redemptive economy becomes ambigious when Athanasius returns to the mode of reasoning from correlativity.

2.2 The Fatherhood of God in Athanasius

The correlative functions as the entry point into considering divine fatherhood in Athanasius's writings, and serves as an example of a theological framework that holds much promise but, in the end, has difficulty delivering firm conclusions. In this section I will first introduce these tensions (2.2.1) before mining Athanasius's works for language on the primacy of the Father (2.2.2). From there this chapter will pivot to a number of concepts – terms, images, and phrases – he marshals in order to stress the intimacy and unity of the Father and Son (and Spirit). I will examine these under three headings: The Father's generation of the Son (2.2.2.1); the pervasive language of ἴδιος to describe the relationship of the divine persons (2.2.2.2); and descriptions of mutual indwelling (2.2.2.3). The united acts of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit also give witness to their unity, but because they concern the application of divine grace within the created realm I will consider them in the next major section of this chapter (2.3). This section will reveal that, despite theologically fecund elements of his thought, Athanasius (especially in his earlier writings) falls short of an integrative account of the fatherhood of God.

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[4] On Trinitarian dynamics in Athanasius's soteriology, see Khaled Anatolios, *Retrieving Nicaea: The Development and Meaning of Doctrine* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011), 106-10. Michel Stavrou notes Athanasius provides a Trinitarian theology from a profoundly soteriological perspective. "Le mystère de Dieu le Père chez saint Athanase d'Alexandrie," in *Gott Vater und Schöpfer: Forscher aus dem Osten und Westen Europas an den Quellen des gemeinsamen Glaubens*, eds., Ysabel de Andia and Peter Leander Hofrichter (Innsbruck: Verlagsanstalt Tryolia, 2007), 77-78.

2.2.1 *Introduction: The Question of the Father in the Divine Life*

Trinitarian reflection for the bishop from Alexandria starts with the names 'Father' and 'Son'.[5] They serve as the starting point within his theological discourse because they are both biblical (ἔγγραφον) and simple (ἁπλοῦν).[6] God is not identified in Scripture by such words as 'maker', 'framer', and 'unoriginate', which carry their own implications and invite speculation as to God's nature. Rather, he is simply called Father and, as Athanasius notes, "'Father' is indicative of the Son (τὸ πατὴρ δηλωτικόν ἐστι τοῦ υἱοῦ)."[7] In fact, when the name Father is used he is being named from a very specific 'place': *from* the Son. It is only *from* the Son that the title Father "has its true meaning and its bearing (σημαίνεται καὶ ἵσταται)."[8] This Father-Son relationship constrains everything one can know about the Father, who cannot be separated from the Son whose very name is tied with his: "the Father, *as* Father, is not separated from the Son (μήτε ἀπηλλοτρίωται πατὴρ υἱοῦ ἦ πατὴρ), for the name (ὄνομα) carries the relationship with it, nor is the Son removed

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[5] Origen supplies the Alexandrian tradition a theological reasoning that highlights relationality through the names. He recognized the names 'Father' and 'Son' are correlative. That is to say, there is something inherent in the name 'Father' that implies the existence of a child, just as the name 'Son' entails a parent. This seems perhaps an obvious point but, considering these are biblical names, for him, as well as for Athanasius, they contain an abiding logic which unlocks something fundamental about the triune character of God. As Origen notes, if God is Father, then, he is eternally. Therefore, his Son is eternal and somehow intrinsic to the being of God. In *De Prin.* 1.2.10 Origen says simply, "no one can be a father if there is no son (SC 252:132: *pater non potest esse quis, si filius non sit*)."
For Origen, the mutual dependence these divine names hold points to an eternal relation where what is said about one must be said about the other. In the words of Rowan Williams, "If part of what is said about God is that he is one term of a relation, the other term also must be eternal" (*Arius: Heresy & Tradition Revised Edition* [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001], 138).
Widdicombe notes that Origen's own argument on the Father-Son correlative is supported by his realist doctrine of language, where there is an intrinsic relationship between a name and the thing it names (*The Fatherhood of God,* 70). Naomi Janowitz provides a study of Origen's theories of divine names across his works, concluding that, for Origen "[n]ames point to the deepest meanings of objects signifying their nature." She quotes *On Prayer* 24.2: A name is a "summing up denomination which gives the real essence (character) of the named object" ("Theories of Divine Names in Origen and Pseudo-Dionysius," *HR* 30 [1991]: 361). Athanasius carries forward this theological connection between names and the divine persons of the Father and Son. That is, the names 'Father' and 'Son' indciate a real relation between two persons whose existence entails the other.

[6] *Ar.* 1.34 (*AW* 1/1.2:144).
Translations of Athanasius and other authors in this thesis are my own, though the reader should assume that I have consulted existing translations where available, and have relied upon them for guidance in varying degrees. See the Bibliography for critical editions and translations.

[7] *Ar.* 1.33 (*AW* 1/1.2:142).

[8] *Ar.* 1.34 (*AW* 1/1.2:144). In contrast to 'Arian' signification of the Father as unoriginate and the Son as originate, Athanasius believes signifying God as from the Son - as Father - is "epistemologically more secure." Widdicombe writes, "The term unorignate leads the mind to many ideas; the term Father is simple, more accurate, and only implies the Son. Athanasius assuumes that the singleness of focus which he attributes to the term Father corresponds to the simplicity of God's nature" (*The Fatherhood of God,* 169).

from the Father."[9] According to Athanasius, we cannot set our minds on either Father or Son without immediately considering the other. I will show that the correlativity of these names introduces an understanding of the persons where it is difficult to discern what, in the end, distinguishes the Father and the Son. When Athanasius sifts through the many implications he sees in the names Father and Son and their inherent relationship, the one distinguishing note he consistently strikes is "the same things are said of the Son, which are said of the Father, *except his being said to be Father* (τὰ αὐτὰ λέγεται περὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ, ὅσα λέγεται καὶ περὶ τοῦ πατρὸς χωρὶς τοῦ λέγεσθαι πατήρ)."[10]

The 'sifting' process Athanasius adopts frequently involves bringing together teaching on the unity and derivation of the divine persons and letting them, as it were, 'interact'. One such example of this mode of explaining the Father and Son is found in *Ar.* 3.5, which is quoted at length as it will guide in elucidating a number of salient elements in Athanasius's Trinitarian thought:

> Hearing the attributes of the Father spoken of a Son, we will by that see the Father in the Son (ὄψεται καὶ οὕτως τὸν πατέρα ἐν τῷ υἱῷ); and we will contemplate the Son in the Father (θεωρήσει δὲ καὶ τὸν υἱὸν ἐν τῷ πατρί), when what is said of the Son is said of the Father also. And why are the attributes of the Father ascribed to the Son, except that the Son is an offspring from him (ἐξ αὐτοῦ γέννημά ἐστιν ὁ υἱός)? And why are the Son's attributes proper to the Father (ἴδιά ἐστι τοῦ πατρὸς), except again because the Son is the proper offspring of his substance (τῆς οὐσίας)? And the Son, being the proper offspring of the Father's substance, reasonably says that the Father's attributes are his own also; whence in a fitting manner and following saying, 'I and the Father are one,' he adds, 'that you may know that I am in the Father and the Father in me.' Moreover, he has added this again, 'He that has seen me, has seen the Father;' and there is one and the same sense in these three passages. For he who in this sense understands that the Son and the Father are one, knows that he is in the Father and the Father in the Son; for the Godhead of the Son is the Father's (ἡ γὰρ τοῦ υἱοῦ θεότης τοῦ πατρός ἐστι), and it is in the Son; and whoever lays hold of this, is convinced that 'He that has seen the Son, has seen the Father;' for in the Son is contemplated the Father's Godhead. And we may perceive this at once from the illustration of the emperor's image. For in the image is the shape and form (τὸ εἶδος καὶ ἡ μορφὴ) of the emperor, and in the emperor is that shape which is in the image (τὸ ἐν τῇ εἰκόνι εἶδός ἐστιν). For the likeness of the emperor in the image is exactly alike (ἀπαράλλακτος); so that a person who looks at the image sees in it the emperor; and he again

[9] *Dion.* 17 (*AW* 2/1.1:58).
[10] *Ar.* 3.4 (*AW* 1/1.3:310).

> who sees the emperor, recognizes that it is he who is in the image. And from the likeness not differing to one who after the image wished to view the emperor, the image might say, 'I and the emperor are one; for I am in him, and he in me; and what you see in me, that you behold in him, and what you have seen in him, that you behold in me.' Accordingly he who worships the image, in it worships the emperor also; for the image is his form and shape. Since then the Son too is the Father's image, it must necessarily be understood that the Godhead and property of the Father is the being of the Son (ἡ θεότης καὶ ἡ ἰδιότης τοῦ πατρὸς τὸ εἶναι τοῦ υἱοῦ ἐστι).[11]

In this excerpt one can see a certain priority of the Father: it is the *Father's* attributes which are in the Son; the Son is the offspring of the *Father's* substance; and the *Father's* Godhead is in the Son. Nonetheless, intermingled with these statements of the Father's priority are a number that also stress the unity of the persons: since the Father is in the Son and the Son in the Father, they are mutually contemplated in each other; and what is said of the Father is said of the Son, too, for the Son's attributes are proper to the Father. Athanasius rounds off these observations concerning the Father and Son with an illustration drawn from the surrounding imperial culture, where what is done *to the image* of an emperor is done *to the emperor*. This illustration provides for Athanasius a literary picture of precisely the interaction between unity and derivation that the preceding text clusters together: on the one hand, it is the emperor's [*Father's*] image; yet, on the other hand, the image is "exactly alike (ἀπαράλλακτος)" as the "shape and form (τὸ εἶδος καὶ ἡ μορφὴ)" of the emperor, and one sees in the emperor the "shape which is in the image (τὸ ἐν τῇ εἰκόνι εἶδός ἐστιν)." This is so because, in some sense, they are 'in' one another. By worshipping the image (Son) one worships the Father as well. One can be assured of this because the being of the Son is the "Godhead and property (ἡ θεότης καὶ ἡ ἰδιότης)" of the Father.

In what follows I take my cue from this passage as this chapter seeks to unravel Athanasius's teaching on the Father. A quick review of *Ar.* 3.5 anticipates that as soon as the reader might see a distinction between Father and Son built upon certain ordering characteristics of their relationship, the distinction grows fainter through strong assertions of union and mutual indwelling. In the end, is there nothing more to say about the Father than he is *not* the Son?

[11] *AW* 1/1.3:310-11.

2.2.2 *The Primacy of the Father*

Athanasius' Trinitarian theology was largely shaped in a polemical context. Pictures occasionally emerge in the course of his argumentation containing formulations informing a view of the fatherhood of God. Yet, these pictures are often fleeting as Athanasius' rapid moving arguments engage a front here or a new set of texts there in polemical contexts. In my investigation on this point I will move more or less sequentially through his theological writings, briefly introducing each into this chapter. Overall, I will demonstrate that while consistency of argumentation is lacking, as Athanasius utilizes the παραδείγματα and begins defending Nicaea, an increasingly defined position for the primacy of the Father can be discerned.

Before Athanasius's engagements with 'Arianism' and the 'Tropikoi', he wrote a two-part work marked by systematization and apologetical concern, *Gent.* and *Inc*.[12] References to the Father come up in the midst of his argument for things other than Trinitarian relations. Nonetheless, while the Son comes into view in *Inc.* largely in his incarnate state, in the bulk of references to the Father the appellation is paired with "of": "Father of Christ"[13]; "Father of our Lord Jesus Christ"[14]; "Father of the Word"[15]; "Word of the Father"[16]; "image of the Father."[17] These tell us Athanasius is more or less sticking closely to biblical language and has in mind that the Father is inherently related, even if he does not in these contexts elaborate upon the precise nature of that relation. In one section of *Gent.* (26-29) "God" is equated with the "Father of Christ," but this is saying more about God vis-à-vis the pagan gods than it is the Father's relationship with the Son. Later in the same work (45) Athanasius proposes reasoning from the Word who ordered the creation to the idea of his "good Father" who is "God." By an analogy of the human spoken word leading to its source in the mind of the speaker, Athanasius would have the reader see the power of the Word in the stars of heaven and, therefore, see its source in the Father.[18] While this certainly gestures toward an understanding of how the Father and Word might be related in eternity, with the latter revealing the former, the context in

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[12] This assumes *Gent.* – *Inc.* predate the rest of Athanasius's theological corpus.
[13] *Gent.* 9, 26, 29, 40; *Inc.* 12.
[14] *Gent.* 27; *Inc.* 2.
[15] *Gent.* 2, 19, 27.
[16] *Gent* 23, 29, 40, 42, 44, 52; *Inc.* 1, 7, 10, 11, 12, 15, 16, 55.
[17] *Gent.* 2, 34, 41, 49; *Inc.* 13, 14, 20.
[18] In this move Athanasius references John 14:9.

which it appears is focused upon the Word as an eloquent "interpreter and messenger (ἑρμηνεὺς καὶ ἄγγελος)" of divine matters rather than the revealer of anything unique about the person of the Father.[19] I will return below to further sections of *Gent.* – *Inc.* as attention moves to other language Athanasius uses for describing the Son's relation to the Father. For now, it is seen from the beginning that the Father is unquestioned deity yet, as God, the Father is in relation to his Word, Image, or Christ through a generative relationship. The language Athanasius establishes within his theological discourse to speak of the Father is tersely biblical and points to a Father in relation, with that relation moving in a particular direction.

In the first two of his *Ar.*, written c.339-340, Athanasius develops his account, introducing what will be a recurrent theme: Created reality is in some way patterned after the divine, but not vice versa.[20] In a chain of fathers in creation fathers beget those who may become fathers themselves. The divine Father, however, is not 'from' anyone, and neither will he beget one who will become a father: "it belongs to the Godhead alone, that the Father is properly father (ὁ πατὴρ κυρίως πατήρ ἐστι), and the Son properly son, and in them, and them only, does it hold that the Father is ever Father and the Son ever Son."[21] This naturally follows from the *eternal* nature of the Creator,[22] and forces the question: what distinction can be discerned between these two eternal persons?

Sometime after he penned his first two *Ar.,* when in the 350s he detected the usefulness of the language found in the creed from Nicaea (325) in opposing the arguments of the 'Arians', Athanasius further probed the relation between the Father and Son in *Decr.*. In this work Athanasius again stresses the different natures of the Creator and created sides of reality.[23] Human beings, as created, received their being from God by

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[19] *Gent.* 45 (Thomson, 122.5). A similar way of reasoning occurs in *Inc.* though there, of course, from the incarnate Word who reveals the invisible Father (12, 32, 41, 43, 45, 46, 54). Again, while through the Son's earthly mission eyes of faith are to be drawn to the invisible Father, the knowledge of the Father is essentially general knowledge of the divine.

[20] "God does not make human beings his pattern; but rather we human beings, because God is properly and alone truly, being Father of his Son, are called fathers of our own children. For of him 'is every fatherhood in heaven and earth named [Ephesians 3:15]" (*Ar.* 1.23 [*AW* 1/1.2:133]).

[21] *Ar.* 1.21 (*AW* 1/1.2:131-132).

[22] *Ar.* 1.14.

[23] The radical ontological difference between the Creator and creation is fundamental to Athanasius's theology and works in the background of much of what is articulated regarding his Trinitarian thought in this chapter. This division of reality is established as a result of Athanasius's understanding of the doctrine of God as well as a theological anthropology that is informed by the creative act itself. Athanasius inherits the overarching emphasis on creation and its relevance for all of his theology from Irenaeus. In particular, the significance of a sharp ontological distinction between the creator God and creation, questions of mediation between God and the world, and the immediacy of the divine persons *ad intra* and *ad*

a distinct act. Athanasius is nonplussed that, according to what he sees in 'Arian' thought, the being of God would be considered similarly: "We receive the terms (τὰς λέξεις) referring to God in one way, and we conceive of those that refer to human beings in another (ἑρτέρως)."[24] In this conceptual context it is notable that not only does Athanasius draw a distinction between the two realms, where in the created one even fathers are 'of' another, by implication he opens the door to consider a distinction within the Creator side of reality as well. This potential distinction is put into relief as Athanasius introduces what will be an enduring fixture of his teaching: the scriptural 'symbols' that function as illustrations or patterns (παραδείγματα).[25]

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extra are retrieved by Athanasius from Irenaeus. See Khaled Anatolios, "The Immediately Triune God: A Patristic Response to Schleiermacher," *Pro Ecclesia* 10:2 (2001): 168-171; John R. Meyer, "God's Trinitarian Substance in Athanasian Theology," *SJT* 59:1 (2006): 84n.14.

Be that as it may, a series of interrelated concepts in Athanasius mitigate the otherwise stark disjunction between Creator and creation in his theology. These come out as he *relates* the Creator *to* creation. Lyman makes the point that for Athanasius the stress is on the eternality of the Creator's nature, which would, of course, put God's nature in direct contrast to a nature created *ex nihilo*. *Christology and Cosmology: Models of Divine Activity in Origen, Eusebius, and Athanasius* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 240. That difference being so, it does not take away the fact that the attributes of the Creator bear on his creation. That is to say, God is good and loving, so his creative act is marked by that character and his creation receives the benefits of it through his presence by his power (*Gent.* 6; *Inc.* 16-17; *Decr.* 11). The goodness and love of God translate into an active God who does not leave his creation alone in ruin (*Ar.* 2.77). The independence of God from his creation then is coupled in Athanasius's theology by the fact that his character governs his continual interaction with it. In addition to God's character marking his interaction with the creation, the actual distinction between God's external actions and internal nature serve to deepen God's loving interaction with his creation. Anatolios details how this distinction is helpful in prioritizing theology (or God's being) over economy (or God's external acts). This prioritization, though, is not simply one of two juxtaposed realms. The will by which God creates is an "essential will" and is identified with the Son as the eternal "intra-divine ground" for God's external acts. This eternal, essential will is fulfilled not in creation but in the generation of the Son from the Father. Thus, the creation is inferior to the eternal generation of the Son but it is derivative of this "divine begetting." The divine begetting is grounded in the consubstantial relationship between the Father and the Son in which they both delight. Since God's relationship with creation is derivative of the Father's generation of the Son, it is proper to speak of God's delight in the world. So, even though there is a radical ontological gulf between God and his creation, this is mitigated by both his loving and merciful character and the eternal ground for God's act of creation. Khaled Anatolios, *Athanasius*: *The Coherence of his Thought* (New York: Routledge, 1998), 119-124; Anatolios, "The Immediately Triune God," 171; Peter Widdicombe, "Athanasius and the Making of the Doctrine of the Trinity," *Pro Ecclesia* 6:4 (1997): 467.

[24] *Decr.* 11 (*AW* 2/1.1:9).

[25] *Decr.* 12 (*AW* 2/1.1:11). The παραδείγματα do a lot of 'work' in Athanasius's thought both with regard to understanding divine life and how human beings become partakers of that life. They will be brought up again below. James D. Ernst provides a thoughtful discussion of them on pp. 151-159 of his *The Bible in Athanasius of Alexandria,* The Bible in Ancient Christianity 2 (Boston: Brill, 2004). He states that they are revealed "phenomena that we might think of as elements of or windows into the metanarrative, which Athanasius both uses and names: the παραδείγματα whereby Scripture accommodates divine truth to the limited human capacity for understanding" (151-152).

Athanasius is likely resourcing Origen, who looked to Scripture and saw such titles for Christ as Word, Wisdom, and Power and noted these same titles are used to describe God. These titles for the Son bolster the correlativity with the Father already suggested in their names—they eternally go together. In his *Comm. Jn.* I.125-292, Origen starts with an examination of the title of "Word" for the Son of God; but he does not stop there for a definition of the Son because, as he demonstrates, Scripture does not stop there. He moves

These symbols at once reveal and conceal. They point to the inability to fully grasp divine concepts and plum the mysteries of God, while at the same time providing pathways for following a "pious rationale (διάνοιαν εἰς εὐσέβειαν)" in order to understand the divine nature.[26] In perhaps a partially ironic move – given his great fear about reading created reality up into the uncreated – the symbols reflect nature or human life.[27] Yet they are privileged because they are inspired ways (taken from Scripture itself and not merely ἐπίνοιαι) of discussing ineffable realities through analogy.[28] Sticking with just *Ar.* and *Decr.* for now, his favorite symbols for the Father – Son are Sun – Radiance/Image[29] and Fountain – Water/Stream[30]. The point to be made regarding the symbols is that while they will be used by Athanasius to argue for the unity and inseparability of the divine persons, at the same time they reveal the priority of the Father – for *from* the Father as sun is there radiance, and *from* the Father as fountain is there living water. These are *irreversible* pictures. The Father is 'of' nothing but himself. It is notable, however, that this is not a point stressed by Athanasius in *Decr.* or the first two books of *Ar*. It is simply assumed by him that one follows the other – radiance from sun and water from fountain – and so Son 'follows' Father. As I suggested earlier, then, the symbols reinforce the correlativity of the names more than they teach anything unique about the person of the Father.

In book 3 of *Ar.,* however, there is a subtle move beyond mere correlativity in Athanasius's use of the symbols, a move that emphasizes the primacy of the Father

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into an exploration of a variety of titles, including the Pauline "Wisdom" and "Power." For Origen, each title for Jesus Christ calls out for an investigation as to its precise meaning and connects to what Jesus Christ is for those who believe in him (For example, as "Word" he makes us "truly rational beings," *Comm. Jn.* I.267 [SC 120:192-194]) but also point to his divine relationship with the Father. In the words of Widdicombe, "the Logos refracts the undivided nature of God into many aspects (ἐπίνοιαι) so that they can be apprehended by us. Each of the titles of Christ conveys an aspect of God" (*The Fatherhood of God,* 53). What is more, these "various aspects of Christ are graduated to the differing spiritual capabilities of his followers" (Peter W. Martens, *Origen and Scripture: The Contours of the Exegetical Life,* Oxford Early Christian Studies (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012], 220n.133). In other words, through these titles Origen communicates both who God is *for us* in Jesus Christ and something of who God *is.* Thus, there is a correlative relationship between these titles, sometimes placeholders for the Son, and the Father.

[26] *Decr.* 12 (*AW* 2/1.1:11). In this section Athanasius uses Matthew 11:27 to note that while only the Father and Son fully know one another, the Son through Scriptural writers reveals realities about the divine that bear "only a slight and very dim resemblance compared to what we yearn for" yet at the same time enable genuine knowledge of the divine, enough to form our understanding so that we can discern what is according to the Creator realm and what is according to the created. Cf. *Ar.* 2.32.

[27] For a taxonomy and discussion of the analogies taken from nature or human life used by Athanasius, see Christopher Stead, *Divine Substance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 260-266.

[28] Michael Haykin, *The Spirit of God: The Exegesis of 1 and 2 Corinthians in the Pneumatomachian Controversy of the Fourth Century,* Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae 27 (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 71-72.

[29] *Decr.* 12, 23-24; *Ar.* 1.14, 27, 2.33, 35, 41, 53; 3.3.

[30] *Decr.* 12; *Ar.* 1.14, 19, 27; 3.3.

through drawing out his uniqueness as source. This perhaps reveals a growing sensitivity to those who thought he was not adequately accounting for the distinction between the Father and Son in his first two *Ar.*, and, therefore, gives evidence to its later (though unknown) date. After a section where he stresses the *Father* speaking and working and giving through the Son, in 3.15 Athanasius invokes again the illustrations or symbols. Seeking to deflect accusations of Greek polytheism while also accusing 'Arians' of their own form of polytheism (since their Son is divine but different in kind), he stresses that through the symbols we understand only *one* origin. There are not three suns but a sun and a radiance and one light in the sun and radiance: "we know of but one origin (μίαν ἀρχὴν); and the all-framing Word we profess to have no other manner of godhead, than that of the only God, because he is born from him (διὰ τὸ ἐξ αὐτοῦ πεφυκέναι)."[31] The "only God" is, of course, the Father "existing by himself according to being above all (ἐφ' ἑαυτῷ ὢν κατὰ τὸ ἐπὶ πάντων εἶναι), and appearing in the Son according to pervading all things, and in the Spirit according to acting in all things through his Word."[32] It is fair to conclude from this that, according to Athanasius, there is only *one God* because there is only *one Father*.[33]

Later in book 3 of *Ar.* Athanasius returns to the primacy of the Father in order to ward off accusations of Sabellianism. Again, the Father appears as the source behind everything the Son has. Referencing John 10:18 and Matthew 28:18, Athanasius says the fact that the Son receives from the Father does not "diminish (ἐλαττοῖ)" his Godhead: "For if all things are delivered to him, first, he is other than that all which he has received; next, being heir of all things, he alone is the Son and proper according to the substance of the Father (καὶ ἴδιος κατ' οὐσίαν τοῦ πατρός)."[34] The Son is distinguished in his receiving from all that which has received in creation by the *will* of the Father. He stands alone as

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[31] *Ar.* 3.15 (*AW* 1/1.3:323-324).

[32] Ibid. (*AW* 1/1.3:324).

[33] Cf. *Serap.* 2.15.6. The issue of a singular divine principle was, of course, at the center of the debate with 'Arians'. Arius accused Alexander of putting forth several principles and so many gods (*Syn.* 18). Athanasius clearly thought that, though Arians avoided speaking of two principles, by asserting that the Father and Son differed in substance the paradoxical result was multiple deities. See the discussion in Xavier Morales, *La théologie trinitaire d'Athanase d'Alexandrie.Collection des Études Augustiniennes,* Série Antiquité 180 (Paris: Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, 2006), 497-499. Athanasius explicitly rejects 'two eternals' in *Ar.* 3.28. Widdicombe notes, "The Son then is not a first principle co-ordinate with the Father; rather, the Son is eternally depdendent on the being of the Father and integral to the expression of that being as the source of all existence" (*The Fatherhood of God*, 175).

[34] *Ar.* 3.36 (*AW* 1/1.3:348).

receiving all according to natural likeness. In this closely argued passage Athanasius clinches his comments by exegeting John 5:26 ("As the Father has life in himself, so has he given also to the Son to have life in himself."). The fact that the Father has "given" signifies for Athanasius that the Son "is not the Father; but in saying 'so' he shows the Son's natural property and likeness towards the Father (δείκνυσι τὴν πρὸς τὸν πατέρα τοῦ υἱοῦ ἰδιότητα φυσικὴν καὶ ὁμοιότητα)."[35] The Son unmistakably and eternally has received all that is the Father's, yet it is *from* the Father, while the Father has received "not from any (οὐ παρά τινος)."[36] The distinctions Athanasius draws here may be faint, but they do prepare the way for understanding a Trinitarian order that is able to make sense of the divine movements of grace so apparent in his later theology. The fullness of the Father is from no other source than himself. While it is naturally shared by the Son, so that his "Godhead" is the Father's, the Father's 'place' is distinct. After 350, when Athanasius begins making arguments based on the language of the Creed, the primacy of the Father's place is emphasized as he grapples with "from the substance of the Father."

First in *Decr.* Athanasius clearly identifies God as Father who when named signifies the "substance (οὐσίαν)."[37] Correlative to this he stresses the simple nature of God in light of Exodus 3:14-15, so that when God is named as Father nothing more or less is being signified than the incomprehensible substance. The biblical bearing of 'Father' ensures that something true about the substance is revealed through it, even as the substance itself remains ultimately mysterious. Therefore, to say the Son is from God is to say that the Son is from the being of God and wholly thereof. To say that the Son is from the being of God is to say, as the Creed indeed does say, that he is "from the substance of the Father."[38] This both limits and expands our understanding of the Son. It limits by ruling out every other source for his being, and it expands by identifying the being with the inexhaustible Father. The use of 'Father' invokes the substance, thus identification with the substance associates incomprehensibility. According to the language of the Creed, to enjoy the status of full divinity is to be from God in a very specific sense, that is, "from the substance of the Father."[39]

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[35] Ibid. (*AW* 1/1.3:348).

[36] Ibid. (*AW* 1/1.3:348).

[37] *Decr.* 22 (*AW* 2/1.1:18). See also *Syn.* 34-35.

[38] For the background of this phrase, as well as Athanasius' interaction with it, see J. N. D. Kelly's *Early Christian Creeds*, 3rd ed. (New York: Continuum, 2006), 235-236.

[39] "The fathers of the council…finally found it necessary to proclaim 'from God' more clearly and

Later in the same decade in which he penned *Decr.,* when Athanasius was in his third exile, he once again found resource in the language of the Creed as he sought to refute in *Syn.* what he portrays as the ever-changing arguments and councils of the 'Arians'. In particular, he sets the councils of Ariminum and Seleucia in an 'Arian' genealogy which leads back to the taproot of Arius himself. The last section of *Syn.* sees Athanasius attempting to dispense with objections to the Nicene Creed's language of "from the substance of the Father" and its necessary consequence, *homoousios.* In *Syn.* 34-35 he replicates the argument he made in *Decr.* 22 identifying the Father with God which signifies the substance. The precision of the statement "from the substance of the Father" is then wielded by Athanasius to cut down a variety of teachings that would misunderstand *homoousios*, for it pinpoints the Father's subtsance as the "origin and root and fountain of the Son (ἀρχὴν καὶ ῥίζαν καὶ πηγὴν εἶναι τοῦ υἱοῦ)."[40] The Creed's language ensures the exact source of the Son, eliminating any consideration that he is separated from the Father and, therefore, from God. Thus, by choosing to defend the language of the Nicene Creed in order to overturn the arguments of the 'Arians', Athanasius must sharpen his language which identifies the substance with the Father and the Father as source of the Son.

In such moves the Father's 'monarchy' begins to emerge in Athanasius's thought, as it is the unique person of the Father who establishes the crucial origin of the Son. To this point the Holy Spirit has not been considered, but the Spirit, too, finds his origin in the Father according to Athanasius. The biblical language of doxology and baptism initially caused Athanasius to speak of the Spirit alongside the Son and Father. Whereas the Spirit is basically absent from *Gent.* – *Inc.* – only mentioned once in a closing doxology of *Inc.* – he is much more apparent in *Ar.* where his divinity is implicit and role in redemption affirmed.[41] It is not until his later work on the Holy Spirit, *Serap.*, however, that we see Athanasius in some way relate the Spirit to the Father outside the economy of

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to write 'the Son is from the substance of the Father (ἐκ τῆς οὐσίας τοῦ θεοῦ εἶναι τὸν υἱὸν)', so that 'from God' may not be considered to be in common and equal in the case of the Son as it is with things that have come to be; but that it may be confessed that while all others are creatures, the Word is uniquely from the Father (τὸν...λόγον μόνον ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς). For even if all things are said to be from God, this is altogether otherwise than how the Son is" (*Decr.* 19 [*AW* 2/1.1:16]). Cf. *Ad Afros* 4-5.

[40] *Syn.* 45 (*AW* 2/1.9:270). E. P. Meijering notes that for Athanasius Father as origin cuts off discussion of divine theogony and multiple *ousiai.* "Athanasius on the Father as the Origin of the Son," *Nederlands Archief voor Kerkgeschiedenis* 55 (1974): 8.

[41] Anatolios writes, "Perhaps the starkest development in Athanasius's thought from the time of the writing of *Against the Greeks – On the Incarnation* to *Orations against the Arians* is his presentation of the role of the Holy Spirit" (*Athanasius* [2004], 76-77).

redemption. He argues for a relationship between the Son and Spirit that is analogous to the Son and Father, yet he is careful to do so in such a way that would not be misunderstood as saying the Spirit is either a brother of the Son or a grandchild of the Father.[42] After establishing that the Spirit is uncreated, and therefore on the Creator side of reality, Athanasius puts him in a derived relationship with the Father just as he did with the Son. He introduces his explanation of this relationship by imagining the "irrational" questions of the "heretics":

> If the Spirit is not a creature, nor one of the angels, but proceeds from the Father, then is he also a son (ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς ἐκπορεύεται, οὐκοὺν υἱός ἐστι)? And are the Spirit and the Word two brothers? And if he is a brother, how is the Word only-begotten? How can they not be equal, but the one is named after the Father and the other after the Son (ὁ μέν μετὰ τὸν πατέρα, τὸ δέ μετὰ τὸν υἱὸν ὀνομάζεται)? And how, if the Spirit is from the Father, isn't it also said that he has been begotten or that he is a son, but is simply called Holy Spirit? And if the Spirit is of the Son, then is the Father the grandfather of the Spirit?[43]

This line of questioning raises the issue of the potential instability of the relations between the divine persons, a point Athanasius is sensitive to throughout his works; and one that must be explored here briefly before giving greater attention to the Spirit's relation to the Father.

Instability is a notion that Athanasius of course rejects as in line with the created realties rather than the divine. In creation every father is a son and is given by his father a part that enables him also to be a father.[44] Because within the created realm one can be both a son and a father at the same time, these terms are not preserved "in their proper senses (κυρίως)" and reveal a certain flexibility of relation.[45] That is to say, neither 'father' nor 'son' 'hold'; they may be true in the flow of time but, due to the multiplicity of the created order, change in their relation to subjects and so are not eternally 'proper'. A combination of realities that are true of the divine nature repel any notion of slippage within the attribution of divine names, so that while the names may mirror those used in creation the realities they speak of diverge from one another at key points. Indeed, the

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[42] *Serap.* 1.21.3 (*AW* 1/1.4:505): "For just as the Son, who is in the Father and the Father in him, is not a creature but is proper to the substance of the Father (ἴδιος τῆς τοῦ πατρὸς οὐσίας)…so too it is incorrect for the Spirit, who is in the Son and the Son in him, to be ranked with creatures or to be separated from the Word, thereby destroying the perfection of the Trinity."

[43] *Serap.* 1.15.1-2 (*AW* 1/1.4:489-490).

[44] *Ar.* 1.27-28; *Decr.* 11.

[45] *Serap.* 1.16.3 (*AW* 1/1.4:492).

distinct identities invoked by the Trinitarian names 'Father' and 'Son' do not change just as the names do not.

The notion of the monarchy of the Father enables Athanasius to uphold the solidity and irreversibility of the divine relations: "There is no God other than the Father; and there is no other Son, for he is only-begotten. Hence the one and only Father is the Father of the one and only Son (διὸ καὶ μόνος καὶ εἷς πατὴρ μόνου καὶ ἑνός υἱοῦ πατήρ ἐστι), and only in the case of the divinity have the names 'Father' and 'Son' always been stable and always are (ἔστηκεν ἀεὶ καὶ ἔστι)."[46] The stability of the Father – Son relation is upheld by the reality of the simple nature of the divine being, so that anything that is 'of' the Father's substance is wholly 'of' it. What is more, a simple nature does not change and so is eternal, and in its eternal simplicity cannot receive something added or expel something unnecessary: an eternal simple nature is *perfect*.[47]

In confirming the solidity of the names, the monarchy of the Father also cuts off any idea of infinite regress that might be understood through the co-eternality of the Father and Son. This was the 'Arian' objection: that the co-existence of the Father and Son entailed their brotherhood and, therefore, generation from some pre-existing origin. Touched on here is the 'third-man' argument – the 'third-man' being the pre-existing origin – which introduces an infinite chain of philosophical reasoning immune from regression curtailment when you have one who is *homoousios* with another with a presupposed origin for both.[48] Athanasius counters by referring, again, to the names and their implied relation by generation. In that relation the Father is the eternal origin of the Son:

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[46] *Serap.* 1.16.2 (*AW* 1/1.4:491-492).

[47] Athanasius resources simplicity in relation to the divine nature from early on in his writings (see *Gent.* 28). For him, it is a generally accepted idea when we think on the divine, who unlike the universe has no parts. God through his will is the source of the multiple parts that surround us and compose our beings. But considered according to himself – what is according to his *being* – only complete wholeness can follow. So, when the Son is said to be begotten from the Father, the nature of the Father constrains the notion of begetting. Unlike human begetting, it will not entail passibility or divisibility. In the actual begetting of the Son, then, that begetting is an element of the Father's perfection: "For this reason he is always Father (ἀεὶ πατὴρ), and 'Father' is not outside of God, lest he seem changeable. For if it is good that he is the Father, but has not ever been Father (οὐκ ἀεὶ δὲ ἦν πατήρ), then good has not ever been in him" (*Ar.* 1.28 [*AW* 1/1.2:138]. Cf. *Decr.* 11). See discussion in Stavrou, "Le mystère de Dieu le Père chez saint Athanase d'Alexandrie," 79-80. For development in Athanasius' use of simplicity seen in *Decr.* and *Syn.,* see Andrew Radde-Gallwitz's *Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nyssa, and the Transformation of Divine Simplicity,* Oxford Early Christian Studies (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 80-86. The inclusion of the Son and Spirit in the Father's perfection is a topic highlighted below.

[48] For further engagement on the 'third man' problem, see *Syn.* 51.

> For the Father and the Son were not generated from some pre-existing origin (ἔκ τινος ἀρχῆς), that we may account them brothers, but the Father is the origin of the Son and begat him (ὁ πατὴρ ἀρχὴ τοῦ υἱοῦ καὶ γεννητής ἐστι); and the Father is Father, and not born the Son of any; and the Son is Son, and not brother. Further, if he is called the eternal offspring of the Father (ἀίδιον γέννημα τοῦ πατρὸς), he is rightly so called.[49]

With these elements of Athanasius's thought in mind, where the Father generates the Son according to his simple nature thereby securing the eternal identities of the Father and Son, this section returns to the Holy Spirit and his relation to the Father. Athanasius first recognizes the Scriptures themselves never speak of the Spirit as a son of a father, and so brother to the Son, or a son of the Son, and so grandchild of the Father: "Instead, the Son is called the Son of the Father, and the Spirit is called the Spirit of the Father (ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ πατρὸς υἱὸς καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ πατρὸς πνεῦμα εἴρηται), and thus in the Trinity there is one divinity and one faith."[50] The unity of the Trinity emerges from the Son and Spirit's relationships of derivation from the one divine Father. The Trinity cannot be unlike itself, Athanasius reasons, and so the two names listed along with 'Father' in the biblical doxologies and baptism formula must be 'ranked' together with him. There is one divinity in the Trinity that is "manifested by the one Father."[51] But whereas Athanasius spends much time on the Son's relation to the Father being ordered according to his name (as an offspring), the Spirit's relation does not carry as much description. Much of the time Athanasius associates the Spirit with the Son as the Son's image and highlights their coinherence, thereby securing his place in the divinity of the Father 'by way of' the Son.[52] One way Athanasius pictures this is when the Father sends the Spirit upon the Church (see John 14:26) it is through the Son breathing the Spirit on the disciples (John 20:22).[53] We see here that, according to Athanasius's reading of John, the Spirit is ultimately 'from' the Father, but is also 'of' the Son and so the Son in his incarnate state breathed him upon his followers. Another biblical picture given by Athanasius excludes the Father altogether in its description. In *Serap.* 1.23.4-7 he speaks first of the Spirit as the one who seals and anoints creatures (referencing 1 John 2:27; Isaiah 61:1; Ephesians 1:13 and 4:30), but, because of his eternal relationship with the

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[49] *Ar.* 1.14 (*AW* 1/1.2:124).
[50] *Serap.* 1.16.7 (*AW* 1/1.4:493).
[51] *Serap.* 2.15.6.
[52] "For as the Son is in the Spirit as in his own Image, so too is the Father in the Son."
[53] *Serap.* 3.3.5 – 3.4.4. Cf. *Serap.* 1.19.7-8.

Word as image, the Spirit is the "form (μορφὴν)" of Christ *who seals*.[54] One might ask, in light of this language, whether it is the Spirit or Son then who ultimately seals. It appears it is the Son who seals and anoints, with the Spirit *as* the seal and anointing. Being *his own* Spirit, the Son gives of himself in the Spirit so that those anointed or sealed by him are partaking in the Word. This mirrors, of course, the Father's eternal relationship with the Son, through whom he "creates and renews all things (κτιζει τὰ πάντα καὶ ἀνακαινίζει)."[55] As the Son is correlative with the Father, the Spirit is correlative with the Son. Since correlativity is not implied in the names, Scriptures such as Romans 8:29 are referenced by Athanasius to uphold such a claim, for there it speaks of the "Image of his Son." And so the reasoning follows that if the Son is not a creature but the Image of the Father, then it is impossible for his own Image to be a creature. Indeed, if you relegate the Son's Image to creaturely reality you say something about the Spirit, of course, but also, Athanasius reasons, the Son (due to their correlativity). What is more, the Son being the Image of the Father, if he is demoted to the classification of creature then the Father himself is blasphemed.[56]

This order of Athanasius's argumentation relates the Spirit to the Father primarily through the Spirit's relationship with the Son (who is then in relation with the Father). Athanasius articulates as much when he says, "Who could separate either the Son from the Father, or the Spirit from the Son or from the Father himself (τίς ἂν διέλοι...τὸ πνεῦμα ἀπὸ τοῦ υἱοῦ ἢ αὐτοῦ τοῦ πατρός)?"[57] In other words, the Spirit's relation to the Father is conceived of primarily 'by way' of the Son. Athanasius will speak at times of the Spirit proceeding from the Father in light of John 15:26.[58] Yet, when giving a fuller account for the Spirit's relationship Athanasius will connect his procession to the Son:

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[54] *Serap.* 1.23.7 (*AW* 1/1.4:509).

[55] *Serap.* 1.24.6 (*AW* 1/1.4:511). See also 1.19.9 where Athanasius writes, "The Son said that the works he did were accomplished by the Father (τὸν πατέρα ἐργάζεσθαι). For he says: 'The Father who remains in me does his works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me. Otherwise, believe me because of the works themselves [John 14:10-11]. Likewise, Paul said that the works that he accomplished in the power of the Spirit were Christ's. For I will not dare to speak anything other than what Christ has worked through me to win obedience from the gentiles, in word and in deed, in the power of signs and wonders, in the power of the Holy Spirit [Romans 15:18-19] (*AW* 1/1.4:501)."

[56] This is Athanasius's line of argumentation in *Serap.* 1.24.7-8.

[57] *Serap.* 1.20.1 (*AW* 1/1.4:501)

[58] *Serap.* 1.2.5; 1.11.7; 1.15.1. Theodore C. Campbell was correct in this judgment: "Although Athanasius does not develop a doctrine of the Spirit's procession from the Father (and the Son), he certainly is not unaware of the problem of intra-trinitarian relations; the problem was simply not pressing for him and he did not apply his mind to it to any great extent" ("The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit in the Theology of Athanasius," *SJT* 27 [1974]: 438).

> Since there is one living Word, there must be one perfect and complete living activity and gift whereby he sanctifies and enlightens. This is said to proceed from the Father (ἐκ πατρὸς λέγεται ἐκπορεύεσθαι), because the Spirit shines forth, and is sent (ἀποστέλλεται), and is given from the Word, who is confessed to be from the Father. Indeed, the Son is sent from the Father (παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς ἀποστέλλεται)…. But the Son sends (ἀποστέλλει) the Spirit…. And the Son came in the name of the Father, 'but the Holy Spirit,' the Son says, 'whom the Father will send in my name' [Jn 14.26] (καί ὁ μὲν υἱὸς ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι τοῦ πατρὸς ἦλθε, τὸ δὲ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον, φησὶν ὁ υἱός, ὃ πέμψει ὁ πατὴρ εν τῷ ὀνόματί μου).[59]

The language of 'sending', therefore, brings together terse language on procession with Athanasius's teaching on the correlativity of the Son and Spirit: the Father sends the Spirit but does so 'through' the Son.[60] It will be demonstrated below how this is in accord with the specific movements of grace Athanasius articulates as coming "from the Father through the Son in the Holy Spirit (ἐκ πατρὸς δι' υἱοῦ ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ)."[61] For now, it is enough to understand that the sending of the Son and Spirit is patterned after the internal ordered relations of the Trinity. The Father stands in 'primary position' as the source *from* whom are the Son and Spirit. This is not articulated in the same way for the Spirit as it is for the Son, both because of the correlativity between the Father and Son inherent in their names and the correlativity between the Son and Spirit. In line with his procession from the Father, the Spirit is sent by him; yet, also in line with the Spirit's correlative relationship with the Son, he is sent through the Son. Thus, in Athanasius' relating of the Spirit to the Father, a 'shape' is again discerned in the Trinitarian relations that at least points to the primacy of the Father. Athanasius relies heavily on the Son's relationship to the Father in order to articulate the Spirit's, and so not much new is provided in understanding the Father by way of his articulation of the Spirit. Rather, there is a further confirmation of his previous theological reasoning.

In this account of the primacy of the Father Athanasius's theological writings have revealed from the start a concern to articulate the 'relatedness' of the Father. While the Son and Spirit are 'of' him, he is 'from himself'. This unique position in the Trinitarian relations is reinforced through Athanasius's use of scriptural symbols which place the Father as sun and fountain. Initially he is not concerned with highlighting the uniqueness

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[59] *Serap.* 1.20.5-7 (*AW* 1/1.4:503-504). Cf. *Serap.* 3.3.5-6.
[60] *Serap.* 2.11.1; 3.3.6.
[61] *Serap.* 1.20.4 (*AW* 1/1.4:503). Cf. *Serap.* 1.24.6; 1.28.3; 1.30.4-7; 2.14.1.

of the Father through these symbols, but as he moves into his third *Ar.* and further writings he emphasizes the Father as the origin of the Son. Engagement with creedal language reinforces this further as he identifies the divine *ousia* with the Father. The eternal Father's simple substance generates an eternal Son, who is always Son as the Father is always Father. The solidity and order of their relations is established through the Father's *monarchia*. The Spirit's relations within the Trinity are primarily delineated in terms of the Son, though the logic Athanasius borrows is a replication of the Father's relationship to the Son. Thus, while the Spirit proceeds from the Father, and is sent by the Father, he is primarily related to the Father through his correlative relationship with the Son. The Son's correlative relationship with the Father ensures, however, that just as the Son is "from the substance of the Father" so is the Spirit "united to the divinity of the Father (ἡνωμένον τῇ θεότητι τοῦ πατρός)."[62]

I will return to much of this foundational language as this chapter gives attention to the divine movements of grace that correspond to the Father's relationship with the Son, the Son's relationship with the Spirit, and the Spirit's relationship with the Father. Before that, though, this chapter turns to the variety of ways Athanasius articulates unity and intimacy within the Trinity, which in their cumulative effect erase lines of distinction that might be drawn based on what has been said of the primacy of the Father thus far. That is, they are not individually problematic so much as they are cumulatively problematic given Athanasius' failure to consistently integrate unity and diversity within his Trinitarian theology.

2.2.2.1 *The Father's Generation of the Son*

In first focusing on the generation of the Son from the Father many theological categories already introduced obtain, namely, the Creator/creature distinction and the character of the divine nature. When created nature's generation is read back into the Father's generation of the Son it results in a Son who has a beginning from the Father, since the created order is not eternal. However, if generation is conceived of consistent with the divine nature of the Father, that generation is eternal as the Father is eternal and within the Father's simplicity.[63] It is either/or. Consistent with his 'leveled' realms, for

[62] *Serap.* 1.12.3 (*AW* 1/1.4:483). Cf. *Serap.* 1.25.5; 3.3.5.

[63] *Ar.* 1.14; *Decr.* 24-27. The eternality of the Father entailing an eternal Son through generation goes back to Origen. In order to express the eternality of Fatherhood in God's nature, Origen writes in *De*

Athanasius the Son is either wholly on the Creator 'side of reality', possessing all the marks of eternality and simplicity, or is on the creature side of reality, bearing all the marks of living in successive time.

Athanasius uses a variety of words to describe the Son whom the Father generates, and through these terms characterizes their relationship. A prominent one already mentioned is that of 'Image'. The Son as image is an emphasis Athanasius picks up from his mentor, Alexander of Alexandria. Consistent with the Alexandrian tradition going back to Origen, Alexander stresses the eternal correlativity of the Father and Son. In doing so, however, he orients that teaching in order to shore up the status of the Son as eternally begotten from the Father.[64] Also in line with Origen, Alexander looks at the Scriptural titles for the Son, such as Wisdom, Power, and Word, as reinforcing the logic of the Father-Son correlative. But he goes even further, stressing the Son as 'image' of the

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Prin. 1.2.3: "Let the one, then, who assigns a beginning (*initium*) to the Word of God or the Wisdom of God consider with care lest his impiety is cast upon the unbegotten Father himself (*ipsum ingenitum patrem*), denying that he was always father (*semper patrem*) and that he begot the Word and possessed Wisdom in all previous times or ages (*in omnibus anterioribus uel temporibus uel saeculis*) or whatever else one can call them" (SC 252:116). Christopher Stead remarks that "Origen is clearly impressed by the reasoning that since the Father is eternal, his relationships must be eternal" ("Was Arius a Neoplatonist?" *SP* 31 [1997]: 50). This impression clearly put Origen at the early stages of a trajectory that, at least in this regard, moves through Athanasius (and not Arius).

Athanasius picked up Origen's teaching on eternal generation while dropping his corresponding teaching that creation is in some way eternal. By a "stricter application of the doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo*," he avoided the tricky conclusion that if the world were eternal then the created order would be in some way a son of the Father as well. Meyer, "God's Trinitarian Substance in Athanasian Theology," 88-89.

Meyer is correct in this general assertion, but for a more nuanced discussion of Origen's conception of the relationship between God and creation, and Athanasius's appropriation of the implications of this, see Anatolios, "Theology and Economy in Origen and Athanasius," in *Origeniana Septima*, eds. W. A. Bienert and U. Kuhneweg (Leuven: Peeters, 1999), 165-171. He writes, "[W]e can conclude that Origen's doctrine of God included the principle of the necessity of an always existing correlation between God and a created world over which he is sovereign" (Ibid., 165n.1). But this was born out of a concern to "safeguard divine transcendence and the priority of God's being over the creation of the world – in other words, precisely the priority of theology over economy." This provided the foundational principle for Athanasius that affirmed the eternal existence of the trinitarian being of God and its priority over economy. Both men wanted to safeguard divine transcendence, but Athanasius did not hold that this is contingent on an eternal Creator reigning over an eternal world; rather, God holds an eternal *capacity* to create that is rooted in the eternal Father-Son relation, but it is not necessary. Ibid., 166-167, 170. Hanson's dependence on linking the use of specific *terms* as proof of the disjunction between Origen and Athanasius's thought could have been helped by a discussion of the broader conceptual inheritance which Athanasius appropriates from Origen. R. P. C. Hanson, "The Influence of Origen on the Arian Controversy," in *Origeniana Quarta*, ed. L. Lies (Innsbruck: Tyrolia, 1987), 417-418.

[64] Widdicombe, *The Fatherhood of God,* 132. On Alexander's relationship with the term *homoousios* and longstanding support for the theological position that the Son is "from the Father's essence," see Mark Edwards, "Alexander of Alexandria and the *Homoousion,*" *VC* 66 (2012): 482-502.

Arius himself summed up Alexander's teaching in a letter to Eusebius of Nicomedia: "God eternal, Son eternal, Father and Son always together (ἀεὶ θεὸς ἀεὶ υἱός, ἅμα πατὴρ ἅμα υἱος) (*Letter of Arius to Eusebius of Nicomedia* [*AW* 3/1.1-2:2]).

Father, which, according to Widdicombe, is unprecedented.[65] This point of Alexander's teaching Athanasius carries forward and gives prominence. For him, 'image' becomes a kind of pole around which the other titles for the Son attach themselves—all of them reinforcing the divinity and relations of the Son, especially with the Father. As we will see below, this serves not only to uphold the status of the Son, it also opens the way for created 'images' sharing in the Image, the Son.

Athanasius, by calling the Son the Image, equates the Son with the Father in equality of being.[66] The generated Image is a perfect "expression (χαρακτῆρα)" of the Father.[67] Athanasius rhetorically asks whether the Father could ever be without that in which he sees himself. Just as a light inevitably has a radiance, so the Father inevitably has an image. Seeing himself in that image, the Father has delight in the Son – the 'I' referred to in Proverbs 8:30 ("I was his delight.") according to Athanasius. What is more, Athanasius reasons that if John 14:9 is true ("Whoever has seen me has seen the Father.") all of the divine attributes of the Father must be found in the Image who in its nature is inalterable as the eternal Father is.[68] Later, in the second *Ar.*, Athanasius again associates the sun-radiance παραδείγματα with the Father and his image. The image is the Son, who is generated 'inside', that is, not divided from the Father but, as an image, a χαρακτῆρα of his subsistence through which one can see unwavering likeness.[69]

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[65] *The Fatherhood of God*, 133. He quotes Alexander (*Letter of Alexander of Alexandria to Alexander of Thessalonica*): "And if also the image of God was not eternal (ἡ εἰκὼν τοῦ θεοῦ οὐκ ἦν ἀεί), it is clear that neither is that of which it is the image (εἰκὼν) eternal. But also by the non-existence of the engraved image (χαρακτῆρα) of God's subsistence the one who is entirely portrayed (χαρακτηριζόμενος) by it is destroyed (συναναιρεῖται) as well" (*AW* 3/1.1-2:24).

[66] *Ar.* 3.10.

[67] *Ar.* 1.20 (*AW* 1/1.2:130).

[68] *Ar.* 1.21-22. While Origen of Alexandria's thought is fundamental to the development of the doctrine of eternal generation, Athanasius' reasoning demonstrated here, according to Maurice Wiles, is definitive for the development of this doctrine. "Eternal Generation," *JTS* 12 (1961): 284-291. J. Moingt gives more credit to Hilary. "La théologie trinitaire de St.Hilaire," in *Hilaire et son temps* (Paris: Études augustiniennes, 1969), 163. In all likelyhood both reached these conclusions through their extensive engagement with the Fatherhood of God.

[69] *Ar.* 2.33. Though the relationship is not conceived of in terms of generation, one way that Athanasius associates the Spirit with the Son is through describing him as his image. This enables him to describe the Spirit as reflecting everything that is the Son's, thereby identifying him as fully divine: "The Spirit is said to be and is the Image of the Son (εἰκὼν τοῦ υἱοῦ λέγεται καὶ ἔστι τὸ πνεῦμα)…. Therefore, if our opponents confess that the Son is not a creature, it is impossible for his Image to be a creature. For an image must be just like that of which it is an image. Hence the Word is suitably and appropriately confessed not be a creature, since he is the Image of the Father (εἰκὼν τοῦ πατρὸς)" (*Serap.* 1.24.7-8) [*AW* 1/1.4:512]. Charles Kennengiesser provides a detailed study of *Ar.* in his *Athanase d'Alexandrie évêque et écrivain: Une lecture des traits Contre les Ariens* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1983). He looks at eternal generation and the παραδείγματα in pp. 271-278.

The Father's delight in his image is a delight in his Word, Wisdom, and Power – these three are often closely associated with the Image[70] as Athanasius reflects on titles he sees as "expressive of unity (ταὶς ἑνοειδέσι φωναῖς)"[71] between Father and Son. This association helps Athanasius play these terms off of one another in order to affirm what he wishes to affirm concerning the Son and his relation to the Father. For example, in order to combat the notion that the Word could be composed of syllables like human words, Athanasius reiterates that the Son, the Word, is "the exact image of his Father (Πατρός ἐστιν εἰκὼν ἀπαράλλακτος)."[72] The one who creates and orders the multiplicity of the world is himself generated from the simple Father as an image. The Word, therefore, is singular and is characterized by his source in the Father (just as an image can only be what it is an expression of).[73]

Wisdom is often paired with Word in Athanasius's writings as that through which the Father created or works.[74] With their close association with the Father's works, Power is then naturally aligned along with Word and Wisdom as an identifier for the Son:

> Everything was created through him and for him, and that being good offspring of a good Father and true Son, he is the power of the Father and his wisdom and Word; not so by participation, nor do these properties accrue to him from outside in the way of those who participate in him and are given wisdom by him, having their power and reason in him; but he is absolute wisdom, very Word, and himself the Father's own power, …and image (αὐτοδύναμις ἰδία τοῦ Πατρός ἐστιν...καὶ εἰκών). In short, he is the supremely perfect offspring of the Father (καρπὸς παντέλειος τοῦ Πατρὸς ὑπάρχει), and is alone Son, the exact image of the Father (εἰκὼν ἀπαράλλακτος τοῦ Πατρός).[75]

Taken together, then, the use of Word, Wisdom, and Power reinforce the character of the Image, the Son, who is the "supremely perfect offspring of the Father." Because of this

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[70] *Ar.* 2.34 (*AW* 1/1.2:211): "For it is sown in each soul from the beginning that God has a Son – the Word, Wisdom, and Power – who is his Image and Radiance (τὸν λόγον, τὴν σοφίαν, τὴν δύναμιν ἔχει, καὶ ταῦτά ἐστιν αὐτοῦ εἰκών καὶ ἀπαύγασμα). From these utterances flow directly the attributions of 'always' and 'from the Father' and 'like' and 'eternal offspring of the substance' (ἀίδιον τοῦ γεννήματος τῆς οὐσίας)." Cf. *Inc.* 48.

[71] *Syn.* 49 (*AW* 2/1.9:273).

[72] *Gent.* 41 (Thomson, 112-113).

[73] "God exists, and is not composite; therefore his Word exists, and is not composite, but is the one, only-begotten, good God, proceeding from the Father as from a good source (ὁ ἐκ Πατρὸς οἷα πηγῆς ἀγαθῆς ἀγαθὸς προελθών), who orders and contains the universe" (*Gent.* 41; Thomson, 112-113).

[74] *Ar.* 2.5, 3.2.

[75] *Gent.* 46 (Thomson, 130-1).

character, one can contemplate the Image and see the Father and his attributes.[76] Accordingly, through his regular invocation of these titles Athanasius seeks to stress the unity of the Son and Father. Rarely, however, does he provide much explanation to the properties and draw out their connections to Son and Father. An exception is *Decr.* 17 where Athanasius briefly sketches how he sees these various properties (here he adds to them "hand") relate and connect to the Son's generation from the Father:

> If God is Father of a word at all (ὅλως ὁ θεὸς πατήρ ἐστι λόγου), how is it that the one who is begotten is not the Son? Moreover, who then would be the Son of God if not his Word? For there are not many words, so that each would be deficient, but the Word is one, so that he alone is perfect; and since God is one, one also must be his image, which is the Son. And the Son of God, as one can learn from the divine oracles themselves, is himself the Word of God and the Wisdom and the Image and the Hand and the Power. For the offspring of God is one, and these names are indications of his generation from the Father (τῆς ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς γεννήσεώς). So if you speak of the Son, you indicate what is from the Father by nature (φύσει). And if you ponder the Word, you think upon the one who is from the Father and inseparable from him (ἀδιαίρετον αὐτοῦ). And when you speak of Wisdom, you think just as much of the one who is not from outside but from him and in him. If you name the Power and the Hand, you speak again of what is proper to the substance (τὸ ἴδιον...τῆς οὐσίας). And if you speak of the Image, you signify the Son. For what would be like God except the Offspring which is from him? Certainly, the things that come to be through the Word have been established in Wisdom. And the things that have been established in Wisdom have been made in the Hand and have come to be through the Son.[77]

These various terms are thus tools in Athanasius's theological hand by which he draws deeper connections between the Son and Father. As the terms mutually reinforce one another, identity of nature, inseparability, and internality are all invoked regarding the relation established through the Father generating the Son. *Internality*, in particular, becomes a consistent point of emphasis for Athanasius as he combats the 'Arians' by contrasting what is according to God's being with what is created according to his will. To give expression to the reality of what is 'internal' or 'proper' to God he uses the word ἴδιος.

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[76] *Ar.* 1.21. Cf. *Decr.* 11.
[77] (*AW* 2/1.1:14).

2.2.2.2 *ἴδιος*

The Son as ἴδιος to the Father's being is perhaps the most dominant motif communicating the unity between Father and Son that Athanasius applies in *Ar.*[78] The application of this term is a natural outworking of the eternal generation of the Son and the simplicity of the Godhead. As generated eternally from the Father and not being an addition to his being from outside, the Son is 'proper' to his being.[79] That is to say, he is *internal* to the being of God rather than being a part of the external created reality brought near to God by grace. To put it the opposite way, as the Father is unoriginate, so is the Son[80]; creation, as *ex nihilo,* naturally has an origin. This theological concept reiterates his teaching of the radical disjunction between the Creator and creation and construes the Son as internal to the Creator side:

> For Athanasius, what is ἴδιος to the Father is from his substance (ἐκ τῆς οὐσίας), and is to be distinguished utterly from the created order which is not ἐκ τῆς οὐσίας τοῦ Πάτρος but rather ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων. Whereas the Son is ἴδιος to the Father, the creature, the thing made (ποίημα), is outside (ἔξωθεν) God. Ἴδιος-ἔξωθεν expresses the fundamental contrast between God and creature, between what belongs to the divine substance and what is created out of nothing, and clearly the contrast is between what is intimate to God and what is merely external.[81]

By contrasting what is internal through *natural* intimacy with the Father with what is external through creation, Athanasius paves the way to consider a deeper unity of the Father and Son while also providing an avenue for understanding how humanity might be brought near through redemption. I will preview this briefly.

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[78] *Ar.* 1.26, 1.56, 1.58; 2.20, 2.23, 2.28, 2.67; 3.24, 3.36 *inter alia*. Because the titles just explored, such as Word and Wisdom, are basically synonymous with the Son, Athanasius will also refer to these as well as Image as ἴδιος to the Father (see *Ar.* 1.14, 15, 16, 20, 26, 28, 35, 36, 58; 2.32, 56, 67 *inter alia*). Anatolios (1998) writes, "In his principal dogmatic work against the Arians, the *Orationes contra Arianos*, probably the single most pervasive motif employed by Athanasius is his continual reiteration that the Son is 'proper to' (ἴδιος) the Father, while all of creation is 'external to' or 'from outside' (ἐκτός, ἔξωθεν) the Father" (*Athanasius,* 102). For a history of Athanasius's use the term ἴδιος see Lewis Ayres, "Athanasius' Initial Defense of The Term Ὁμοούσιος," 343-344. For how Athanasius co-opted and modified its use by Arius and Asterius, see Anatolios's "'Christ the Power and Wisdom of God'," 516-521.

[79] In a passage (*Ar.* 2.59) where Athanasius is contrasting the externality of creation to God with the internality of the Father and Son, he says not only is the Son ἴδιος to the Father but also the Father is ἴδιος to the Son. While such a comment is fitting with Athanasius's emphasis on the correlativity of their names, it seems in tension with his later emphasis on identifying the Father with the divine substance.

[80] This is true, of course, in the ultimate sense of being, though not true in the sense of personal origin.

[81] Andrew Louth, "The Use of the Term ἴδιος in Alexandrian Theology from Alexander to Cyril," *SP* 19 (1989): 198. On the close association between ἴδιος and ἐκ τῆς οὐσίας in the *Ar.* see Ayres, *Nicaea,* 114-115.

More or less consistent with Platonic notions of participation in his day, Athanasius teaches that human beings can 'participate' in the divine. The opportunity for participation is through the Son. Inherent in the notion, though, is that there is no *internality* if one is *participating* in something – participation presupposes a difference in natures.[82] Human beings participate in the divine by his grace because we are not equal or internal to his being. If the Son then does not participate in the Father but is ἴδιος to him, then the implication is that he does not possess titles or whatever else can be ascribed to him by virtue of participating with the Father, but he possesses everything according to his nature and therefore by natural right.[83] He does not take hold of these things from the outside but they are *internal* to who he is.

Athanasius's carries forward his language of ἴδιος into his writings on the Holy Spirit. In *Serap.* he reiterates the Son being proper to the Father's substance.[84] Then, to show the unity enjoyed by the Spirit as well as the Son, Athanasius's states that the Spirit is ἴδιος to the Son's substance like the Son is to the Father's.[85] Finally, since the Spirit is ἴδιος to the Son, by virtue of the Son being ἴδιος to the Father, he is ἴδιος to the Father (τοῦ πατρὸς ἴδιόν ἐστι),[86] to his divinity (τῆς θεότητος αὐτοῦ),[87] or, in the one passage where Athanasius applies the term *homoousios* to the Holy Spirit, "proper to and the same as the one God in substance (τοῦ θεοῦ ἑνὸς ὄντος ἴδιον καὶ ὁμοούσιόν ἐστι)."[88] Ἴδιος thus is a tool utilized by Athanasius to, first, highlight the Son's internality to the Father's being and, then, the Spirit's internality to the Son and, therefore, to the Father. The unfolding picture of intimacy between the divine persons is significantly sharpened by this language. It naturally extends from Athanasius's language on image and generation, yet furthers matters by stressing how each person is proper to the Trinity. One is either outside the

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[82] Anatolios (1998), *Athanasius,* 105; Ayers, *Nicaea*, 56. For a brief discussion on what participation might have meant for Arius, see the latter.

[83] *Ar.* 1.19. There is one passage in Athanasius (*Ar.* 1.15) where he speaks of the Son fully participating in the Father *internally*. C. J. De Vogel comments on how this is a "rather unplatonic usage of the term" and one of many instances where Athanasius makes unplatonic usage of "*seemingly* Platonic language" ("Platonism and Christianity: A Mere Antagonism or a Profound Common Ground?" *VC* 39 [1985]: 51-52). For a discussion of the language of 'full participation' as a strategic attack by Athanasius on Arian conceptions, see Kevin Douglas Hill, *Athanasius and the Holy Spirit: The Development of His Early Pneumatology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2016), 184, 259-261.

[84] *Serap.* 1.21.3; 1.25.2; 2.5.2; 3.3.5.

[85] *Serap.* 1.25.2.

[86] *Serap.* 1.26.6 (*AW* 1/1.4:484).

[87] *Serap.* 1.12.5 (*AW* 1/1.4:484); 1.25.5; 1.32.1. In 1.21.4 it is "proper to and one of the divinity in the Trinity." (ἴδιον δὲ καὶ ἓν τῆς ἐν τριάδι θεότητος) [*AW* 1/1.4:505].

[88] *Serap.* 1.27.3 (*AW* 1/1.4:519).

Trinity and so proper to creatures, or internal and so "proper to and one of the divinity in the Trinity (ἴδιον...καὶ ἓν τῆς ἐν τριάδι θεότητος)."[89]

2.2.2.3 *Mutual Coinherence*

In examining the ways in which Athanasius stresses the unity of the divine persons it is easy to see how ἴδιος naturally emerges from a combination of themes within his writings, such as the logic of the Creator and creature realms and the Father's eternality and simplicity. Likewise, notions of mutual indwelling organically grow out of ἴδιος. Here is the dawn of the doctrine of περιχώρησις, where the persons are in and with one another in a dynamic movement towards unity.[90]

Following the Gospel of John (specifically chapters 10 and 14), Athanasius emphasized the mutual indwelling of the Father and the Son and through it was led to his strongest union language.[91] I will focus here on a passage beginning with *Ar.* 3.1 and culminating in 3.6. Within this stretch, Athanasius marshals his full arsenal of concepts descriptive of unity that have been examined in this chapter thus far: correlativity; full possession of the Father's attributes through being an offspring of the *ousia;* the Son as 'proper' to the Father; and now the Father and Son's coinherence. Athanasius starts off stressing that even in the midst of mutual indwelling the Father and Son remain distinct and are not "discharged into each other (ἀντεμβιβαζόμενοι εἰς ἀλλήλους)."[92] Still, as a result of sharing the same nature, Athanasius taught that the Son "is in the Father and the Father in the Son; for the Godhead of the Son is the Father's (τοῦ υἱοῦ θεότης τοῦ πατρός ἐστι), and it is in the Son."[93] This is wholly consistent with the idea that the Son is ἴδιος to the Father, but it expands that notion to express the mutual knowledge and delight which the Father and Son enjoy in one another. In addition, while advancing the notion of union between the Father and the Son, Athanasius's teaching on mutual coinherence

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[89] *Serap.* 1.21.4 (*AW* 1/1.4:505).

[90] Athanasius does not, of course, use this term, but the seeds for the doctrine which was explicated by later fathers are found here. T. F. Torrance, "The Doctrine of the Trinity according to St. Athanasius," in *Trinitarian Perspectives,* 10. For a helpful history of its usage in the Greek Fathers, see Verna Harrison, "Perichoresis in the Greek Fathers," *SVTQ* 35:1 (1991): 53-65. Ayres sees in Athanasius's doctrine of περιχώρησις "that the persons are in or with one another through a dynamic movement towards unity and each other" (Ayres, *Nicaea*, 246).

[91] *Ar.* 1.59, 61; 2.12, 31; 3.1-6, 21 *inter alia.*

[92] *Ar.* 3.1.

[93] *Ar.* 3.5 (*AW* 1/1.3:311).

provides the conceptual grounding for the unity of God's acts which will become crucial when speaking about redemption below.

Athanasius furthers his meditation on divine unity in *Ar.* 3.2-3 in light of the παραδείγματα, contemplating how the "entire being of the Son is proper to the Father's substance (σύμπαν τὸ εἶναι τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦτο τῆς τοῦ πατρὸς οὐσίας ἴδιόν ἐστιν)."[94] This is not said, of course, to assert there are *two* beings but that all that is the Son's is proper to the *one ousia.* As I have shown, for Athanasius it is correct to affirm that the *ousia* is in some sense the Father's, yet the language of ἴδιος presses that identification into language of coinherence: "For whereas the form and Godhead of the Father is the being of the Son (τοῦ γὰρ εἴδους καὶ τῆς θεότητος τοῦ πατρὸς οὔσης τὸ εἶναι τοῦ υἱοῦ), it follows that the Son is in the Father and the Father in the Son."[95] This leads Athanasius to say in *Ar.* 3.4 that the coinherence revealed in John 10:30 demonstrates the "identity of the Godhead and unity of substance (τὴν μὲν ταυτότητα τῆς θεότητος, τὴν δὲ ἑνότητα τῆς οὐσίας)."[96] While in light of the fear of Sabellianism he deflects any notion that he is referring to the same thing with two different names, in the end, after following this rigorous course of 'unity logic' culminating in coinherence, the only distinction he can draw is: "They are two, because the Father is Father and is not also Son, and the Son is Son and not also Father (δυο μέν εἰσιν, ὅτι ὁ πατὴρ πατὴρ ἐστι καὶ οὐχ ὁ αὐτὸς υἱός ἐστι καὶ ὁ υἱὸς υἱός ἐστι καὶ οὐχ ὁ αὐτὸς πατήρ ἐστι)."[97] What is more, after again going through his repertoire in describing unity in *Ar.* 3.6, Athanasius's reaches particularly strong conclusions regarding the Son. First, Athanasius says it has a "fit meaning (καλῶς λέγεται)" to identify the Father with what is said in Exodus 3:14 (the "I AM"); Deuteronomy 32:29 ("beside me there is no God"); and Isaiah 44:6 ("I am the first and the last"). At the same time, he is careful also to say these are said of the Father not to the denial of the Son. For the Son is 'in' and 'of' the one identified as "first and only (μόνος καὶ πρῶτός)" as the Word, Wisdom, and Radiance. Thus, Athanasius concludes, "[The Son] too is the first and himself the fullness of the Godhead of the first and only, being whole and full God (ἔστι...πρῶτος καὶ αὐτὸς πλήρωμα τῆς τοῦ πρώτου καὶ μόνου θεότητος, ὅλος καὶ πλήρης ὢν θεός)."[98] *Ar.* 3.1-6 is a

[94] *Ar.* 3.3 (*AW* 1/1.3:309).
[95] Ibid.
[96] (*AW* 1/1.3:310).
[97] *Ar.* 3.4 (*AW* 1/1.3:310).
[98] (*AW* 1/1.3:313) . See *Serap.* 2.4.2 where the Son is again identified as the "He who is" of Exodus

striking example of where Athanasius juxtaposes the primacy of the Father alongside the strongest statements of the Son's status and unity with the Father. In the end, though, he does not make significant effort to provide coherence to these two assertions. I leave further comment on this language for now in order to follow Athanasius's teaching of mutual indwelling in relation to the Spirit.

Like what has been seen in each of the 'unifying doctrines' examined thus far, Athanasius's moves in *Serap.* from the mutual indwelling of the Father and Son to the Holy Spirit in order to give further expression to the unity he enjoys with the other divine persons: "But if the Son being in the Father, and the Father in him (ὁ υἱὸς ἐν τῷ πατρὶ ὤν, ἐν ᾧ ἐστι καὶ ὁ πατὴρ), has been confessed not to be a creature, then there is every necessity that the Spirit is not a creature. For the Son is in him and he is in the Son (ἐν αὐτῷ γάρ ἐστιν ὁ υἱὸς καὶ αὐτὸ ἐν τῷ υἱῷ.)."[99] Thus, since the Son is in the Father and the Spirit in the Son, then the Spirit is likewise in the Father through the Son and the Father in the Spirit through the Son. Each of the divine persons is 'in' the other. Following the language of the Gospel of John, Athanasius will also use modified indwelling language when he speaks to the divine movements of grace.

It is to these movements this chapter now turns. I have spent significant space on understanding the divine persons through what has been revealed of their life on the 'Creator side' of reality. As this chapter moves now *ad extra* it is taken into the realm where their acts are displayed. Consideration of the united acts of the Trinity link this section with the next, as the acts within the 'created side' of reality display the Trinitarian relations and the united acts display the Trinitarian relations. Furthermore, through the acts a picture is provided for understanding personal *distinction* - including the Father's.[100]

3:4. Also, from *Ar.* 3.9: "For as the Father is first, so also is [the Son] first, as Image of the first (καὶ γὰρ ὥσπερ ὁ πατὴρ πρῶτός ἐστιν, οὕτως καὶ αὐτὸς πρῶτος μέν ὡς εἰκὼν τοῦ πρώτου) and the first also being in him, and offspring from the Father, and in him the whole creation is created and adopted into sonship" (*AW* 1/1.3:316).

[99] *Serap.* 2.12.5 (*AW* 1/1.4:556). For a discussion of the Spirit within the Trinity in Athanasius, and how coinherence connects to unified redemptive activity, see Haykin, *The Spirit of God*, 93-110. Cf. 1.14.6-7.

[100] An illustrattion of the claim that the mutual indwelling of the divine persons is seen through their united acts can be observed at the beginning of *Ar.* 2. Here is a section where Athanasius is arguing for the Son's place on the 'Creator side' of reality and, therefore, not one of the Father's works (*Ar.* 2.2ff.). Through identifying the Son as the Word, Athanasius not only affirms the Son as ἴδιος with the Father, he specifically unites him with the act of creation. Resourcing John 1:3, Athanasius distinguishes the Son as one who creates from one who would simply craft something already in existence. The Son is

> the Word of the creator God; and from the works of the Father, which the Word himself works, one perceives that he is in the Father and the Father is in him and that the one who has seen him has seen the Father because of the identity of substance and the complete

2.3 The Divine Movement of Grace

Each category Athanasius uses to establish the unity of the divine persons is also utilized in some way to describe how God establishes communion with humanity. This could mean that, despite the overlap, Athanasius simply utilized available language that was plainly biblical or adopted models that were helpful in describing the fruits of redemption. Or, running in the opposite direction (and as suggested in the introduction to this chapter), this language could reveal that soteriological concerns were at the forefront of Athanasius's mind (e.g., The Son 'must be this' in order for him 'to be able to do this'.) and so had a significant hand in shaping his doctrine of God. As a consequence, there are times Athanasius's push to affirm the divinity of the Son confuses his relation to the Father. A question I will be seeking to answer is whether Athanasius provides a clearer picture when in a 'soteriological mode'. Accordingly, in what sense is the divine movement of grace revealing of any structure of divine relations, in particular of the place of the Father? And do descriptions of redemption contribute to the picture of the Father and what we can know and experience of him from what Athanasius has to say about the *ad intra* relations? A particularly hopeful category for highlighting the Father is illuminated through Athanasius' return to his παραδείγματα in *Serap.* Their description suggests the Spirit as the one who sets believers on a course to 'return to the Father'. That is to say, just as grace flows from the Father, through the Son, in the Spirit, so the Spirit takes human beings through the Son to the Father in the experience of their redemption. Thus, the source and 'end' of human redemption in Athanasius's thought is in some sense the Father.

Following now the divine movement of grace in Athanasius, I will ground that movement first in creation and then in re-creation (2.3.1). This will involve initially understanding some objective elements of the Son and Spirit's roles as they 'move' toward

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likeness of the Son to the Father (διὰ τὸ ἴδιον τῆς οὐσίας καὶ τὴν κατὰ πάντα ὁμοιότητα τοῦ υἱοῦ πρὸς τὸν πατέρα) (*Ar.* 2.22 [*AW* 1/1.2:198]; Cf. *Serap.* 1.2.3-6 where Athanasius includes the Spirit as Creator.)

What Athanasius ties together in this passage is that it is through observing the divine works, attributed at the same time to the Father and the Son, that we also see their creative power and their prior likeness and coinherence. That is to say, then, the mutual indwelling of the Father and Son can be discerned from the biblical portrayal of united divine acts within the created order. Highlighting the *revealing* aspect of the united acts reminds that as this chapter transitions to the next section it is not 'moving away' from understanding the divine life according to Athanasius. Rather, another perspective is being gained through which he describes the divine life.

humanity. With these conceptual frameworks in place, I will step back to observe the larger picture by which Athanasius describes human redemption (2.3.2), leading to a consideration of how the Trinitarian God brings humanity into communion with himself through participation (2.3.2.1), adoption (2.3.2.2), and deification (2.2.2.3). The conclusions of this section will then be weighed against the picture of the Father we have gained thus far in order to determine if Athanasius possesses an increasingly coherent theology of fatherhood.

2.3.1 *Introduction: The Logic of Creation – Re-creation*

The connection between the eternal relations within the Godhead and the redemptive movements in the economy is elucidated through first probing the logic of creation and re-creation in Athanasius, through which some light is shed on the Father insofar as he sends the Son and Spirit. Along these lines, I begin by observing the foundational sending of the Word by the Father, a sending rooted in their eternal ordered relations. Jumping off here I return to the Word's role in creation referenced in John 1:3 and follow Athanasius's foundational argumentation in *Inc*.[101] A little later in John 1, of course, that same Word is described as becoming incarnate (1:14). Athanasius sees the incarnation of the Word for the redemption of humanity as proper since he is sufficient to 're-create' that which was created by him in the first place.[102] Further, the "added grace" of the image of God which enabled knowledge of the divine by humanity is to be restored by the original Image of God.[103] The image had been darkened in humanity by

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[101] Athanasius's cosmology is primarily in service of his account of human beings. His theological anthropology developed out of his account of creation *ex nihilo*, which is crucial to both the drift of humanity into sin and its restoration in redemption. When this theological anthropology is evaluated in light of the 'leveled' realms of Creator and creation which allow no gradations of creators or creations, one can see the foundation in place which sheds light on understanding the divine movements of grace in redemption.

[102] See the flow of argumentation in *Inc.* 7-10. Frances Young writes, "Re-creation is Athanasius' main understanding of salvation in Christ" (*From Nicaea to Chalcedon: A Guide to the Literature and its Background* [London: SCM, 1983], 71). Meyer ties together the prominence of the preposition διᾰ in both the original creation διὰ τοῦ λόγου and "God's process of divinizing renewal in the soul" διὰ τοῦ λόγου ("Clarifying the *Filioque* Formula," 396). This is appropriate since "it is … characteristic of Athanasius to distinguish the Second Person of the Trinity from the creation not in terms of mere unlikeness, but rather in terms of creation owing its being and sustenance to the Word" (Anatolios, "Theology and Economy in Origen and Athanasius," 168). Athanasius is following Irenaeus in his teaching that the doctrine of the incarnation is bound to the doctrine of creation and that "former completes the latter" (Anatolios, "The Immediately Triune God," 171).

[103] *Inc.* 3 (Thomson, 140). It helps to put this teaching on the original state of humanity into a broader context: There is a certain continuum between Athanasius's account of the instability of humanity's original created state and the Fall. Immediately after their creation a tension is present in human

neglecting the natural clues to God in creation and the witness of holy people, prophets, and the law given through the Jews.[104] Drawn by more immediate things, humanity wandered further away from God and increased in darkness.[105] By the Father sending the true image of God, he addresses the very 'location' of his original grace by renewing humanity's ability for communion with him and comes down to meet humanity's senses that had run their own way.[106] The immediate presence of the true Image of God in the flesh culminating in the resurrection cuts off humanity's tie to sin and death, grants us a new "origin of life" and repairs our ability to receive the grace of God.[107] As this is opened up through the sending of the Son, the Spirit is involved, too, as he coinheres with the Son making their work in the world is inseparable:[108]

> The Son is Creator like the Father; he says 'For whatever I see the Father doing, this is what I also do [John 5:19]'.… But if the Son is Creator like the Father, then he is not a creature (οὐκ ἔστι κτίσμα). And if he is not one of the created things because all things are created through him (δι' αὐτοῦ κτίζεται τὰ πάντα), it is clear that the Spirit is also not a creature (οὐδὲ τὸ πνεῦμα κτίσμα ἐστίν). For it is written about him in Psalm 103: 'You take back your Spirit, they die and they return to their dust; you send forth your Spirit, they are created, and you renew the face of the earth [Psalm 103:29-30].' Seeing that it has been written, it is clear that the Spirit is not a creature but is involved in the act of creating. For the Father creates all

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beings as a result of being created out of the goodness of God but also having no being to hold them in goodness within themselves and so therefore susceptible to drifting away from God into nothingness if not for God's goodness and grace (*Inc.* 4, 10, 11; *Gent.* 41). The goodness of God issued in an "added grace" in creation for humanity: being made in God's image (*Inc.* 3; See Anatolios [1998], *Athanasius*, 55-56; John Behr, *Formation of Christian Theology: The Nicene Faith, Part 1* [Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2004], 188-189). This is fundamentally the image of the Son which becomes important for connecting divine grace in Christ. This grace allowed an original knowledge of God through "similarity" between God and human beings (*Gent.* 2, 8, 34), meaning that even though creation *ex nihilo* necessitates an entirely active Creator and passive creation, the grace instilled in a particular part of the creation – humanity – provided for receptivity and activity on the part of human beings in their original interaction with God (Anatolios [1998], *Athanasius*, 58). See Andrew Louth's discussion on this point and its connection to the image of God in *The Origins of the Christian Mystical Tradition: From Plato to Denys* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), 78-80.

[104] On whether the image of God is entirely lost or not in Athanasius's thought, see the tension brought out by Anatolios (1998), *Athanasius*, 65-66.

[105] See the flow of argumentation in *Inc.* 11-14.

[106] See the flow of argumentation in *Inc.* 14-16.

[107] *Inc.* 10 (Thomson, 158): "For by the sacrifice of his own body he both put an end to the law over us, and renewed for us the origin of life (ἀρχὴν ζωῆς) by giving hope of the resurrection. For since by humanity death had conquered humanity, so for this reason by the incarnation of the Word were effected the ovethrow of death and the resurrection of life" (Thompson, 158). See Anatolios, "The Immediately Triune God," 171.

[108] T. F. Torrance, "*Spiritus Creator:* A Consideration of the teaching of St Athanasius and St Basil," in *Theology in Reconciliation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965), 215-216. Ayres asserts that "Athanasius' *Letters to Serapion* may well represent the earliest clear statement of the doctrine [of inseparable operation] applied to all three persons," though the seeds for this were in Origen, *Princ.* 1.2.12 (*Nicaea*, 214 and n.85).

> things through the Word in the Spirit (τοῦ λόγου ἐν τῷ πνεύματι κτίζει τὰ παντα), since where the Word is, there also is the Spirit; and the things created through the Word have their strength to exist through the Spirit from the word…. For the Father himself works and gives all things through the Word in the Spirit (αὐτὸς γὰρ ὁ πατὴρ διὰ τοῦ λόγου ἐν τῷ πνεύματι ἐνεργεῖ καὶ δίδωσι τὰ παντα).[109]

The divine freedom enjoyed by the Son is shared by the Spirit. In the great divide between the Creator and creation, the Holy Spirit is firmly established on the active, creative side who works in the world without any lines of mediation. Thus, the Holy Spirit as united to the Son and Father enjoys the freedom of God who always acts out of his independent nature both in the original creative act and in his 're-creative' act.[110]

Still, this independence is a united one, so that God's redemptive work in the incarnation is not separate from any work in the Holy Spirit. This is clearly seen in Athanasius's teaching on the baptism of Jesus in the Jordan. There, in the historical narrative of the work of Jesus, one sees the economy of the Holy Spirit modeled in the life of Christ: Jesus receives the Spirit and, in turn, supplies the Spirit to the Church. In line with Athanasius's assertion that Jesus did all things in his flesh for humanity's sake,[111] the descent of the Holy Spirit and Jesus Christ's reception of the Spirit is a model of perfect receiving and sanctification for humanity's sake.[112] Indeed the taking on of flesh by the Son in the incarnation is crucial for the redemption of humanity, but equally important is his perfect receiving of the grace of the Holy Spirit and his remaining in that grace in that same flesh where humanity failed. The Father sends the Word for humanity's redemption which the Son secures in uniting us with the Holy Spirit, who is his to give:

> [T]hrough whom and from whom should Spirit have been given, if not through the Son whose Spirit he is (οὗ καὶ τὸ πνεῦμά ἐστι)?… Therefore we have received him securely (βεβαίως)…in that he is said to be anointed in the flesh. For the flesh was first sanctified in him and he is spoken of as having received through it, as a human being; we have the Spirit's grace

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[109] *Serap.* 2.13.4 – 2.14.4 (*AW* 1/1.4:557-559)

[110] *Serap.* 1.23.2-3. The fact that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are all "fully integral to the divine being" establishes that their interaction with creation is "immediate" and not one member of the Trinity can get "*in the way* of our immediate union with God" (Anatolios, "The Immediately Triune God," 170 [emphasis his]). Similarly, Ayres writes, "Athanasius emphasizes God's unmediated action in the material world, and sees the Arian/Eusebian emphasis on the intermediate nature of the Logos as serving to prevent this connection, however intimate the union between the Logos and the human body of Christ that they envision" (*Nicaea*, 77).

[111] *Ar.* 2.51-56.

[112] *Ar.* 1.46-50.

that follows from his reception, receiving from his fullness.[113]

By looking to what happens in the Son's baptism we are equipped to recapitulate the 'two sides' of Athanasius's original description of creation: Jesus models both the passive side of the divine-human encounter (passively receiving the Holy Spirit in his flesh) and the active side (giving the Holy Spirit to the Church as the Word). Where humanity was to keep the grace given in the original creation through an active 'remaining' in that grace and failed, Jesus succeeded: "But it is human beings who have the origin of their receiving (οἱ ἀρχὴν ἔχοντες τοῦ λαμβάνειν) in him and through him."[114] Therefore, humanity both perfectly receives God's grace in Jesus and actively remains in that grace in Jesus. It is the receiving and indwelling of Holy Spirit which enables this new beginning and new life.

The involvement of the Son and Spirit in the 'recreation' of humanity flows from their divine status and, therefore, involvement in the first creation. This is at the behest of the Father who sends both the Son and Spirit to work in the created realm in accordance with their eternal relations within the Godhead. That is to say, while there is a logic behind the Son and Spirit's involvement in 'recreation' because of their prior involvement in creation, there is also a foundational logic to their involvement in both because of, first, their divine status, and, second, the eternal order of relations within the Godhead. The next section turns to this relationship between the eternal relations within God and the redemptive movements in the economy.

2.3.2 *The Economy of God's Movement of Grace*

I introduce this section by framing the entire Trinitarian economy in God's graceful acts on behalf of his creation which has been implicit in what has already been said: the Father does all things through the Son, in the Spirit.[115] The articulation of this economy sums up for Athanasius not only what he sees as the biblical frame of God's movement of grace, but also the inter-relatedness of each member of the Trinity in that movement.[116] To divide either the Father, Son, or Spirit is to put one on the side of the creatures and tear at the unity of the Godhead. Without that unity, the economy of God's actions for human beings is threatened since all that God does in his gift giving follows the

[113] *Ar.* 1.50 (*AW* 1/1.2:160-161).
[114] *Ar.* 1.48 (*AW* 1/1.2:158)
[115] e.g., *Ar.* 1.48.
[116] Athanasius gives numerous Scriptural examples or order and inter-relatedness in *Serap.* 1.19.1-9.

pattern of being from the Father, through the Son, in the Spirit. For the concerns of this chapter, the economy itself is instructive as it follows the pattern evident from the beginning of this chapter's investigations in the divine life: matters proceed *from the Father.* By reiterating this order in God's movement of grace Athanasius highlights the source of that grace in the Father while also sketching the path that humanity will follow in finding communion with the divine. This movement is seen in the gift from the Father which brings grace that then returns to the Father:

> For the Spirit is not external to the Word, but is in the Word, and through the Word is in God (οὐ γὰρ ἐκτός ἐστι τοῦ λόγου τὸ πνεῦμα, ἀλλὰ ἐν τῷ λόγῳ ὂν ἐν τῷ θεῷ δι' αὐτοῦ ἐστιν). Hence the spiritual gifts are given in the Trinity (ἐν τῇ τριάδι). For as Paul writes to the Corinthians, in their distribution there is the same Spirit and the same Lord and the same God, 'who works them all in everyone' [1 Corinthians 12:6]. The Father himself through the Word in the Spirit works and gives all things (αὐτὸς γὰρ ὁ πατὴρ διὰ τοῦ λόγου ἐν τῷ πνεύματι ἐνεργεῖ καὶ δίδωσι τὰ πάντα). Indeed, when Paul prayed for the Corinthians, he prayed in the Trinity (ἐν τῇ τριάδι), saying: 'The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all' [2 Corinthians 13:13]. When we participate in the Spirit, we have the grace of the Word and, in the Word, the love of the Father (τὴν τοῦ πατρὸς ἀγάπην). Just as there is one grace of the Trinity, so too is the Trinity indivisible (ὡς δὲ μία τῆς τριάδος ἡ χάρις, οὕτως ἀδιαίρετος ἡ τριάς).[117]

The Father's gift follows a divine movement of grace that effects communion with humanity. That communion is described through interrelated categories of increasing intimacy.

2.3.2.1 *Participation*

The first category of 'intimacy' investigate here is 'participation', through which attention turns first to the 'far end' of the gift, to the Spirit, who is the initial 'touching point' between the divine and humanity:

> This grace and gift given in the Trinity is given by the Father through the Son in the Holy Spirit (ἡ...διδομένη χάρις καὶ δωρεὰ ἐν τριάδι δίδοται παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς δι' υἱοῦ ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ). Just as the grace given through the Son is from the Father (ἐκ τοῦ πατρός), so too we cannot have fellowship with the gift except in the Holy Spirit. For it is when we participate in the Spirit that we have the love of the Father and the grace of the Son and fellowship of the Spirit himself (ἔχομεν τοῦ πατρὸς τὴν ἀγάπην καὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ

[117] *Serap.* 2.14.4 – 2.15.1 (*AW* 1/1.4:559-560).

τὴν χάριν καὶ αὐτοῦ τοῦ πνεύματος τὴν κοινωνίαν).[118]

In the prevous discussion of the unity shared between the Son and Father, it was revealed that the Son does not participate in the Godhead of the Father because he shares the same nature as the Father. While participation except in the most absolute terms[119] is not for any member of the Trinity with another, human beings are able to participate in the divine by God's grace. When Athanasius speaks of this participation, though, he has something very specific in mind. First, as Lyman has put it, we participate by "grace in the sense of an external, transforming relationship with God which allows a certain sharing in the power of God, but not of ultimate transformation into divinity."[120] The notion of ultimate transformation will be examined in due course, but in what sense can participation be a "transforming relationship" for humanity since it is of a wholly different *nature* than the divine in which human beings are participating?

Recall, in the baptism of Jesus humanity has a new reception of grace. This flows from Jesus's assumption of human flesh which bore all the marks of our flesh created *ex nihilo*. By receiving grace within that flesh and remaining in it, the door was opened in the incarnation for true participation in the Son through the Spirit.[121] That is, through the Son sending the Holy Spirit to the Church in his grace, humans can participate in God by the Spirit uniting us to Christ.[122] This union with the Son means being in the true Image of God. It was the image of God in creation modeled on the true Image of the Word which was God's gracious act that held in check humanity's nature. Now, through union with the true Image, that image is 're-created' by grace.[123] In the Spirit, then, human

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[118] *Serap.* 1.30.7 (*AW* 1/1.4:525-526)

[119] See *Ar.* 1.15-16. In *Ar.* 1.16 Athanasius writes, "What is proper to [the Father] is entirely the Son; for it is the same to say that God is wholly participated (τὸ γὰρ ὅλως μετέχεσθαι τὸν θεὸν ἴσον ἐστὶ λέγειν), and that he begets; and what does begetting signify other than a Son" (*AW* 1/1.2:125)?

[120] Lyman, *Christology and Cosmology*, 145.

[121] *Ar.* 1.9 (*AW* 1/1.2:117-118): "The Son is very God, existing one in substance with the very Father. But others, to whom he said, 'I said you are gods,' had this grace from the Father only by participation of the Word, through the Spirit (μόνον μετοχῇ τοῦ λόγου διὰ τοῦ πνεύματος ταύτην ἔχουσι τὴν χάριν παρὰ τοῦ πατρός).

[122] In detailing participation and the role of particular persons in the Trinity, Dietrich Ritschl writes, "Athanasius teaches in *Contra Arianos*, and later in *Ad Serapionem*, that Father, Son, and Holy Spirit dwell in one another, that the Spirit is not to be thought of on a lower level than the Son, and that the believers' participation in God is a participation of the Spirit. The word is the bridge in this participation. Since the word is in the Father, and since the word and the Spirit participate fully in the Father, and since the word is with the believers (and in them), so the believers are *in* God *in the Spirit*" ("Historical Development and Implications of the *Filioque* Controversy," in *Spirit of God, Spirit of Christ*, ed. L. Vischer [London: SPCK, 1981], 55 [emphasis his].

[123] For a discussion contrasting the Son as Image and our participation according to the image and by grace, see Régeis Bernard, *L'image de Dieu d'après Saint Athanase* (Paris: Aubier, 1952), 34-37.

beings reproduce the image of the Son. Athanasius's concept of participation is furthered when he brings in the notion of adoption.

2.3.2.2 *Adoption*

With Athanasius's teaching on adoption there is a stronger orientation to the divine communion enjoyed by humanity in the Son *before the Father.* Through a clearer relational standing vis-à-vis the Father perspective is gained regarding the loving character of the Father (though a challenge of this chapter will be relating this perspective to his eternal fatherhood). What is more, adoption brings us closer to understanding both the nearness and the separation between the divine and human in participation and leads us on the way to talking more fully about the transformation of human beings. Thus it serves as a link between participation and deification.

What is adoption but by grace being placed in the natural Son so that in him humanity participates in the divine love of the Father.[124] This was made possible by the Son in the incarnation taking on *our nature* so that we stand in the place to call God Father and not simply Creator:

> This is the love of God for humanity: that of those he is maker he later becomes by grace also Father (αὕτη...τοῦ θεοῦ φιλανθρωπία ἐστιν, ὅτι ὧν ἐστι ποιητής, τούτων καὶ πατὴρ ὕστερον κατὰ χάριν γίνεται). He becomes their Father when created human beings receive, as the apostle says, 'into their hearts the Spirit of the Son, crying out, "Abba, Father" (Galatians 4:6). And these are the ones who by receiving the Word, receive authority from him 'to become children of God' (John 1:12). Being creatures by nature, they would not become 'sons' except by receiving the Spirit of the natural and true Son (τοῦ ὄντος φύσει καὶ ἀληθινοῦ υἱοῦ τὸ πνεῦμα ὑποδέξονται). So, in order to bring this about, and to make humanity receptive to divinity, "the Word became flesh" (John 1:14).[125]

This clear passage brings out the integrative nature of adoption for Athanasius where the Spirit is the Spirit of the Son who enters into human beings and allows them to call on the Father from the position of a 'son'. This is, initially, the work of the Son because, just as he was powerful to re-create the image in humanity as the original Image, he is the true

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[124] Widdicombe provides a helpful definition of adoption for Athanasius: "Sonship by adoption signals our participation in the divine love of the Father for the Son and the Son for the Father; this participation is effected by the Son by nature, who is set in direct contrast with sons by adoption" (*The Fatherhood of God*, 227).

[125] *Ar.* 2.59 (*AW* 1/1.2:236).

Son of the Father by natural right and so can unite humanity to himself in adoption.[126] He saves from bondage and slavery and gives deliverance to humanity through the freedom of sonship by the work of the incarnation. As this is made accessible by Jesus Christ, though, the presence of the Holy Spirit enables humanity to apprehend its sonship and cry out, 'Abba, Father'.

The experience of sonship by the redeemed is a potentially crucial link to the eternal fatherhood of God. The experience entails a place in the Father's family where there is participation in the Father's love. The question is whether the Father's expression of love is a unique manifestation of his character. That love would be distinctive of the Father in particular is not something Athanasius gives much attention. Yet, at the very end of *Ar.* 3 he ventures into this territory.

After quoting John 3:35, he says, "Let the Son be willed and loved by the Father (θελέσθω καὶ φιλείσθω τοίνυν ὁ υἱὸς παρὰ τοῦ πατρός)." He does not stop there, however, for with that same will the Son "loves, wills, and honours the Father; and one is the will which is from Father in Son (ἀγαπᾷ καὶ θέλει καὶ τιμᾷ τὸν πατέρα, καὶ ἕν ἐστι θέλημα τὸ ἐκ πατρὸς ἐν υἱῷ), so that here too we may contemplate the Son in the Father and the Father in the Son." He concludes a little later with regard to the Father and the Son: "the Father loves and wills towards the Son, and the Son loves and wills towards the Father (ὁ πατὴρ ἀγαπᾷ καὶ θέλει τὸν υἱόν, καὶ ὁ υἱὸς ἀγαπᾷ καὶ θέλει τὸν πατέρα)."[127] In these words as soon as one senses Athanasius might put something forward that is distinctive about the Father's love, he strikes strong notes of reciprocity. This move in Athanasius is to be expected. While fatherhood is an important element of his teaching, Athanasius's attention quickly moves to consider the Son. In his description of adoption, experience of the Father's love is a part of the gift of grace. Here at the end of *Ar.* 3 Athanasius suggests there might be something unique about the Father's eternal relation to the Son that can be characterized as love, but that note is quickly counterbalanced through an emphasis on reciprocity in divine love.[128]

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[126] *Ar.* 3.9.

[127] *Ar.* 3.66 (*AW* 1/1.3:379-380).

[128] Interestingly, the end of *Ar.* 2 finishes with thoughts along a similar line:

> For one is the knowledge of the Father, through the Son, and of the Son, from the Father, and the Father rejoices in the Son and in this same joy, the Son delights in the Father (μία γὰρ γνῶσις πατρὸς δι' υἱοῦ ἐστι καὶ υἱοῦ παρὰ πατρὸς καὶ χαίρει τούτῳ ὁ πατήρ καὶ τῇ χαρᾷ ταύτῃ εὐφραίνεται ἐν τῷ πατρὶ ὁ υἱὸς), saying, 'I was beside him, his delight. Day by day, I rejoiced in his presence' (Proverbs

Adoption within human redemption does bring out a tension as this section considers human relationship to the divine Father. On the one hand, it is continually affirmed in Athanasius's teaching that the Son alone is Son by nature. Humanity's sonship is one of grace – it is not a natural right.[129] But on the other hand, adoption brings humanity to the fullest possible participation with the divine as it stabilizes participation in the Son rather than in human nature. 'Our new beginning', mentioned earlier, is that we are no longer wallowing in the drift of our nature created from nothing, but are put in a position of security and filial affection before the Father. We gain 'new origins' in the Son yet, unlike him who is natural offspring, never lose the reality of being created 'from nothing'. Because our fundamental nature never changes, our communion with the Father will always be conditioned by an external participation by grace. As much as we share in divine life through participation, there is always a 'remainder point' because of our created nature *ex nihilo.* There is never going to be for humanity a complete replacement of its created nature with divine nature, no collapse into ontological equality. But, as Athanasius makes clear, this does not mean God's grace does not do much to bring humans as close as 'humanly' possible in their participation in God as they are in the Son by the Spirit before the Father.

2.3.2.3 *Deification*

The interrelated categories Athanasius uses to describe human redemption as mapped out here lead in the direction of increasing intimacy. Thus, if adoption presents an experience of loving fatherhood for those who are united to the Son by grace, deification includes this but also presses the intimacy through notions of coinherence.[130]

8:30)....When was it then that the Father did not rejoice? But if he has always rejoiced, then there was always the one in whom he rejoiced. In whom, then, does the Father rejoice, except by seeing himself in his own image, which is his Word? Even though, as it is written in the same Proverbs, he also 'delighted in the sons of people, having consummated the world' (Proverbs 8:31), yet this also has the same meaning. For he did not delight in this way by acquiring delight as addition to himself, but it was upon seeing the works that were made according to his image, so that the basis of this delight also is God's own Image. And how does the Son also rejoice, except by seeing himself in the Father? (2.82; *AW* 1/1.2:259-260).

[129] *Ar.* 3.19-21. E.g., "For as, although there is one true and only-begotten Son by nature (φύσει καὶ ἀληθινοῦ καὶ μονογενοῦς), we also become sons, not as he is in nature and truth, but according to the grace of him who calls (κατὰ χάριν τοῦ καλέσαντος), and though we are humans from earth, are yet called gods, not as true God or his Word, but as God willed who has given us this grace" (*Ar.* 3.19; *AW* 1/1.3:329).

[130] As has been demonstrated already, deification is not, as is often thought, the sole Athanasian concept of human redemption. Hamilton Hess writes, "Athanasius treats a broad variety of salvation motifs, presenting an exceedingly rich soteriology. Several concepts are dominant in his writings, but none…can be exclusively identified as the focal point or central theme of his salvation theology" ("The Place of

Yes, there is a divine coinherence among the Trinitarian persons, as this chapter has examined, but Athanasius also suggests an intimacy redeemed humanity enjoys in the Son where by grace they coinhere with the Father as they are 'in' the Son. In examining the redemptive pattern Athanasius provides for understanding this intimacy, again perspective is provided on the Father.

It is important to examine what Athanasius means and does not mean by deification. During Athanasius's time the word 'God' did not quite have the absolute meaning it enjoys today, providing, then, room to talk of gradations of divinity.[131] In the process of deification, according to Athanasius, human beings do not lose their nature, nor do they simply return to the grace humanity had in the beginning – it is a higher grace.[132] The idea involves the incarnation as the location where deification takes place – the *locus deificandi* – as Jesus Christ receives the Holy Spirit and is sanctified by him.[133] Furthermore, it includes adoption as the basis for a real intimacy and communion with the divine that is enabled by the indwelling of the Spirit who binds humanity to the Word:

> It is through the Spirit that all of us are said to be partakers of God: 'Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which you are [1 Corinthians 3:16-17]. If the Holy Spirit were a creature, we would not have participation in God through him. But if we were joined to a creature, we would become strangers to the divine nature (ἀλλότριοι...τῆς θείας φύσεως), inasmuch as we did not partake of it in any way. But as it is, when we are said to be partakers of Christ and partakers of God, it shows that the anointing and the seal which is in us does not belong to the nature of things which have been brought into existence, but to the Son, who joins us to the Father through the Spirit that is in him (υἱοῦ διὰ τοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ συνάπτοντος ἡμᾶς τῷ πατρί).[134]

In this matrix of adoption, union, and indwelling, not only is humanity's 'status' changed

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Divinization in Athanasian Soteriology," *SP* 17 [1982]: 370). See the whole of this article for an examination of the various salvation motifs employed by Athanasius. Basil Studer also recognizes the variety of motifs employed by Athanasius in his soteriological theology, though, for him, the most helpful summary of his soteriology is summed up in the "simple antithesis: incarnation – deification" (*Trinity and Incarnation: The Faith of the Early Church*, ed. A. Louth [Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1993], 116).

[131] In the words of R. P. C. Hanson, "The word could apply to many gradations of divinity" (*The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God: The Arian Controversy, 318-381* [Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 1988], 456). Cf. Ayres, *Nicaea,* 14n.10.

[132] *Ar.* 2.67: "The human race is perfected and restored in him, as it had been in the beginning, or rather, by an even greater grace (καὶ μείζονι μᾶλλον χάρτι) (*AW* 1/1.2:244).

[133] *Ar.* 1.42, 2.74, 3.40; *Inc.* 9. Meyer writes, "When a neophyte is incorporated into the risen body of Christ, she enters into the *locus deificandi*" ("Clarifying the *Filioque* Formula," 390-391).

[134] *Serap.* 1.24.1-2 (*AW* 1/1.4:510).

through gaining new origins, but real transformation occurs where human beings are lifted up from their nothingness and transformed and sustained in grace as they *really* and *truly* share in the divine nature.[135]

'Really' and 'truly' are emphasized in order to reinforce the Athanasian notion that, when speaking about knowledge of the divine for humans, it is a genuine knowledge that is given. This is as a result of humanity's position as united to the Son in sonship where the Son's sonship is an absolutely real and actual sonship according to nature. Though by grace, the relation is nonetheless in existence by the binding and indwelling of the Holy Spirit who is no less divine than the Son, according to Athanasius.[136] Since it is by the Holy Spirit that humanity shares in that sonship, our relationship with God is determined by God himself. And because, consistent with the foundational distinctions of Athanasius's theology, there are no gradations of divinity, or no way to ascend to higher knowledge through intermediaries, humanity possess true and real knowledge of God even if, consistent with the unceasing disjunction between divine and human nature, it never comprehends God.

By means of the fact that the Father mediates between the world through the fully divine Son and the fully divine Spirit, there is an 'immediacy' between the two realms leading to a correspondence confirmed in humanity as *partaking* and God as *partaken*. This is illuminated by thinking through the full coinherence shared by the divine persons and the partial coinherence shared by humanity as it is indwelled by the Spirit and united to the Son. Therefore, humanity is able to be 'in' the Father since the Son is in the Father. There is a certain 'ascending' participation in the persons through adoption and deification which gestures toward not just a true knowledge of God, but a true reciprocal delight—a delight which is a taste of divine life.

It is at this point it is fruitful to return to a discussion of one of Athanasius's favorite ways of describing the relationship between Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, that is, through the παραδείγματα. While these illustrations refer to concrete things in human experience, they are helpful for Athanasius as inspired ways of discussing ineffable divine realities

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[135] Jaroslav Pelikan gives a list of three things which are helpful as a grid through which to consider Athanasius's doctrine of deification: "first, the reality of the transformation in man that had been accomplished by the salvation given in Christ; second, the analogy between this transformation and the eternal status of Jesus Christ in relation to God; third, the unbridgeable ontological difference between the status of Christ and that of transformed humanity" (*The Light of the World: A Basic Image in Early Christian Thought* [New York: Harper & Brothers, 1962], 83).

[136] See *Serap.* 1.24.1 – 1.30.7.

through analogy. As seen above, they enable him to assert equality and difference between the divine persons through such examples as Father/light – Son/radiance and Father/fountain and Son/river. While utilizing the παραδείγματα in *Serap.* he expands their symbolism to include the Spirit: We are enlightened in the Spirit (from sun-radiance) and drink of the Spirit (from fountain-river). To these he adds in *Serap.* 1.19.6 that the Father is the "only wise (μόνου σοφοῦ)" the Son is his wisdom, and we receive the Spirit of wisdom and are made wise in him.[137] These analogies not only help illuminate the coinherence of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, they also intimate a coinherence which extends to human beings:

> Suppose some inquisitive person were to ask: 'When the Spirit is in us, how is the Son said to be in us? And when the Son is in us, how is the Father said to be in us? (πῶς τοῦ πνεύματος ὄντος ἐν ἡμῖν λέγεται ὁ υἱὸς εἶναι ἐν ἡμῖν, τοῦ τε υἱοῦ ὄντος ἐν ἡμῖν λέγεται ὁ πατὴρ εἶναι ἐν ἡμῖν;) Or since it is entirely a Trinity, how is the Trinity indicated by only one of them? Or when just one of them is in us, how is the Trinity said to be in us? (ἡ τριὰς ἐν ἡμῖν εἶναι λέγεται)' First let him divide the Radiance from the Light or the Wisdom from the Wise One, or else tell us how these things are possible. But if this cannot be done, much more is the audacity of the insane to ask such questions about God.[138]

These 'symbols' point to both the inability to grasp these divine concepts and plum the mysteries of God or his ways with humanity, *and* the ability to, through "faith" and "pious reasoning joined with reverence (εὐσεβεῖ λογισμῷ μετ'εὐλαβείας)," "palliate our inability to explain and comprehend these matters with words (διὰ λόγων)."[139] Athanasius is here at 'the edge' of describing God's intimacy with humanity and he encourages a certain apophaticism that still allows him to say something positive about God and his relation to humanity. But these positive statements come from a vantage point which disallows any notion of comprehensive knowledge or trespass of the divine by the human.[140] Yet, with this background, and the symbolic language necessitated by it, true and positive things are communicated about God. Thus, the παραδείγματα assume difference but are able through that difference to communicate about the Trinity if received by faith.

As this section is brought to the highest point in redemption in speaking about

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[137] (*AW* 1/1.4:500).
[138] *Serap*. 1.20.1-2 (*AW* 1/1.4:501-502).
[139] *Serap*. 1.20.3-4 (*AW* 1/1.4:502).
[140] See *Serap.* 1.17.1 – 1.19.9.

intimations of coinherence, it is instructive for the theme of this chapter to notice that in each of the above analogies the Father is the source of the grace that is enjoyed. While it is the Holy Spirit who is the one by whom humans can either be enlightened, drink, or made wise, he does so by entering humanity into a flow of grace coming from and returning to the Father. In the context of the divine movement of grace, these images evoke an inner dynamic that takes place by communing with the Trinity where the redeemed are united to the Son so that they might know and love the Father. The Trinitarian economy is thus seen in reverse: redemption 'retraces' the line where humanity is brought up 'out of' its nature by the Spirit into adoption with the Son, and in the Son then is in the Father, and so humanity is united with God in this movement from the Spirit, through the Son, to the Father. The Father is the 'goal' of this movement as the redeemed take part in the 'Godward stance of the Son' who, after divinizing human beings and making them sons, "brings them to the Father (προσάγει τῷ πατρί)."[141]

2.4 Conclusion

In Athanasius' appropriation of the Alexandrian tradition, the Father-Son correlative takes on force. Widdicombe put it plainly: "All thought about the nature of God ultimately is to be about the Father-Son relation; that relation is theology's beginning and end."[142] For Athanasius, this theme does significant work in bolstering the divine status of the Son, a status that, in turn, provides the groundwork for the Son's saving ability. The logic that Athanasius establishes through the Father-Son correlative, and the reinforcing titles for the Son that the foregoing has explored, he then applies to the Spirit's relation to the Son. That is to say, just as the Father and Son 'go together' in a bundle, as it were, so do the Son and Spirit. In this simple way of framing the relations among the divine persons it perhaps can be seen that while Athanasius's thought provides a coherence to the relations between the Father and Son and Son and Spirit, it can be a challenge to discern a coherence of the unity and diversity of the three persons of the Trinity together as one God in three persons.

Stressing the correlative of the Father and Son, as well as the Son and Spirit, is effective for demonstrating the full divinity of each of these divine persons. Along with

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[141] *Serap.* 1.25.5 (*AW* 1/1.4:514). Anatolios, "The Immediately Triune God," 174-177.
[142] *The Fatherhood of God*, 170.

this argument from correlation, Athanasius's teaching on the absolute ontological spheres of Creator and creature serves to provide a firm either/or to the status of the Son and Spirit. Through coupling the eternal correlativity of the persons with their 'place' on the Creator side of reality, Athanasius effectively places the persons 'side-by-side' and communicates an eternal relatedness within the Godhead. That is to say, relationality is at the heart of who God is. This is a consistent implication of Athanasius's Trinitarian thought from the beginning. As helpful as this implication can be in shoring up certain Nicene principles, it does not bring clarity to divine fatherhood. What is more, Athanasius's growing use of ἴδιος in order to highlight the Son as internal to the Father's *ousia* "serves to reinforce his tendency to present the Father/Son relationship as most like that of a person and their faculties."[143] To his critics, Athanasius was clear on unity but not always on how that relates to diversity within the Godhead.

The Athanasian παραδείγματα provide both a reinforcement of these tensions as well as one potential line for a measure of resolution. These reinforce divine relationality through communicating an eternal 'with-ness' to the Father. He is never alone, but always 'with' the Son and Spirit. While the παραδείγματα are initially used by Athanasius in order to demonstrate the divinity of the Son and Spirit, they reveal a pattern where the Son and Spirit are eternally 'of' the Father. These relations are irreversible and so, when giving attention to the Father, reveal a generativity and fruitfulness that can be associated distinctly with the Father.[144] It is not Athanasius's regular point to highlight the character of the Father through correlativity, ontological spheres, and the παραδείγματα. Be that as it may, as he combats the 'Arian' supposition that the Son is a created being and, therefore, not eternal, Athanasius draws out the conclusion that if the Father's offspring is not eternal as he is then that is not only something disparaging to the Son but, further, to the Father.[145] This is because the Son is a part of the Father's 'perfection' or 'completion' as a Father. In other words, if the eternal Father cannot have an eternal Son with the same divine status then this suggests something about his fatherhood and his ability to

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[143] *Nicaea,* 115. Anatolios objects to this point by Ayres: "[T]he notion that the Son's being 'proper to' the Father can be taken to mean that he is simply an attribute or faculty of the Father is countered by the affirmation of a certain mutuality; the Father too is proper to the Son" ("Christ the Power & Wisdom of God," 519-520). Curiously, Anatolios references *Ar.* 3.27, which nowhere claims that the Father is proper to the Son.

[144] For discussion of this points, see Widdicombe, *The Fatherhood of God,* 184-187.

[145] e.g., *Ar.* 1.11.

communicate himself fully to his Son.[146] This line of implicit 'dependence' on the Son for the perfection of Father within the divine life is not something Athanasius explores in any depth, but it becomes an undercurrent in the next chapter as we look at fatherhood in Hilary.

A dimension of this perfection of the Father as source of all that the Son is picked up when turning to the divine movements of grace in the created realm. In Athanasius's description of the course of grace he stresses that it is 'from the Father, though the Son, in the Spirit'. The order of this grace matches the order of divine life where the Son and Spirit are 'of' the Father. Grace has its ultimate source in the Father who communicates that gift through the sending of his Son and Spirit. As human beings are indwelled by the Spirit and know the grace of the Son, they experience the love of the Father.[147] Thus, the order of grace that flows from the Father and lifts humanity into the Son by the Spirit, in order to know grace and experience the love of the Father, flows from the divine order of the Father giving himself to the Son so that he can be all that he is as the eternally divine Son of God. Thus, the perfection of the Father as manifest in his gift of himself to the Son in order to establish an eternal relationality is glimpsed in the order of grace that flows from the Father and results in believers sharing in the grace of the Son by the Spirit. In the Son by grace, then, humanity experiences the gift of the Father's relationality.[148] The character of what is experienced in this relationality is something that, when articulated in a more theological key, is muted in Athanasius's writings.[149] Thus, despite Athanasius' midcentury moves to better distinguish the Father and Son, isolating a decisive mark on the Father around which a theology of fatherhood can be developed is a frustrating endeavor.

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[146] See *Ar.* 3.36. Also, in *Ar.* 3.66 Athanasius writes, "To say of the Son, 'He might not have been,' is presumptious impiety reaching even to the substance of the Father (δυσσεβές ἐστι, καὶ φθάνον εἰς τὴν τοῦ πατρὸς οὐσίαν τὸ τόλμημα), as if what is his own might not have been. For it is the same as saying, 'The Father might not have been good'" (*AW* 1/1.3:380). See discussion in Meijering, "Athanasius on the Father as the Origin of the Son," 8-9. Jon M. Robertson notes this is a point of contrast with Eusebius of Caesarea's teaching on the Father. Eusebius does not want there to be any 'dependence' of the Father on the Son for understanding who the Father is as "the One true and Ultimate God" (*Christ as Mediator: A Study of the Theologies of Eusebius of Caesarea, Marcellus of Ancyra, and Athanasius of Alexandria,* Oxford Theological Monographs [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007], 50).

[147] *Serap.* 2.14.4 – 2.15.1

[148] *Ar.* 3.14: "what the Son gives, that is the gift of the Father (ἃ δίδωσιν ὁ υἱός, τοῦ πατρός ἐστιν ἡ δόσις" (*AW* 1/1.3:323).

[149] Widdicombe overstates the case when he said that for Athanasius "fatherhood is not so much the first attribute among many, as that which makes God what he is" (*The Fatherhood of God,* 251). This might be the case if we selectively read out the insistent correlative in Athanasius's writings. Better might be to say that the 'Father-Son' relation is what makes God what he is.

For the problem is, when Athanasius returns throughout his writings to arguments from correlativity, the firm 'place' of the Father within the divine life recedes from view and, thus, all the benefits that go with it: Instead of a clear account of the source of life in the Trinity found in the Father, the unity of the Godhead appears to emerge from the Father-Son relation, thereby occluding the order of relations grounded in the Father that give coherence to unity and diversity within the Godhead as well as grounding for the redemptive movements of God. What is more, the many further categories Athanasius uses to stress the unity of the Godhead are never fully integrated with an account of the Father within the divine life. It is as if there is reasoning from correlativity and accounts of unity here, and accounts of the uniqueness of the Father there, but these are never fully integrated with each other in a way that coheres across the persons.

As a bishop doing theological battle at the crossroads of competing theological trajectories, and an eventual inheritor of Nicaea's language on the Father and Son, Athanasius was working through key issues in Trinitarian theology in a fluid environment. It would be a mistake to think he had the last word on these issues, or had brought them to considerable resolution. It is the argument of this thesis that an increasingly coherent account of the unity and diversity of the Trinity in pro-Nicene thought was grounded in the fatherhood of God. In working through vital Trinitarian issues, Athanasius's thought frequently touched on the Father in fruitful ways. And even if sustained reflection leading to a systematized account is lacking, the very elements raised to the surface by Athanasius become building blocks for a pro-Nicene theology of fatherhood in the writers I will explore in the following chapters. In particular, in the next chapter the category of eternal generation will take on prominence as we examine fatherhood in Hilary's *De trin.* For Hilary generation is a more expansive theological category that provides context for the divine 'gift' from the Father. While this is not wholly absent in Athanasius, increasing dimensions on the gift is found in Hilary that has perspective not primarily through redemption but within the very dynamics of divine life.

Athasnasius's Trinitarian thought expanded when he turned his attention, later in *Ar.* and especially in *Serap.,* to the Spirit. His thought unfolded naturally from the fundamentals he developed in articulating the Father-Son relation. However, Athanasius's pneumatology takes on a real dynamism and, perhaps, intelligibility vis-à-vis fatherhood when he theologized concerning redemption in light of the παραδείγματα. This is a point he never integrates back into his account of divine life, though. A theology of the Holy

Spirit will be important both to Gregory of Nazianzus and Basil of Cesaerea, the subjects in chapters 4 and 5, respectively. Through their developing pneumatologies added perspective will be provided on divine fatherhood. The seeds are here in Athanasius.[150] As theology develops over the last half of the fourth century, those seeds will grow. The result will be a higher level of integration in Trinitarian thought that illumines the distinctiveness of our topic: the fatherhood of God.

[150] Haykin notes that in *Serap.* Athanasius "laid the foundation upon which the edifice of Greek pneumatology was raised" (*The Spirit of God,* 4).

Chapter 3: Hilary of Poitiers

3.1 Introduction

This chapter is an extended engagement with the dynamics of divine fatherhood in Hilary's *De trin.* through exploring the various aspects of *nativitas.* While the centrality of *nativitas* in Hilary's Trinitarian thought is inescapable on just a cursory reading of *De trin.*, he weaves other themes into it in order to shore up a number of concerns: epistemologically, the biblical names 'Father' and 'Son' lead to *nativitas* and provides understanding of their relation; and, ontologically, the infinite nature of God is brought to bear on that relation in order to avoid the temporal implications of birth language.[1] I will argue that through the *nativitas* the Father eternally gives of himself out of love in order that the Son might be everything the Father is. This of course invites questions concerning the nature of a gift that enables full equality while maintaining distinction among persons. Further, Hilary's account highlights a number of tensions where he balances strong assertions of mutuality with consideration of the Father as 'greater' but the Son 'not less'. These questions and tensions are addressed by Hilary's multifaceted utilization of *nativitas*. The result is a denser account of the Father than was found in Athanasius, especially through Hilary's attention to the Son's generation.

Given the importance of eternal generation within Hilary's thought, the next section of this chapter (3.2) will take up an examination of the background of this doctrine in Origen of Alexandria and note continuities as well as development from Origen to Hilary. Following that I will trace the shape of Hilary's teaching with a focus on the words 'Father' and 'Son' as leading to the centrality of the *nativitas* to theological understanding (3.3 below). In confessing either 'Father' or 'Son' the believer is immediately led, through these divine names, to a confession of the birth. This birth – the *nativitas* – then serves as the theological engine that generates the maintenance that Father and Son have the same nature, while also insisting that there exists a real distinction between them. What is detailed under the subsections of 3.3 below concerning *nativitas* supports the centrality of the personal gift of the Father to the Son—a gift that defines the

[1] In the words of Mark Weedman, "For Hilary, a proper understanding of God's infinite eternity helps explain how the birth could be a true birth—and distinguish the Father from the Son—without having to be bound by a beginning in time" (*The Trinitarian Theology of Hilary of Poitiers* [Leiden: Brill, 2007], 180-181).

fatherhood of God in Hilary's Trinitarian theology.

These introductory comments on the themes to be explored in Hilary reveal at least surface overlap with elements explored in Athanasius in the previous chapter, specifically on the correlativity of the names 'Father' and 'Son' and their organic relation to the consequential category of eternal generation. Despite this overlap, however, there is no clear evidence of Hilary drawing on Athanasius.[2] Similarities can be attributed to common patrimony rather than any direct dependence.[3] In what sense, then, can these two be spoken of in the same breath?

Athanasius and Hilary have often been brought together in the historical theological imagination, with Hilary referred to as the "Athanasius of the West."[4] Their common participation in Trinitarian controversy would seem to support such a title, though a close examination of the scope of their careers would quickly diminish Hilary's standing.[5] It is clear that Hilary was 'pro-Athanasius' early in his career, aligning himself with the Alexandrian in 356 through a strategy to defeat opponents by using the Nicene Creed.[6] Weedman notes Hilary's arguments at this time are against a classical Arianism

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[2] Ellen Scully, *Physicalist Soteriology in Hilary of Poitiers,* Vigiliae Christianae, Supplements (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 91. Hanson writes, "It is perhaps wisest to assume that Hilary did not have any first-hand acquaintance with Athanasius' works, but that in conversation or discussion with those pro-Nicenes whom he met during his exile he had picked up some of Athanasius' ideas and had woven them into his own theology" (*The Search*, 473).

[3] Pierre Smulders, *La Doctrine trinitaire de S. Hilaire de Poitiers: Étude précédée d'une esquisse du mouvement dogmatique depuis le Concile de Nicée jusqu'au règne de Julien (325-362)* (Rome: Pontificia Università Georgiana, 1944), 293-294.
For details on Hilary's life, including his important exile to the East, see C. F. Borchardt, *Hilary of Poitiers Role in the Arian Struggle* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1966); H. C. Brennecke, *Hilarius von Poitiers und die Bischofsopposition gegen Konstantius II* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1984); and J. *Doignon, Hilaire de Poitiers avant l'exil* (Paris: Études Augustiniannes, 1971). With a focus on the chronology of his writings and career, see C. Kannengiesser, "Hilaire de Poitiers saint," *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité* 6 (1968): 466-499. For Hilary's post-exilic pro-Nicene reforming efforts in Gaul and Italy, see D. H. Williams' "The Anti-Arian Campaigns of Hilary of Poitiers and the 'Liber Contra Ausentium," *CH* 61 (1992): 7-22; *Ambrose of Milan and the End of Arian-Nicene Conflicts,* Oxford Early Christian Studies (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 38-49; Y.-M Duval, "Vrais et faux problèmes concernant le retour d'exil d'Hilaire de Poitiers et son action Italie en 360-363," *Athenaeum* 48 (1970): 251-275.

[4] Since the nineteenth century at least, when German scholar K. Hase used *Athanasius des Abendlandes* as a title for Hilary. *Kirchengeschichte,* 2nd edition (Leipzig, 1836), 137.

[5] While this judgment applies to historical influence, it has nothing to do with theological acumen. H. M. Gwatkin observed that for "depth of earnestness and massive strength of intellect [Hilary] is a match for Athanasius himself, and in powers of orderly arrangement decidedly superior" (*Studies in Arianism* [Cambridge: Deighton Bell and Co., 1900], 154); M. F. Buttell also considered Hilary's organization to be superior to Athanasius', as well as his "speculative endowment" (*The Rhetoric of Hilary of Poitiers,* Patristic Studies 38 [Washington DC: Catholic University of America, 1933], 9). On Hilary's influence on those after him, see Charles Kannengiesser S.J.'s "L'Héritage D'Hilaire de Poitiers," *RSR* 56 (1968): 435-456.

[6] This is evident in his work *Lib. adv.,* which contains the first known example of the Creed being translated into Latin (CSEL 65:151-153).

and its denial of eternal generation.[7] The background shifts a few years later, though, with the ascent of Homoion theology. Hilary puts together his *De Synodis,* which, rather than being a mere historical account of previous synods, is a polemical reaction to the Homoian theology found in the letter composed by the Synod of Sirmium (359).[8] What is noteworthy is he no longer mentions Athanasius. Rather, he turns to Basil of Ancyra and adapts a homoiousian theological strategy.[9] In doing so he does not leave Nicaea behind. Indeed, he uses the Creed to demonstrate how its use of *homoousios* accords with Basil's *homoiousios.*[10] In the background of what is discussed below various emphases of Basil of Ancyra's find their home in Hilary's *De trin.* Before engaging *De trin.* directly, however, this chapter investigates a deeper background figure. While his influence is likely indirect, he left an indelible theological imprint on the central idea of Hilary's theology that is taken up in this chapter.

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[7] "Not the Athanasius of the West: Hilary's Changing Relationship with Athanasius" *SP* 42 (2006): 411-412. Smulders observes the same while adding similarity between them in argument from the true divinity of the Son to the unity of the Godhead in the Father and the Son. Hilary does not inherit from Athanasius arguments from Word or Wisdom and ignores ones that run from the work of our redemption by the Son to the Son's divinity (*La Doctrine trinitaire de S. Hilaire de Poitiers,* 293-294). Williams notes that arguments utilizing eternal generation were absent several years earlier, however, when Hilary wrote his commentary on the Gospel of Matthew. "Hilary of Poitiers and Justification by Faith According to the Gospel of Matthew," *Pro Ecclesia* 16 (2007): 448-449. In another article Williams' judguement is that Hilary's pre-exilic theology was ignorant of the issues surrounding Nicaea and rather basic in its content, relying on 3rd c. Latin sources. "Defining Orthodoxy in Hilary of Poitiers' *Commentarium in Matthaeum*," *JECS* 9 (2001): 169.

[8] Michel Meslin, "Hilaire et la crise arienne," in *Hilaire et son Temps,* ed. E.R. Labande (Paris: Études Augustinienne, 1969), 19-42; Mark Weedman, "Hilary and the Homoiousians: Using New Categories to Map the Trinitarian Controversy," *CH* 76:3 (2007): 491-510.

[9] Recent scholarship has released Hilary from being considered compromised if influenced by an ostensibly 'semi-Arian' Basil. The semi-Arian label for Homoiousians goes back as far as Epiphanius and the fourth century. Smulders has defended Hilary's independence from the Homoiousians on the basis of a static understanding of Hilary's theology in *La doctrine trinitaire de s. Hilaire de Poitiers,* 235-249. A more nuanced account of the Homoiousans and their theological trajectory has been provided by Ayres, *Nicaea*, 149-152; Jeffrey Steenson, "Basil of Ancyra and the Course of Nicene Orthodoxy (Ph.D. diss., Oxford University, 1983); Weedman, "Hilary and the Homoiousians." This more recent consensus highlights Hilary and Basil's shared theological sensibility as well as their common opponent, the Homoians.

[10] Hilary was keen to find common ground between the Homoiousians he met in the East and his theological allies in the Latin Church: "In an age which saw the West view the East with considerable misunderstanding and mistrust, the *Synod.* deserves respect as a work of creative and sympathetic mediation" (Paul C. Burns, "West Meets East in the *De Synodis* of Hilary of Poitiers," *SP* 28 [1993]: 24-28). See also Paul Löffler, "Die Trinitätslehre des Bischofs Hilarius von Poitiers zwischen Ost und West," *ZKG* 71 (1960): 26-36; Paul Galtier, "Saint Hilaire trait d'union entre l'Occident et l'Orient," *Greg* 40 (1959): 609-623. Weedman observes that in his *Synod.* 41 Athanasius also tries to convince the Homoiousians that *homoousios* can be interpreted in light of their concerns, but he does so with "nowhere near the same nuance and appreciation for Basil's position as does Hilary" ("Hilary and the Homoiousians," 492n.5).

3.2 Origen and Eternal Generation

There are clear antecedents for Hilary's use of *nativitas* as a theological category. He adapted and transformed earlier traditions in Latin theology, and, as was just suggested, in his own day he had a role in the growing 'rapprochement' with the Homoiousians through the attention he gave to the Son's generation from the Father.[11] This section briefly turns to the origins of the doctrine of eternal generation found in Origen of Alexandria. As much as Hilary will carry forward fundamental elements in Origen's development of this doctrine, the important element of the story here is, through his teaching on *nativitas,* he *develops* eternal generation in a more personal direction. This will be clear as this chapter highlights the *nativitas* as the means by which the Father communicates the gift that enables the Son to be who he is.

The connection between Origen and Hilary is complex. A native of Gaul, Hilary's exposure to Origen stems from his time of exile to Phrygia.[12] But even if Origenian influence is evident thereafter, to draw direct lines of influence is complicated. [13] Hilary's heavy use of Origen's Psalms commentary in his own writings on the Psalms is quite evident.[14] That said, to be specific on Origen's direct influence on Hilary on the eternal

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[11] Ayres, *Nicaea,* 184.

[12] Scholars have debated the causes for Hilary's exile to Phrygia as a result of his condemnation at the synod of Béziers in 356. The view of several church fathers was that Hilary's exile was caused by his pro-Nicene confession (e.g., Sulpicius Severus, *Chronica* 2.39; John Cassian, *De Incarnatione* 7.24; Venantius Fortunatus, *Vita Sancti Hilarii Episcopi Pictaviensis*; and Gregory of Tours, *Historia Francorum* 3). Along with other twentieth century scholars, Daniel Williams has critically engaged this patristic testimony within a larger argument in favor of political causes ("A Reassessment of the Early Career and Exile of Hilary Poitiers," *JEH* 42 [1991]: 202-217). Carl L. Beckwith critically evaluates scholarship that argues for primarily political causes behind Hilary's exile in "The Condemnation and Exile of Hilary of Poitiers at the Synod of Béziers (356 C.E.)" *JECS* 13:1 (2005): 21-38; and, while admitting political machinations were behind the emperor's sentence, through a close examination of Hilary's writings just after Béziers and while in exile he concludes "that he was condemned and subsequently exiled because of his confession of faith and his rejection of the subordinationist theology being advocated at Béziers" (37). Prior to Beckwith, Burns reached the same conclusion based on Hilary's writings before Béziers. See "Hilary of Poitiers' Road to Béziers: Politics or Religion?" *JECS* 2:3 (1994): 273-289. Burns' judgments are largely based on the historical evaluations of T.D. Barnes' "Hilary of Poitiers on his Exile," *VC* 46 (1992): 129-140.

[13] Jean Doignon's work on Hilary's thought prior to his exile has definitively shown a lack of any direct dependence upon Origen during this time. There may be some overlap in ideas, but this can be attributed to Hilary's use of Tertullian. Yet even with Tertullian there is no evidence for his dependence upon Origen. Rather, similarity can be attributed to shared sources: "Hilaire, qui dépend en droite ligne de Tertullian, n'est occasionnellement avant l'exil l'héritier d'Origène que par un jeu d'intermédiaries" (*Hilaire de Poitiers avant l'exil* [Paris: Études Augustiniannes, 1971], 185). See also Doignon's "De l'Absence à la Présence d'Origène dans l'Exégèse d'Hilaire de Poitiers: Deux cas Typiques," in *Origeniana Sexta: Origène et la Bible/Origen and the Bible: Actes du Colloquium Origenianum Sextum, Chantilly, 30 août-3 septembre 1993*, eds. G. Dorival and A. le Boulluec, Bibliotheca ephemeridum theologicarum Lovaniensium 118 (Leuven: Peeters, 1995), 693-699.

[14] Weedman, *Trinitarian Theology*, 5; E. Goffinet, *L'utilisation d'Origene dans le Commentaire des Psaumes de saint Hilaire de Poitiers,* Studia Hellenistica 14 (Louvain: Publications Universitaires de Louvain, 1965).

generation is difficult due to lack of evidence.[15] Be that as it may, it is part of the theological tradition he appropriated and made a keystone to his project.

Origen taught a doctrine of eternal generation which held up for him both the ontological relation between the Father and Son as well as the ontological disjunction between God and creation. It is so consequential in his thought that, in the judgment of Ayres, "eternal generation is not a detachable extra in his theology of God but a vital strand in its cardiac muscle."[16] For Origen, the Son's eternal birth places him in a unique relationship with the Father. Creation is related to God through an act manifest in time, which reveals created nature to be temporal, material, changeable, and dependent.[17] The Son is related to God through his name revealing his birth. Because God is eternal, immutable, and immaterial, as Origen presupposes, the birth of the Son must be eternal, unchanging, and immaterial.[18] Thus, Origen reasons in *De Prin.* 1.2.2, the concept of

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Though, see Ellen Scully for the complex lines of influence of Origen on Hilary in her *Tractatus super Psalmos*: *Physicalist Soteriology in Hilary of Poitiers,* Vigiliae Christianae Supplements (Leiden, Brill, 2015), 55-62. Hilary's use of Greek expanded in and after his time of exile, but always with the help of others. See György Heidl, *Origen's Influence on the Young Augustine: A Chapter of the History of Origenism* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2003), 273; Doignon, *Hilaire de Poitiers avant l'exil,* 531-543.
Hilary is a key figure for the distribution of Origen's thought into Western theology, including Augustine. For examples, see Isabella Image, *The Human Condition in Hilary of Poitiers: The Will and Original Sin between Origen and Augustine,* Oxford Theology and Religion Monographs (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 161-181.

[15] Scully, *Physicalist Soteriology in Hilary of Poitiers*, 91. As will become clear below, for Hilary eternal generation is a way of explaining how the Son has everything the Father does. That is to say, it is one 'tool' he uses to show the full equality of the Son with the Father. Origen's exposition of the nature of the eternal God and generation is foundational for what comes later in Greek theology, which, as we have seen, Hilary would have been exposed to in his period of exile. That said, Origen struggled to hold together his teaching on eternal generation without also saying the Son is "not a second ultimate principle in the cosmos" (Lewis Ayres, "At the Origins of Eternal Generation: Scriptural Foundations and Theological Purpose in Origen of Alexandria," in *Retrieving Eternal Generation* edited by Fred Sanders & Scott R. Swain [Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2017], 162).
One aspect of Origen's teaching on eternal generation that gets dropped as it works its way through later Alexandrian theology is the notion that the Son's eternal birth from the Father is according to will proceeding from the Father's mind. As found in the last chapter, Athanasius sees a clean break between what is external to God and according to will, such as the creation, and what is internal to God and according to nature (See *Ar.* 1.26-29). Athanasius honed this argument in the face of 'Arian' arguments that wanted to see eternal generation necessitating an eternal Creator and, therefore, an eternal creation. Begetting, according to Athanasius, belongs to the substance and not the will – it is "inherent to the Father's nature" (Weedman, *Trinitarian Theology*, 148). What God does according to his will takes place in time, according to Athanasius, and is subject to change. See E. P. Meijering, "The Doctrine of the Will and of the Trinity in the Orations of Gregory of Nazianzus." *NedTTs* 27:3 (1973): 227.

[16] Ayres, "At the Origins of Eternal Generation," 162.

[17] Given the focus of this thesis, I will not engage the complex question of how creation might be 'eternal' in Origen's thought. For a careful examination of this question, see Behr's "Introduction" to Origen's *On First Principles*, *Volume I*, pp. lvi-lxii.

[18] In *De Prin.* 1.2.2 Origen argues for the incorporeal nature of generation because Christ is called the 'Wisdom' of God and wisdom cannot be understood in a corporeal sense. It also must be submitted, according to Origen, that the generation of the Son must be eternal because the Father is never without his Wisdom. H. M. Gwatkin summarizes Origen's view: "Origen cleared up the idea of a divine generation by

eternal generation reveals the closeness in nature of the Son to the Father while at the same time maintaining the Son's distinct existence: "We recognize that God is always the Father of his only-begotten Son (*semper deum patrem nouimus unigeniti filii sui*), who was indeed born of him and draws his being from him (*quod est ab ipso trahentis*), but is yet without any beginning."[19]

Origen is aware that to speak of a birth immediately impresses upon the mind the implications of time. After all, when one thinks of birth, dates, and age, and change follow. Yet, when it is said of the Son that there was 'never a time when he did not exist', Origen explains:

> For the very words, 'when', or 'never', bear the significance of temporal vocabulary, whereas what is said of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit are understood as transcending all time and all ages and all eternity (*supra omne autem tempus et supra omnia saecula et supra omnem aeternitatem*). For it is this Trinity alone which exceeds all comprehension of understanding, not only temporal but even eternal. The rest of things, however, which are external to the Trinity, are to be measured by ages and periods of time (*in saeculis et in temporibus metienda sunt*).[20]

Origen understands that while the language of generation, necessitated because of biblical description and the revelation of the divine names, has overlap with creaturely begetting, the divine nature necessitates stripping that begetting, when applied to God, of any material or temporal connotation. The fatherhood of God is eternal. Thus, the Son is eternal. Unlike what is means for a human being to be a father, which is added to personhood at a particular age, God is Father 'all the way down', just as he is Son 'all the way down'—Father and Son always and forever. These two distinct hypostases are related through an eternal generation, which both personally distinguishes them and places them on the same ontological plane. In Origen's famous examination of the Son's titles in his *Comm. Jn.*, he ties together the eternal nature of God and the nature of the Son's origin through eternal generation:

> But the noble origin of the Son (ἡ εὐγένεια...τοῦ υἱοῦ) is not presented clearly by all these titles, but it is when God, with whom it is always "today," says to him, "You are my Son, today have I begotten you." For there is no evening of God possible and, I think, no morning, but if I may put it this way, which is coextensive with his unoriginated and eternal life

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shewing that it denotes no finite act either temproal or pretemporal, but an eternal or intemporal process of relation" (*Studies in Arianism*, 14).

[19] *De. Prin.* 1.2.2 (SC 252:114).

[20] *De. Prin.* 4.4.1 (SC 268:402).

> (τῇ ἀγενήτῳ καὶ ἀϊδίῳ αὐτοῦ ζωῇ), is today for him, the day in which the son has been begotten. Consequently, neither the beginning (ἀρχῆς) nor the day of his generation (γενέσεως) is to be found.[21]

What is more, the idea of eternal generation characterizes the Father-Son relationship as dynamic, because it entails continuous activity.[22] Meditating on a text like Hebrews 1:3, Origen illustrates this dynamism by means of the brightness from light. The source of light is not turned on like a flip of the switch at one moment; rather, it is constant. Thus, the effulgence of God's glory – the Son – is generated not according to the conditions of time but continuously.[23] While it is important to note how eternal generation functions in order to express the ontological status of the Son vis-à-vis his lively relationship with the eternal Father, it is also vital to discern the order of this relation (from Father to the Son).

The theological ordering of Father and Son by way of eternal generation is a point of continuity between Origen and Hilary. Hilary's thought, as will be seen in the next section, in some ways echoes this sentiment: "Ce qu'Origène veut affirmer, et cela avec vigueur, c'est la distinction réelle des personnes divines : le Fils est un Autre que le Père, il y a une différence numérique entre les deux."[24] Such an articulation, however, carries some dangers. Origen does not bequeath to later theological tradition a coherent picture of how both full unity and diversity are upheld within the Trinity. No matter how close he wanted to unite the eternal Son to the eternal Father, there remained too strong of a difference—at least more than fourth century pro-Nicene theologians could tolerate. As a result, despite noticeable continuities in arguing for the eternal divine status of the Son via his generation from the Father, there are critical discontinuities. Hilary's thought will move in a direction that subverts the slightest suggestion that ontological judgments could be based on this difference revealed through the Father's eternal generation of the Son.

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[21] *Comm. Jn.* I.204, 74 (SC 120:161).

[22] In the words, of Peter Nemeshegyi, SJ: "La conception trinitaire d'Origène est donc extrêmement dynamique : le Père se donne, se communique continuellement, le Fils est un éternel recevoir. Le don permanent de la vie divine se realize dans l'intemporel aujourd'hui de l'éternité" (*La Paternite de Dieu Chez Origene* [Tournai: Desclée, 1960], 71).

[23] *Jer.* 9.4 (SC 232:392): "The Father…always begets (ἀεὶ γεννᾷ) [the Son]…. Let us consider who is our Savior: a reflection of glory. The reflection of glory has not been begotten just once and no longer begotten (οὐχὶ ἅπαξ γεγέννηται καὶ οὐχὶ γεννᾶται). But just as the light is an agent of reflection, in such a way the reflection of the glory of God is begotten."

[24] Nemeshegyi, *La Paternite de Dieu Chez Origene,* 73.

Furthermore, this chapter's argument will draw out precisely how *nativitas* functions within Hilary's thought in a fuller sense than mere generation. As a theological category, it enabled Hilary to articulate, in line with Origen, the status of the Son with the Father, as well as distinguish him from the Father. By way of contrast, however, it provides the theological resources in *De trin.* for Hilary to accent the personal giving of the Father. For Hilary, eternal generation is more than simply reckoning with the theological significance of the names 'Father' and 'Son' and the entailments that follow. Eternal generation, as shaped through *nativitas*, reveals fatherhood as possessing a constituent self-giving quality. This personal aspect is a development beyond Origen's thought and a point of contrast informing how fatherhood functions within Hilary's Trinitarian theology.

3.3 Understanding Divine Fatherhood through the *Nativitas*

The *nativitas* provides the grammar for Hilary's articulation of the fatherhood of God. In this, the main section of this chapter, I start with how the mystery of the birth in *De trin.* reveals the 'content' of the divine nature as it is given from the Father to the Son (3.3.1). The next section (3.3.2) shows the Father is identified with the divine nature first and then identified as the one who *gives* - fully and perfectly - through the *nativitas* (3.3.3). Yet, even while arguing for a birth that proceeds from the *whole* of the Father to the Son in simplicity, the being of the Father is received by the whole of the Son through the birth.[25] I will attend to these dynamics through Hilary's utilization of the 'two births' (3.3.4), thus further drawing out the Father as giver (and Son as receiver). Through the giver-receiver dynamic a divine order will be discerned with the Father as the "source" (*auctoritate*) of the Son.[26] Therefore, Hilary can argue that through understanding the *nativitas* that the Father is "greater" even while, through the *nativitas,* the Son is "not less."[27] While such articulations will give occassion to probe the tensions of Hilary's account, his utilization of

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[25] *De trin.* 9.61. Dominique Gonnet, S.J. writes, "Dieu ne peut se donner que complètement, dans sa simplicité, et c'est cela qui est le vrai sens du mot << Père >> par rapport au Fils. La vie est le signe de ce dynamisme de l'être spirituel et divin. C'est ce qu'il communique au Fils ("Dieu le Père chez S. Hilaire de Poitiers," in in *Gott Vater und Schöpfer: Forscher aus dem Osten und Westen Europas an den Quellen des gemeinsamen Glaubens,* eds., Ysabel de Andia and Peter Leander Hofrichter (Innsbruck: Verlagsanstalt Tryolia, 2007), 290.

[26] *De trin.* 9.53 (SC 462:126) (Cf. 2.1, 6; 9.49). For a brief study of Hilary's appropriation of *auctoritas* and use within *De trin.,* see Irénée Rigolot, OCSO, "Tradition et nouveauté dan le vocabulaire théologique d'Hilaire de Poitiers: à propos d'*auctoritas* et de *necessitas*," *SP* 28 (1993): 81-86.

[27] *De trin.* 9.56. See *De trin.* 3.12 where Hilary startlingly asks, "Who will not agree that the Father is superior (*Patrem potiorem*) as the one unbegotten to the one begotten (*ut ingenitum a genito, ut Patrem a Filio*), as the Father to the Son, as the one who sends to the one who is sent, as the one who wills to the one who obeys?" (SC 443:354).

'in' language and stress on co-operative works between the Father and Son add a level of mutuality. This section will conclude with an exploration into the complexity this brings to Hilary's account of the divine fatherhood even while it draws out further the Father's identity as *giver.*

3.3.1 *Introduction: From Names to Nature to Nativitas*

In Hilary of Poitier's *De trin.,* fundamental to knowing God is understanding names. He speaks of a 'name' in two distinct ways, both highlighting the divine nature. Holding to a modified naturalist understanding of names,[28] at least when the subject is theological, Hilary could state that because a name was given by God it invites an understanding of the divine nature,[29] that is, "the name of the thing brings an understanding of the thing (*rei nomen intellegentiam rei adfert*)."[30] In some passages Hilary speaks straightforwardly of one "name (*nomen*)", the name "God (*Deus*)": "the one name of the one nature (*naturae unius nomen unum*)"[31] that reveals divinity.[32] In this usage the name

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[28] Tarmo Toom does a fine job distinguishing Hilary's theory of names from those who hold a more standard 'naturalist' theory of names (e.g., Cratylus, Stoics, Origen, Eunomius). For Hilary, Scripture contained both natural names and conventional titles. Following the "pro-Nicene *regula fidei"* Hilary decides "whether word 'god' and 'son' are names or titles. He makes his decisions on the basis of his theological presuppositions rather than by philosophical analysis of naming." Toom concludes that Hilary "would be a naturalist only in his restricted, theological use of names; that is, he merely holds that certain divine names—although not in an absolute sense—correspond to what they name, whereas other names may well be conventional." In other words, rather than an ancient technical theory guiding his use of names, Hilary resourced theology and this, in the end, had as a strategy the affirmation of the full divinity of the Son. "Hilary of Poitiers' *De Trinitate* and the Name(s) of God," *VC* 64 (2010): 472, 478.
Weedman sees within *De trin.* itself (between Books 7 and 12) a possible move away by Hilary from a stress on the divine names in favor of emphasizing a more apophatic approach through increasing attention on God's infinity. *Trinitarian Theology*, 180. He argues this was done as pro-Nicene theologians became increasingly attentive to the Homoian and later Eunomian critiques of 'Father-Son' analogical argumentation. Epistemologically, Hilary relies less on the names 'Father' and 'Son' in Book 12 and "places a new emphasis on the character of the Father's eternity to provide a logical justification for the Son's eternity: because the Father is infinite, whatever he generates must necessarily share in that infinity" ("The Polemical Context of Gregory of Nyssa's Doctrine of Divine Infinity," *JECS* 18:1 [2010]: 94-95). See also McDermott's chronological study of *infinitas* in Hilary's writings, "Hilary of Poitiers: The Infinite Nature of God." And for Hilary's exegetical foundations in John 1:4, see Jarred A. Mercer, "The Life in the Word and the Light of Humanity: The Exegetical Foundation of Hilary of Poitiers' Doctrine of Divine Infinity," *SP* 66 (2013): 273-282.

[29] *De trin.* 2.3; 6.44; 7.9.

[30] *De trin.* 7.10 (SC 448:296). Hilary is quick to distinguish between a name and a title by explaining the former is derived from the nature of a thing whereas the latter is conferred by another. So, when Moses is titled a "God of Pharaoh" this is to be "given as God, which is qualitatively different than *to be* God" (*De trin.* 7.10 [SC 448:294]). The name 'God' and 'Father', 'Son', and 'Holy Spirit' are clearly distinguished by Hilary as names and not mere titles.

[31] *De trin.* 5.20 (SC 448:132).

[32] e.g., *De trin.* 5.24; 7.13. It is a name possessed by divine persons, thus pointing toward their shared divinity, so that Hilary can say the Father and the Son have "the same *name* and nature" (*De trin.* 7.8, emphasis added; [SC 448:292]): *unius nominis adque naturae*. He also speaks of this one name in a way that

'God', shared by both Father and Son alike, serves as an epistemological gateway for immediate consideration of the *divine* nature.

The other way that Hilary speaks of a 'name' is plural: the *names* 'Father', 'Son', and 'Holy Spirit'.[33] These are the names of *the nature* – not names of *natures*.[34] Revealed as they are by God in Scripture, Hilary asserts their evident meaning found in the *words themselves*.[35] In what way, then, does one get *from* the names *to* an understanding of the divine nature? Do the plural names of the divine persons open directly to the nature, just as the singular name *Deus* does? Below will show Hilary works from the Gospel of John, chapters 5 and 10 in particular, to bring together names, nature and *birth*; and while the names lead to the nature, they do so by a consideration of the *nativitas*.[36] Thus, *nativitas*

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highlights the divine birth:

> Since the Father is God and the Son is God and the name of the divine nature is proper to each (*proprium naturae diuinae nomen in utroque sit*), the two of them are one, for, although the Son subsists by the birth of the nature (*ex natiuitate naturae*), the unity is preserved in the name (*nomine*), nor does the birth of the Son, which acknowledges that the Father and the Son have the one name just as they have the one nature (*quae Patrem et Filium ut unius naturae, ita unius profitetur et nominis*), force the faith of the believers to acknowledge two gods (*De trin.* 7.13 [SC 448:302]).

[33] While the name of the Holy Spirit is included in Hilary's teaching that the divine names lead to an understanding of the divine nature, his central concern is the Father-Son relation as through these we are led to the *nativitas.* Therefore, this chapter will focus only on the Father-Son relationship as understood through the *nativitas.*

[34] *De trin.* 2.5. In the last chapter we will observe the break between name and nature in pro-Nicene theology necessitated by Eunomius's arguments. In short, Eunomius used diverse names such as ἀγέννητος and μονογενής to lead to diverse natures. He identified God with ἀγέννητος and since the Son was μονογενής he was not God. *Apol.* 21 and *Expositio Fidei* 3, both found in *Eunomius: The Extant Works,* trans. Richard Paul Vaggione, Oxford Early Christian Texts (Oxford: Oxford Universith Press, 1987).

[35] *De trin.* 1.18 (SC 443:240). The whole sentence reads: For the best reader (*lector*) is the one who looks for the meaning of the words (*dictorum intellegentiam*) in the words themselves rather than imposes (*inponat*) meaning on them and...who does not insist that the words mean what he presupposed before reading them (*ante lectionem praesumpserit intellegendum*). Cf. 3.22.

[36] An emphasis on names, birth, and nature in *De trin.,* especially in books 7 through 12, demonstrate Hilary's anti-Homoian arguments by way of appropriating Homoiousion theology. Drawing from his time interacting with Homoiousions while in exile, it appears he marshals a number of arguments in these books gleaned from Basil of Ancyra. For Basil, "the 'birth' of the Son, along with the biblical names Father and Son, demonstrate that the relationship between the Father and Son is one of substance" (Weedman, "Not the Athanasius of the West," 415. Cf. Jannel Abogado, O.P., *Hilary of Poitiers on Conciliating the Homouseans and the Homoeouseans: A Historico-Theological Inquiry on the Fourth-Century Trinitarian Controversy* [Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2016], 241-303). See Epiphanius *Panarion* 73.4.2. Basil is at pains, however, to emphasize the passionless and immaterial nature of divine Fatherhood: "For just as in the case of the creature (κτίσματος) we say again <that> after all <corporeal> [concepts] have been rejected (ἐκβεβλημένων), what is left will be the creator's impassibility (ἀπαθὴς) as well as the creature's perfection and stability, just as [the creator] wished, so too in the case of a father and a son, after all corporeal (σωματικῶν) [concepts] are rejected, the only thing left will be the generation of a living being that is like in substance (ἡ ὁμοίου κατ᾽οὐσιαν ζῴου γενεσιουργια), since every father is understood as father of a substance like his (πᾶς πατὴρ ὁμοίας οὐσίας αὐτοῦ νοεῖται πατήρ)" (GCS 37:272-273.). In *Synod.* 84 Hilary considers the *homoousion* to mean that "the Son is produced of the Father's nature (*de paternae...naturae*), the substance of the birth (*nativitatis*) having no other origin (*auctoritate*), and that both, therefore, have one unvarying essence" (PL

plays a central role in the structure of knowledge of the divine in Hilary, and the Father's relationship to it and the divine nature shape the theology of fatherhood in *De trin.*

3.3.2 *The Father's Identification with the Divine Nature*

From *De trin.* book 7 onward, which is regarded as Hilary's mature Trinitarian thinking,[37] it is common for a series of attributes to be clustered together that are possessed by the Father.[38] These attributes are sometimes labeled "names (*nomina*)," though it is clear these names describe aspects of the divine nature and are not "names of the nature (*nomina naturae*)."[39] I will give attention to these in due course as they provide the 'content' to the gift given from the Father to the Son and are uniquely accessible in the *nativitas.* First, though, some general comments about the divine nature are in order.

There are a number of properties that Hilary *presupposes* in any discussion of the Father's divine nature. In the autobiographical section of book 1, after describing how he rejected the tenets of the religious options of his day, Hilary moves to seeking to understand what is divine and eternal, one and worthy of worship.[40] He submits that a reverent natural reason and "universal understanding (*communem sensum*)"[41] are sufficient for gathering these more general attributes, though consistent with Hilary's repeated refrain on the limits of knowledge of the divine, they are "not included within the thoughts that we comprehend nor beyond the comprehension of our thoughts (*extra intellegentiam sentiendi*)."[42] He proceeds to add to eternity infinity and majesty as what is proper to the divine. All of these can be summed up in what Hilary finally finds in Moses and the Prophets. Specifically, the tetragrammaton in Exodus 3:14 ('I AM WHO I AM') provides the most basic definition of God, since there is "nothing more characteristic of

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10:536). Hilary's tying together of birth and substance in his explanation of *homoousios* reveals his sensitivity to homoiousian concerns.

[37] Hilary himself writes, "In number, it is true, [book 7] comes after the others that have proceeded, but it is first or the greatest in regard to the understanding of the mystery of the complete faith" (*sed ad perfectae fidei sacramentum intellegendum aut primus aut maximus*) (*De trin.* 7.1 [SC 448:274]). For background on book 7 as a watershed in Hilary's maturing theology, see Carl Beckwith, *Hilary of Poitiers on the Trinity: From* De Fide *to* De Trinitate (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 54-70.

[38] These are, of course, almost exclusively detailed by Hilary in the context of the Son's own perfect receiving of these attributes, and our knowledge of them through his possession by the birth. Nonetheless, I bracket out discussion of the Son and *nativitas* for now in order to gain a feel for the shape of Fatherhood according to Hilary.

[39] See *De trin.* 7.11; 12.52. For *nomina naturae* see 2.3-5; 3.23; 5.24; 6.26; 7.21.

[40] *De trin.* 1.4.

[41] A phrase he uses when speaking of the eternity of God in *De trin.* 12.24 (SC 462:418).

[42] *De trin.* 1.7 (SC 443:218).

God than to be (*Non enim aliud proprium magis Deo quam esse*)."[43] Hilary locates further confirmation in Isaiah and the Psalms for his thoughts on God's infinite majesty and omnipotence demonstrated in creation.[44] But it is when he comes to John 1, and his "mind advances beyond the knowledge of natural reason (*ultra naturalis sensus intellegentiam*) and is taught more about God than it suspected,"[45] that he associates these more general attributes with God the Father.[46] From these observations on the Father's nature, he quickly moves on in book 1 to discuss the incarnation of God the Son and his sharing in the divine nature.[47]

Hilary makes a similar move in book 2 of *De Fide (=De trin.)*, where the setting is no longer his own theological journey but the doctrinal conflicts he is facing with adherents to the likes of Sabellius and Ebion.[48] As he considers the divine names revealed in Matthew 28:19-20, he would rather remain thoughtfully silent before such "lofty and mysterious subjects (*tantis ac tam reconditis rebus*)" than probe the divine nature through

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[43] *De trin.* 1.5 (SC 443:212). Cf. 12.24. G. Madec has provided a survey of the exegesis of Exodus 3:14 in Latin theology. "'Ego sum qui sum' de Tertullian à Jerôme" in *Dieu et l'Être* (Paris, 1978), 121-139. Madec references Tertullian's *Adversus Praxean* 7 and Novatian's *De Trinitate* 4 as sources in the background of Hilary's engagement with this verse.

[44] *De trin.* 1.6.

[45] *De trin.* 1.10 (SC 443:222). Hilary utilizes the Gospel of John extensively in *De trin,* as will be demonstrated below. In his previous works it did not play such a prominent role. Burns notes, in particular, Hilary's unique use of John's prologue within the first two books of *De Fide.* "Hilary of Poitiers' Confrontation with Arianism from 356-357," in *Arianism: Historical and Theological Assessments,* ed. Robert C. Gregg [Philadelphia: Philadelphia Patristic Foundations, 1985], 287-302. See also Beckwith, *Hilary of Poitiers on the Trinity,* 196-198.

[46] *De trin.* 1.10-11 (SC 443:220-226).

[47] In contrast to more straightforward autobiographical or rhetorical approaches, Carl Beckwith provides a perceptive theological reading of *De trin.* 1-1-19 and locates Hilary's purpose in this section as finding knowledge of God in Scripture (and not through limited reason) while also highlighting the soteriological importance of affirming the Son's divinity. "A Theological Reading of Hilary's 'Autobiographical' Narrative in *De Trinitate* I.1-10," *SJT* 59:3 (2006): 249-262. Burns also notes the theological importance of Hilary's autobiography and the soteriological importance of the Son's status in "Hilary of Poitiers' Confrontation with Arianism," 291-297.

[48] Theories abound as to the final composition of *De trin.* In 1965 Simonetti confirmed earlier theories of there being two works, Books I-III and IV-XII, that merged together. The latter group likely were written later, after Hilary's exile began. "Note sulla struttura e la cronologia del 'De Trinitate' di Ilario di Poitiers," *Studi Urbanati* 39 (1965): 274-300. In 2008 Beckwith theorized another layer of development. He thinks books 2 and 3 were the original work (later revised), then came books 4-6, and finally books 7 to 12 and book 1 were added. *Hilary of Poitiers on the Trinity*, 53-93. Still another theory is Meijering's, who thinks it was drafted as a coherent whole from the outset. *Hilary of Poitiers on the Trinity:* De Trinitate *1, 1-19, 2, 3,* Philosophia Patrem, V. 6 (Leiden: Brill, 1982), 3-6.

them.[49] But the "rashness," "error," and "ignorance"[50] before him compel him to speak on "the nature of the names (*naturam nominum*)."[51] So he proceeds to introduce a traditional set of the Father's attributes that are fundamental to how he conceives of the divine nature, and overlap at points with those attributes highlighted in book 1. However, the difference in book 2 is seen in that instead of arguing from reason to revelation (i.e., Exodus 3 and John 1), Hilary starts from the divinely revealed names. It is not first God's self-existent being but the *Father's* being *is* the being of God: "His being is in himself (*eius esse in sese est*) and he does not derive what he is from anywhere else, but possesses what he is from himself and in himself (*quod est ex se adque in se*)."[52] He is creator and source of all things; infinite; eternal; omnipresent; invisible, ineffable; incomprehensible; immortal. The name of his nature is possessed "in the Father (*in Patre*)," that is, God is the Father by his very nature.[53] Like book 1, in book 2 such general comments about the Father's nature will quickly turn to a discussion of the status of the Son and 'X from X' argumentation.[54]

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[49] *De trin.* 2.5 (SC 443:282). At the same time Hilary communicates extreme reticence to elaborate upon the divine nature, he sets the epistemological tone for how he will proceed: "The nature of the theme exhausts the meaning of words (*Verborum significantiam rei ipsius natura consumit*), its impenetrable light darkens the mind's vision, whatever is without limits is beyond the capacity of our power of reasoning (*intelellegentiae capacitatem…continetur excedit*). But, owing to the necessity of put upon us, we beg pardon of him who possesses all these attributes, and we will dare, we will seek, and we will speak. Amd in the discussion of a matter so exalted we make only this promise to believe whatever will be made known" (*De trin.* 2.5 [SC 443:284]).

[50] *De trin.* 2.5 (SC 443:284).

[51] *De trin.* 2.5 (SC 443:282).

[52] *De trin.* 2.6 (SC 443:284).

[53] *De trin.* 2.5-6 (SC 443:282-286).

[54] Though his section here on the Father's attributes lacks exegetical argumentation, he turns to references in the Gospels of Matthew and John when arguing about the status of the Son. For Hilary's reliance on X from X arguments, see Ayres, *Nicaea*, 181. On these types of arguments more generally, see Barnes, *The Power of God*, 119. In this section of *De Fide* more of Hilary's Latin heritage perhaps shines through than his interactions with eastern theological concerns, which is, of course, an argument for *De Fide* being written before Hilary's exile. As will be demonstrated below, in book 7 and following Hilary adds layers of sophistication to his argument for the Son's generation from the Father. Here, however, his argument follows the simpler lines of 'one from one' and 'only-begotten from unbegotten'. The Father gives everything he is to the Son. Therefore, everything in the one is in the other and together they are one. This stress on the Son receiving from the source of the Father in a way that does not compromise divine unity is very similar to Latin anti-monarchianism and anti-adoptionist strategies from the third century, such as found in Tertullian and Novatian of Rome, respectively. In Tertullian's *Against Praxeas* (c. 210), he is opposing monarchians who oppose the Word's existence as distinct: "…the tree is not cut off from the root, nor the river from the fountain, nor the ray from the sun; nor indeed is the Word separated from God. Therefore according to the form of these analogies, I confess that I call God and his Word—the Father and His Son—two. For the root and the tree are two things but joined, and the spring and the river are two manifestations but undivided…. Everything that proceeds from something (*omne quod prodit ex aliquot*) must of necessity be another beside that from which it proceeds, but it is not for that reason separated…. In this way the Trinity (*trinitas*), proceeding through intermingled and connected degrees from the Father (*gradus a patre*), in no way challenges the monarchy (*monarchiae*) and hides the state of the economy (*oeconomiae*)" (8 [Evans, *Tertullian's Treatise Against Praxeas,* 97]). Novatian carries this line of argumentation forward in his opposition to adoptionism, arguing that the Son receives everything from the Father while remaining united to him.

As will be investigated below, in books 7 through 12 Hilary's discussion of the Father's nature is much more wrapped up in the concepts introduced by the *nativtias* and how what is his is communicated to the Son.[55] Nonetheless, a heavy emphasis can be found on the eternity of God,[56] especially in book 12, and the simplicity of God. A baseline verse for Hilary is Exodus 3:14, which has already been used in book 1 to confirm those attributes discerned by natural reason. In book 12, he uses the same verse to show how the Father's eternity is where the Son's is rooted. The Father is called simply "he who is (*qui est*)"[57] and "he who always is what he is (*qui quod est semper est*)."[58] Inherent to the logic of the eternity of the Son is the fundamental eternality of the Father:

> To be from him, that is to say, to be from the Father *(ex Patre esse*), is the birth. To be always from him who always is is eternity – an eternity not from himself, but from the eternal (*aeternitas uero non ex se, sed ab aeterno*). From the eternal nothing else comes except what is eternal. If that is not eternal, then neither is the Father eternal who is the author (*auctor*) of the generation.[59]

In the closing prayer to book 12, and thus to the whole of *De trin.*, Hilary first addresses the Father in terms of the general attributes introduced above, accenting in particular his infinity and eternity. But these quickly give way to those attributes closely associated with

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These arguments are quite clear in his *De Trinitate* 31: "Whether he is the Word, whether he is Power, whether he is Wisdom, whether he is Light, whether he is the Son—whatever he is of these, he is not from any other source but from the Father (*sed ex patre est*).…Owing his origin to the Father, he could not cause disunion in the Godhead by making two Gods (*patri suo originem suam debens discordiam diuinitatis de numero duorum deorum facere non potuit*" (31.48-53 [CCSL 4]).

[55] Methodologically, Hilary still appeals in book 7 to "the judgment of the human mind." Here he does so because it rejects the notion that "anything by its birth is distinct from the nature of its origin" (*aliquid a natura originis suae nascendo diuersum sit*) (*De trin.* 7.14 [SC 448:302-304)]. Hilary reaffirms his point on the ability of the human mind to discern that a birth brings about a like nature in 7.16: "The judgment of our reasoning…agrees with universal opinion of humanity (*cum humani sensus opinione communia sint*), that birth brings about an equality of nature (*naturae…aequalitatem*), and where there is equality there can be nothing that is another nor can it be alone" (SC 448:308). Birth comes from the 'essence of the nature', so a divine nature that is necessarily eternal cannot have within it a creation, that is, something new. The Son of God, then, is born of a nature that only produces 'same' and not something 'different'. Hilary's consideration of the divine birth as incapable of introducing anything 'alien' comes not only from the universal judgment of the human mind but also from his use of John 3:6 (*De trin.* 7.14; John 3:6 reads, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." Thus, Hilary moves from a general understanding of nature and birth and then shows how that is affirmed by Scirpture [Cf. *De trin.* 9.44]).

[56] Meijering considers 'infinity' to be Hilary's *leitmotiv* that does significant work throughout *De trin.* and possesses argumentative power in connection with other aspects of his theology. *Hilary of Poitiers on the Trinity*, 184. For a helpful discussion of the philosophical and theological implications of 'eternity' and 'infinity' in Hilary's writings, see McDermott, "Hilary of Poitiers: The Infinite Nature of God."

[57] *De trin.* 12.24 (SC 462:416).

[58] *De trin.* 12.25 (SC 462:418).

[59] *De trin.* 12.25 (SC 462:418).

the birth. Indeed, the names of these eternal attributes reveal the nature of the *nativitas*.[60]

3.3.3 *The Giving Father in De Trin. 7-12*

By first following Hilary in identifying the divine nature with the Father a way is provided for understanding the dynamics of divine *taxis* and how fatherhood begins to be conceptualized in *De trin*. But in order for that be filled out further, this section needs to investigate the heart of *De trin.* and consider those attributes of the Father's nature that Hilary closely associates with the *nativitas* and receive careful exegetical explication in books 7 through 12. They form the picture of what is given by the Father to the Son through the *nativitas,* and their identification with the Father characterizes fatherhood for Hilary. That is to say, characterizing the Father is not simply about nailing down those attributes which are held together in his simple nature, for there is no static possession but an eternal *giving.* Thus, what follows adds definition to the nature of the gift which is at the heart of Hilary's account of fatherhood.

These attributes are first introduced in 7.9 where Hilary lists together name, birth, nature, power and confession. Whereas the context is how through these we know the Lord Jesus Christ as God, this section's goal will be to see these as attributes *of the Father*.[61] I will, then, proceed to peer through the *nativitas* in order to discern the Father's attributes, for "the perfect birth of the Son includes the attributes of the Father's nature (*naturae paternae proprietatem*)."[62]

The first attributes of the nature of the Father's divinity Hilary focuses on are "the

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[60] *De trin.* 12.52. In addition to identifying eternity with the Father's nature, Hilary accents his simplicity. This emphasizes the wholeness of the Father's attributes. Hilary submits that the Father's "perfect, complete, and infinite" (*perfecta et absoluta et infinita*) nature does not consist of unlike parts (*De trin.* 8.43; SC 448:448). Indeed, as eternal Father he is *always* Father, carrying a name that does not admit any parts or partitions so that "he must be the whole Father of all his own attributes" (*ipse sit omnium suorum…Pater totus*) (*De trin.* 9.61 [SC 462:142]). As spirit, he is not composite like material things and remains unchangeable (*De trin.* 12.8 [SC 462:396] Cf. 7.30 and John 3:6). Hilary stresses that emerging from his eternality and spiritualty there is a simple wholeness to the Father's nature that will remain fundamental to the communication of his attributes though the *nativitas.* I will return to this theme in 3.3.3.2 below.

[61] Interestingly, though, contrary to what he initially indicates will be his method of going through each attribute *seriatim*, Hilary abruptly reconfigures his list by first submitting that name is a straightforward revelation of Scripture which designates the nature. That is, the name, *Deus,* leads to the divine nature, yet nature itself is not known but through the birth, the *nativitas* (*De trin.* 7.9-10. Cf. 7.16). Therefore, Hilary quickly isolates birth as the rich resource that will further reveal the divine attributes. And though his overall intent is to show how these are fully the Son's as they are the Father's through the *nativitas*, he argues these "surnames (*cognomina*)" always "inhere in the Father by the power of his unchangeable nature (*Patri insint ex indemutabilis uirtute naturae*)" (*De trin.* 7.11 [SC 448:296]). So these attributes will not be explored by Hilary one after the other after all; rather, he will demonstrate how the nature of the birth "embraces within it the name, the nature, the power, and the confession" (*De trin.* 7.16 [SC 448:308-310]).

[62] *De trin.* 9.49 (SC 462:116-118). Cf. 7.31; 12.24

names of wisdom and power."[63] Wisdom is quickly identified with the Word and is not elaborated upon in connection with the Father. Power,[64] however, is repeatedly identified with the nature of the Father, and in 7.15 Hilary turns to John 5:18-23 to begin explaining the power of God. Among other things, this passage in John concerns the Father's "doing (ποιοῦντα)" ("The Son can do nothing of himself, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever he does, the Son also does in the same in like manner.") and is used to establish the equality of the Son in that he does the same things as the Father.[65] The Son is able to do the same work as the Father because he "sees everything by the power of his nature."[66] "Seeing (βλέπων)" is taken by Hilary to indicate the dependence of the Son on the Father, a dependence that recognizes he does not come from himself and can only do what he sees. Yet, even as he has his origin in another, that is, in the Father, the Son's works show the power of the nature within him because he does the same works as the Father. Further, the Son only sees because the Father first "shows (δείκνυσιν)."[67] The Father has shown the Son all things, meaning, according to Hilary, he is ignorant of nothing. If seeing is used by Hilary as functionally equivalent with knowledge, then for the Father to "show" the Son all things means there is a complete manifestation of himself to the Son through the birth.[68] This manifestation is of the divine nature: "God does not see (*uidet*) in a material way, but sees everything by the power of his nature (*uirtute naturae est*)."[69] When the Son does the same things as the Father, he "bears witness to the nature (*testentur…naturam*)."[70]

In reflecting on John 5:18-23, then, Hilary moves from the Son doing the same things as the Father to the Son seeing everything the Father shows him. The 'showing' of the Father is a complete manifestation of himself to the Son that the Son receives in full

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[63] *De trin.* 7.11 (SC 448:296).

[64] "Strength" is sometimes set beside "power" as an attribute in *De trin.*, but they appear to be near synonyms and strength is never elaborated upon to the same extent as power (Cf. 7.17; 9.1). In 9.52, however, after tying power to nature, Hilary writes that work shows the "strength of the power." Here strength seems to be a manifestation of the divine nature's power seen in specific deeds (SC 462:124).

[65] In exegeting both John 5:17-23 and 10:27-38 on the power of God, Hilary acknowledges these passages are extensions of a narrative where the works of God are being made manifest in the Son through the healing of a paralytic (John 5:1-16; Cf. 7.17) and a blind man (John 9:1-41; Cf. 7.21), respectively.

[66] *De trin.* 7.17 (SC 448:312).

[67] *De trin.* 7.19.

[68] *De trin.* 7.19.

[69] *De trin.* 7.17 (SC 448:312).

[70] *De trin.* 7.18 (SC 448:314).

knowledge ('seeing' = 'knowing'). And the knowledge is *of the nature*.[71] That is to say, when the Son does the same things as the Father he is aware that his doing comes not from himself but from something that has been made manifest, which leads to the nature.[72] It is the nature that enables the Son to do the same things as the Father. Thus, if the same nature leads to the same actions, there must be a singular power at work that moves from nature to action.

It is clear that Hilary roots power in nature so that one can read back from the same actions to the same power which comes from one nature.[73] The illustration given for this is John 5:21 where the Father raises from the dead and gives life and so the Son also gives life. In the equal work of giving life, therefore, there is the same power; and the singular power comes from "the unity of an indistinguishable nature (*naturae indissimilis unitatem*)."[74] The Son's power to perform the same works as the Father stems from a shared nature. That nature is 'the Father's' and so the power is 'the Father's', but he fully manifests that nature to the Son who 'sees' everything.

The question as to why the Father shows all things to the Son is answered by John 5:20-21: *the Father's love*. For the full manifestation of the Father is his 'showing' that follows from the Father's love (a crucial point I will return to later in this chapter). Out of that love, then, comes not only the power of a shared nature to do the same works but also the ability to judge: "All judgment has been given [to the Son], because he vivifies those whom he wills (*quia uiuificat quos uult*)."[75] The giving of nature, which means the same power, also means the giving of judgment. Hilary makes clear that judgment has not been taken away from the Father, but "the judgment of the Son comes from the judgment of the Father (*iudicium Fili ex iudicio sit paterno*)."[76] He gives this judgment for the express purpose that the Son might be equally honored with the Father.

When Hilary is summarizing his exegesis of John 5:18-23 in book 7, before turning to John 10, he highlights order, divinity, and unity in the Father-Son relationship. First, the Son is the Son because he can do nothing of himself, meaning his source is in another. That 'another' is the Father who fully manifests himself to the Son who can,

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[71] *De trin.* 7.17.

[72] *De trin.* 7.18.

[73] Cf. *De trin.* 5.3-24. Barnes highlights the technical sense of power as correlative of nature in Latin pro-Nicene theology. *The Power of God*, 152.

[74] *De trin.* 7.19 (SC 448:316).

[75] *De trin.* 7.20 (SC 448:318).

[76] *De trin.* 7.20 (SC 448:318).

then, do the same things the Father does. This demonstrates that the divinity of the Father is the Son's. Further, in addition to doing the *same* things, they share the *same honor*, thus pointing to their unity and the full manifestation of the Father to the Son.[77] In book 7 Hilary draws out of John 5 a unity between the Father and the Son so that the Son's full divinity is unquestioned, but that is enabled through the *nativitas,* which at the same time reveals an eternal divine ordering between the Father and the Son. It is the 'loving gift' of the Father's nature that brings shared work through a singular power, and shared honor through a singular judgment.

As Hilary transitions from reflecting on John 5 to John 10 in book 7, he continues to probe the divine nature through the property of power. As a material illustration of divine power, Hilary draws from John 10:27-38 the picture of a believer not being able to be snatched out of the Son's hand. He highlights how there is power in this hand – the Son's hand. The 'I' in Jesus' voice which says "no one will snatch them out of my hand" is a "conscious power (*consciae potestatis*)."[78] Yet, right after this statement, the Son adds that "what the Father has given me is greater than all." Hilary takes this to mean that the power the Son uses to grasp those who are his is given by the Father, so that it is the hand of the Son which has received from the Father and the hand of the Father which was given to the Son. This comes from the unity of the divine nature expressed in Jesus' words, "I and the Father are one." The reason the hand of the Son can be the hand of the Father is that the nature of the Father is in the Son and, therefore, the Son has the same power as the Father. This full giving from the Father to the Son, and the full receiving of the Son from the Father, takes place within the "mystery of the birth (*sacramentum natiuitatis*)."[79] While the material illustration drawn from John 10 highlights the unity of nature between the Father and the Son, it also draws attention to the priority of the Father as the one whose nature has divine power.

Hilary emphasizes that the power of the Father's nature comes out all the more in

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[77] *De trin.* 7.21. Cf. 12.7. Hilary makes a similar point in 9.23: "Unless things are of the same nature, they are never made equal in honor, and equality of honor does not bring about a separation in those who are to be honored. But the mystery of the birth demands equality of honor (*poscitur honoris aequalitas*). Since the Son must be honored as the Father is, and since the honor of him who is the only God is not being sought, he is not excluded from the honor of the only God, whose honor is also one and the same with that of God. For, as he who dishonors the Son also dishonors the Father, he who does not seek the honor of the only God is also not seeking that of Christ. As a consequence, the honor of Christ is inseparable from the honor of God (*Inseparabilis itaque est a Dei honore honor Christi*)" (SC 462:60).

[78] *De trin.* 7.22 (SC 448:324).

[79] *De trin.* 7.22 (SC 448:326).

John 10 as Jesus faces charges of blasphemy in stating "I and the Father one." Jesus faces these charges by directing his accusers to the works he performs. That is, if they will not believe his words that he is the Son of God, then he points to the works; if they examine them, they will see they are the works of the Father. And the only way he could perform the works of the Father is if the Father's nature was in him, which is exactly what Hilary says Jesus is saying in "I and the Father are one." What enables the nature of the Father to be in the Son, thereby enabling the assertion that he is the Son of God, is the *nativitas.* Yet Jesus turns from a direct presentation of his birth to his enemies in order to draw them in to the mystery of his nature through the power manifest in his works. He writes,

> The Son does the works of the Father (*opera Patris*) and on account of this he asks us to believe in him as the Son of God. This is no arrogant presumption, which asks that he be tested only by those deeds that he performs. He testifies, however, that he does not perform his own works, but those of his Father (*gerere…se non sua sed quae Patris sunt*), in order that the birth of his nature (*naturae natiuitas*) may not be taken away through the greatness of his deeds.[80]

In drawing attention to the works Jesus is drawing attention to the Father. But by drawing attention to the Father, he brings back the discussion of his name, nature, and birth. Each of these, according to Hilary, is answered by Jesus's statement "I and the Father are one."

Hilary breaks down this assertion in order to locate the exact function of the birth: 'I' and the 'Father' are the names, "one" is the unity of the nature, and the verb "are" – what "has caused them to be one (*unum eos efficit esse*)" – is the birth.[81] In a round about way, then, when Jesus draws attention to the *Father's* works in him – and therefore the Father's nature and power – he subverts the question of blasphemy. For, if the Father's power is evident in him it begs the question of *how*, which is answered through their unity. And the means by which Jesus is one with the Father is answered by the birth, so that he can be called 'Son of God' because he truly is. The Son is fully engaged in the work so that it is the 'Son's work' even if it is the work of the Father's nature within him. The reason it can be the Son's work is that the Father shows or reveals - or *gives* - everything to the Son.

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[80] *De trin.* 7.26 (SC 448:336).
[81] *De trin.* 7.25 (SC 448:334).

3.3.3.1 *An Illustration of the 'Giving Father': The Son from* forma servi *to* forma dei

Perhaps the most extensive illustration of divine fatherhood in *De trin.* is the attention Hilary gives to interaction between Father and Son as the Son moves from *forma servi* to *forma dei.* I investigate here book 9 where Hilary addresses questions raised by 'the plan of salvation' in 9.33-56. The Son in the *forma servi* provides opportunity for seizing on biblical comments where he is considered somehow 'less' than the Father (e.g., John 14:28). Hilary takes these head on, situates them within the dynamics of 'the plan of salvation', and reasons through properties of the divine nature such as 'power' and 'glory' in order to reveal both the equality of the Son with the Father as well as their personal order.[82] This equality and order is fully revealed, according to Hilary, through the dynamics of the Son moving from *forma servi* to *forma dei.* He takes a text like Philippians 2:11 and adapts it to interpret texts that would, on the face of it, lead one to consider the Son 'less'. Hilary will also utilize lines from John 14 to assert the unity of the Father and the Son in light of the Son's questioned divinity (e.g., John 14:9-11). The following is illustrative of the Father's identity as 'giver' within Hilary's Trinitarian theology.

Hilary in book 9 once again he gives attention to John 5:18-23, believing that, despite having already discussed this text in book 7, a reconsideration of these verses will provide a "positive aid to the true religion," especially in light of his address starting in 9.33 to the 'heretic' who doubts that Christ is true God.[83] In this address Hilary intertwines two key arguments that are instructive for the purposes of this chapter: one is that the Father and the Son are "clearly shown as equal in the power of strength

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[82] In book 10 Hilary utilizes Basil of Ancyra's thought in order to argue for a Christology where the Son's humanity is 'like' our humanity (*De trin.* 10.25-26). This follows from a Homoiousion Trinitarian argument where the Son is "seen to be similar in substance not identical to the Father because the act of begetting is without the vicissitudes characteristic of the natural generative process" (Jeffrey N. Steenson, "Basil of Ancyra on the Meaning of Homoousios," in *Arianism: Historical and Theological Assessments,* ed. Robert C. Gregg [Philadelphia: Philadelphia Patristic Foundations, 1985], 269-270). Basil associated 'identity' with material not spiritual realities, thus a spiritual begetting in the Godhead produces a 'similar' not identical substance: "His concern is not that relationships of substantial identity will obliterate personal distinctions but rather that they will impart to the divine and spiritual that which is passible and material" (Ibid., 271).
In book 11 Hilary will use arguments over Christ's body to demonstrate the Son's subjection to the Father in the incarnation as primarily having to do with his body that "borrows its glory from its association with the divine nature (*ex naturae diuinae consociatione gloriam mutuaretur*)" (42 [SC 462:366]). A more complete glory awaits Christ's resurrected body. As will be seen in the argument below, the 'scope of glory' demonstrated throughout 'the plan of salvation' bolsters the divinity of the Son while also revealing the character of the Father. In handling the nature of Christ's body and its relationship to the Hilary's Christology, Mark Weedman makes a case for how he escapes the charge of Docetism in his article "Martyrdom and Docetism in Hilary of Poitiers's *De Trinitate,*" *Augustinian Studies* 30:1 (1999): 21-41.

[83] *De trin.* 9.43.

(*aequalis…uirtutis potestas…manifestatur*)," and the other is that they are "equal in the greatness of honor (*aequalis…honoris dignitas*)."[84] From 9.33-42 Hilary initiates his engagement with this generic heretic with an argument for the glory of the Son that is the same glory as the Father's. Hilary telegraphed this engagement in 7.6 where he identifies but does not name a heretic who uses John 14:28's "the Father is greater than I" to "effect a lessening of the nature by acknowledging a greater nature (*naturae facient deminutionem professione maioris*)."[85] The 'lesser nature' can be seen in the Son, according to Hilary's heretic, who is clearly less than the Father through what we see in the incarnation. Here, all the way forward in book 9, Hilary gives a lengthy engagement with this heretic where his concern is to show that despite the Son taking on the *forma servi* in the incarnation this does not mitigate the reality of the Son's shared glory with the Father. Hilary traces this glory to the same nature. Within 9.33-42, his argument runs from the glory that the Son shared with the Father before all worlds through the birth, to the retaining of the nature of the Father when he took on the form of a servant in 'the plan of salvation' (the incarnation), to the glory the Son of Man receives as God is glorified in man in the union of the divine and human natures in the incarnate Son, to, finally, a restoration of the proper glory which is the Son's *in the glory of God the Father* as the *forma servi* is assumed into the *forma dei* through the resurrection. In reflecting on Philippians 2:11, Hilary writes,

> As the Father has glorified him in himself, he must be confessed in the Father's glory (*in sese Pater glorificauit, in eius gloria confitendus est*). And in regard to him whom must be confessed as being in the glory of the Father and whom the Father has glorified in himself, it must without a doubt be understood that in him is everything that the Father is (*est esse quibus Pater est*), since he has glorified him in himself and it must be acknowledged that he is in his glory. Now, he is not only in the glory of God, but in the glory of God the Father (*Non enim hic nunc tantummodo in gloria Dei est, sed in gloria Dei Patris est*). Nor did he glorify him with an external glory, but glorified him in himself. By restoring him to that glory which is proper to him, and to that glory which he had with him, he also glorified him with himself and in himself (*eum et apud se glorificat et in sese*).[86]

Thus, this initial address to the 'heretic' is an argument for the nature of the Father being *in* the Son, so that their shared glory is internal and not 'from the outside'. The internality of the glory, for Hilary, demonstrates the equality. This is a glory that 'runs' from the

[84] *De trin.* 9.50 (SC 448:118).
[85] SC 448:286.
[86] *De trin.* 9.42 (SC 462:100-102).

Father to the Son, but that within their shared nature.[87] The internal nature of this shared glory, even after Christ's completion of the 'plan of salvation' in his resurrection, is emphasized by the fact that the *forma servi* in Christ has been absorbed into the *forma dei* and glorified there.[88]

Glory will be a theme Hilary returns to here and there throughout this section as in it he believes he is on firm ground in taking on John 14:28 in the mouth of his heretic. In fact, the whole of this larger section in *De trin.* 9 is taking on those biblical texts seized upon by Hilary's heretic in order to assert something 'less' in the Son. Many of these examples being in the 'plan of salvation', Hilary demonstrates how these work within the planned 'humiliation' and 'exaltation' of the Son where the "glory of the confession" is that the "Lord Jesus is [now] in the glory of God the Father (*Dominus Iesus in gloria Dei Patris*)."[89] Consequently, Philippians 2:11 (referenced above) serves as a controlling verse for any others that would appear to say that the Son is less or in need or lacks anything. In a sense, the emphasis Hilary put on the 'honor' due the Son in book 7 from John 5:23 is paralleled by the worship due the Son because of his equal 'glory' with the Father.[90] Both 'honor' and 'glory' are the Son's because of his birth, and both 'honor' and 'glory' are all the more the Son's because of his completion of the 'plan of salvation' and receiving from

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[87] *De trin.* 9.41.

[88] Cf. *De trin.* 11.8-49 where, in light of an interpretation of 1 Corinthians 15:26-28 that would "weaken" the Son and "degrade" the Godhead, Hilary appeals to the glory which "perfects everything." The assumption of the Lord's flesh is, according to Hilary, a mystery and not a necessity, and in that assumption we have a manifestation of the mystery that directs us to not see any weakness. Rather, the subjection of the Son to the Father is that God may be 'all in all' in that the Son remains what he has always been – divine – while his human body is transformed and glorified. This was done to the end that human beings might be "conformable to the glory of the body of God (*conformes…gloriae corporis Dei*)" and press forward in our own glorification (SC 462:382). For how Hilary's argument here fits within *De trin.*'s Christology, see Weedman, "Martyrdom and Docetism," 35-40. Irénée Rigolot provides a helpful study of the background of Hilary's use of 'glory' and notions of progress as they relate to Christ's exaltation in "L'Essor donné à la Notion classique de 'Progrès' par Hilaire de Poitiers, dans le *De Trinitate*," *SP* 33 (1997): 454-461.

[89] *De trin* 9.54 (SC 462:126).

[90] Cf. *De trin.* 9.23, 46. Basil of Ancyra was keyed in on the necessity of his theology giving account for Christian piety. That is, if the Son is worshipped then a theological account of his status must elevate him above a creaturely level. This is why, according to Weedman, he insisted on using *ousia* language: "he believes its use preserves something fundamental to the experience of the Christian religion" ("Hilary and the Homoiousions," 501). See *Panarion* 73.4.4. The Father-Son analogy enabled Basil and, as we have seen, Hilary, to express this connection on the level of *ousia*: "That the Father is not said to be Father of an activity but of a substance like himself (ὁμοίας ἑαυτῳ οὐσίας), which subsists by virtue of such an activity (τῆς κατὰ τὴν τοιάνδε ἐργειαν ὑποστάσης), is clearly established on the basis of arguments from nature (ἐκ τῶν φυσικῶν). For God who has many activities is understood as creator by one activity, according to which he is the creator of heaven and earth and everything in them and also all invisible things. But being Father of his only-begotten Son he is not understood as creator but as a Father who has begotten (πατὴρ δὲ μονογενοῦς ὢν οὐχ ὡς κτίστης, ἀλλ' ὡς πατὴρ γεννήσας νοεῖται)" (GCS 37.273).

the Father the "name which is above every name."

As Hilary returns to the property of power in John 5, it is not to continue an argument for the full divine *glory* of the Son, yet it is in the context of the overall heretical impulse to attach something less to the Son.[91] The function of the section on glory in 9.33-42 is to begin an extended argument for the equality of the Son with the Father. A key element of this argument is demonstrating, as seen in the quote above from 9.42, that the Son possesses *everything* the Father has. A reintroduction of John 5 at this point in *De trin.* highlights how the Father's *power* is fully possessed by the Son. Within this context of engagement with his heretic, Hilary goes to John 5:19 because it *seems* to say that the Son can do nothing of himself.

The question Hilary asks of John 5 is whether the demonstration of need in the Son – that he can do nothing *of himself* – harmonizes with the reality that he is fully God.[92] He starts by going through the work of the Father, who performs all things "through the Son and in the Son (*per Filium enim et in Filio*)."[93] In other words, Hilary closes any gates of knowledge regarding the Father that do not pass exclusively through the Son (Cf. John 14:10). And in the Son are revealed the Father's words and deeds which proceed from the work of the Father's nature. After establishing that the Son reveals the work of the Father's nature, Hilary addresses whether *only* the Father is revealed. Here he goes back to John 5:17 where Jesus says just as his Father works *so does he.* The specific work referenced in this passage is the healing miracle on the Sabbath that John records at the beginning of chapter 5. The reason, according to Hilary, Jesus says he "can do nothing" is not to refer to an inherent weakness but to highlight the source of his "authority (*auctoritatem*)."[94] Thus, Jesus works within his earthly ministry with the consciousness of the nature within him. Since this is the *Father's* nature, it is not appropriate to say he does these things in himself.[95]

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[91] The category of the glory of the divine nature is not one that Hilary reflects upon from the text of John 5 itself, though in 8.43, in a quick reference to John 5:18-23, he groups 'glory' with 'power' and 'nature' as where the Son is equal with the Father. Whereas the latter two receive much consideration by Hilary in books 7 and 9 from John 5, his thoughts on glory are largely drawn from biblical texts concerned with the 'plan of salvation'.

[92] *De trin.* 9.43.

[93] *De trin.* 9.44 (SC 462:104).

[94] *De trin.* 9.45 (SC 462:108).

[95] If the Son said he did these things in himself, it would indicate, according to Hilary, that he is alone and not perfectly united with his Father: "It is a sign of one who is not alone not to speak from himself (*ab se*) on the subjects to which he speaks, and … it is not an indication of one who is alien to or separable from (*alieni ac separabilis*) him to speak through him who is speaking, but this is the mystery of those who are one (*hoc eorum sacramentum est, qui unum sunt*). Both, who are in each other by the property of their nature, are not something else (*qui uterque non aliud sunt, qui per naturae proprietatem in sese sunt*). Their unity consists in this,

Yet, due to the reality he 'sees' everything, since the Father has fully manifested himself to the Son, the Son does everything the Father does.[96] Adding the fact that the Son also receives the same honor, according to John 5:23, Hilary argues here, just as he did in book 7, that equal power and equal honor do not admit any accusation that the nature of the Son is weaker – indeed, his nature is the Father's at work in him.

So far in book 9 this argument is more or less a condensed version of what Hilary offers in book 7. Beginning in 9.47, however, he adds considerations to his reflections on John 5 that are drawn from John 6 and 8. These again highlight the unity of nature between the Father and Son – a unity discerned in the Father's activity through the Son. Hilary inserts John 8:28-29 into the discussion because in it Jesus says he does nothing of "his own authority," and therefore aligns with John 5:19 and the question of need in the Son. For Hilary, this reiterates that Jesus does nothing *by himself* since the unity of the nature demands the Father remains in him. Nonetheless, even though he does not act by himself, the Son *is* active even as the Father is active *through him*.[97] The activity of the Son is demonstrated in John 8:28-29 for Hilary because it says there that in the Son's action he does things that are pleasing to the Father.[98] If they are pleasing *to* the Father that means it is not the Father *alone* acting, yet the reality they are pleasing shows the unity of nature.[99]

The addition of John 6 in 9.49-50 contributes the more provocative discussion of the Son's will. Hilary asks that if John 6:37-38 says Jesus *must* act, and that he comes not to do his own will, whether that subjects him to necessity and, therefore, reveals weakness.[100] Again, Hilary opts for the understanding that these phrases do not say anything about weakness in the Son but serve to highlight the "unity of the mystery (*sacramenti unitatem*)," that is, the Father's nature.[101] Hilary inserts John 6:45-47 to affirm his interpretation, for in it the Son is revealed to teach and be heard, yet the instruction comes from the Father. He also returns to John 5:21 to show that through the Son's ability to give life he has a "natural will (*naturalem... uoluntatem*)" with the Father that is entirely

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that the speaker does not speak of himself (*ab se*), nor does he not speak, who does not speak of himself (*ab se*)" (*De trin.* 7.40 [SC 448:366-368]).

[96] *De trin.* 9.45-46.

[97] *De trin.* 9.47-48.

[98] "And of myself I do nothing: but even as the Father has taught me, I speak these things. And he who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, because I do always the things that are pleasing to him."

[99] *De trin.* 9.47-48.

[100] *De trin.* 9.49. The Scripture says, "I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me."

[101] *De trin.* 9.49 (SC 462:116).

free.[102] A natural will proceeds from the same nature, according to Hilary, so the Son's is as free as the Father's. Yes, the Son does what the Father wills, but this only demonstrates his unity with the Father since *everything* he does is the will of the Father.

Hilary closes this section on the work of the Father and Son by referencing John 17:24 and Matthew 11:27. These texts enable him to again affirm the full engagement of the Son, who freely enables his people to be with him and impart knowledge of the Father. The Son's freedom, however, stems not from his person *per se*. Freedom, according to Hilary, comes from nature and is demonstrated in action. Consequently, the Son's free acts are "an act of his Father's will (*factum paternae…uoluntatis*)."[103] This is another way for Hilary to reference that while the unity of nature guarantees that the Son is not 'less than', one is led from the Son's freedom into the mystery of the *Father's* nature and its power.[104]

In the bestowal of glory that occurs when the Son receives back his former glory and gains the "name which is above every name" the 'donor', that is, the Father, is "greater (*maior*)" because of his prerogative as "donor (*donans*)"[105] and as "origin (*auctoritate*)"[106] of him who is to be glorified. Nevertheless, since Jesus receives this name fully, he is not less than the Father as the result is he is in the glory of God the Father. Hilary is vexed at his heretic for seizing on the 'plan of salvation' and interpreting from the *forma servi* something less in the Son. While attention must be given to the glory of the Son, it is the Son *in the glory of the* Father; and it is the *Father* who renews the Son from *forma servi* to *forma dei.* So while Hilary addresses those who would lessen the Son through

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[102] *De trin.* 9.50 (SC 462:118).

[103] *De trin.* 9.50 (SC 462:120).

[104] In 9.51-57 Hilary moves on from his exegesis of John 5 to highlight how both power and glory show the equality of nature between the Father and Son and, therefore, again how John 14:28 cannot mean what his heretic thinks it means. And as will be seen more clearly below, in intertwining these two principles he fills out the discussion of the *nativitas* and its role in expressing the unity of nature between Father and Son – the nature that carries the power and the glory. Hilary writes, "It must be believed that the Father is in the Son and the Son in the Father, by their unity of nature (*naturae unitatem*) by the strength of their power (*uirtutis potestatem*), by their equality in honor (*honoris aequalitatem*), and by the generation of the birth (*natiuitatis generationem*)" (*De trin.* 9.51 [SC 462:120]). He proceeds once again to argue for the unity of nature by reflecting on just in what way John 14:28 is to be understood. In this immediate context, though the plan of salvation is still his concern, he does not use Philippians 2:11 as his controlling verse. Instead, he adds John 14:9-10 and the phrases "whoever has seen me has seen the Father" and "I am in the Father and the Father is in me" to say that the unity of the nature means the Son *cannot* be saying he is of a lesser nature. Further, John 14:11 reveals again the power of the Father's nature in the Son's works, thus pointing to their unity of nature (*De trin.* 9.52). Yet, while the unity of the nature is ever before him as he addresses misunderstandings of John 14:28, Hilary is unflinching – even in this context – to emphasize the personal order between Father and Son.

[105] *De trin.* 9.54 (SC 462:128).

[106] *De trin.* 9.55 (SC 462:132).

the *forma servi,* he conceives of divine order in such a way that the priority of the Father is maintained. Likewise, the nature of the eternal birth ensures that the Son is not less.[107] Even so, through the birth the Father is understood to be greater as the one who "bestows the image of his unbegotten nature (*innascibilitatis esse*) by the mystery of the birth (*sacramento natiuitatis*)."[108] Before turning to a new topic within the overall theme of the threat of 'something less' in the Son, Hilary summarizes the equality and order of the Father and Son:

> The Father who is to glorify the Son is greater (*maior est*); the Son who has been glorified in the Father is not less (*minor non est*)…. The Father is greater while he is the Father, but the Son is not less while he is the Son. By the birth of the Son the Father is ordered as greater. The nature that is by the birth surely does not suffer the Son to be less. The Father is greater while he is asked to restore glory to the man who was assumed; the Son is not less while he again acquires glory with the Father. Thus, both the mystery of the birth and the dispensation of the incarnation are fulfilled. The Father, while he is the Father and while he now glorifies the Son of Man, is greater; and the Father and the Son are one, while the Son, who has been born of the Father, is glorified in the Father after the assumption of an earthly body (*Nam et Pater, dum et Pater est et glorificat nunc filium hominis, maior est, et Pater et Filius unum sunt, dum ex Patre natus Filius post adsumptionem terreni corporis glorificatur in Patrem*).[109]

Power and glory are thus two key divine properties that Hilary is at pains to show are fully the Son's. These properties are first of the Father's nature; but the Father's nature is within the Son, and indeed in the Son's work and his glory one is led to that nature. The Son, however, is not a mere cipher for the Father: the Son, too, is fully engaged in the work and in receiving glory. Hilary hints as to why this is so throughout this section of book 9, but it becomes clearer as he engages the question of the Father being 'greater'. In what sense is he greater?

Here Hilary turns to the concepts introduced by the *nativitas*: the Father is greater in that he gives birth and the Son is the only-begotten. Hilary parallels the order of the persons in the argument from glory: the Father is greater in that he renews the Son from the *forma servi* to the *forma dei*. Yet, at the same time, the nature of the Father, as it is active in the Son's work, as it is given in the birth, and as it is where the Son is glorified, ensures that the Son is not less – for the Son fully possesses the nature in the work, fully receives

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[107] *De trin.* 9.56.
[108] *De trin.* 9.54 (SC 462:128).
[109] *De trin.* 9.56 (SC 462:132-134).

the nature in the birth, and is fully glorified in the nature in his exaltation. It can be affirmed once again that while Hilary emphasizes the priority of the Father as source and origin of all that is the Son's, he points to the *nativitas* as what is uniquely capable of communicating *everything* that is the Father's to the Son. Accordingly, in the end, Hilary can say the Son is not 'less'.

3.3.3.2 *The 'Simple' Gift: The Whole Gift*

As a point of transition to the order of the 'two births', I want to highlight in transition the manner in which the Father holds his properties. Understanding the way the doctrine of divine simplicity functions within *De trin.* will further fill out the picture of the nature of the Father's gift. Put simply, Hilary's teaching on simplicity highlights the Father's *full* and *whole* giving and the Son's *full* and *whole* receiving.

In book 7 as Hilary is finishing up his examination of John 10 he moves to an account for divine simplicity that enables him to say that the Father (and Son) wholly possesses all of his properties. At the beginning of this account he asserts the faith confesses "the truth of the living God from the living God (*ex uiuente Deo uiuentis Dei ueritatem*)."[110] He goes on to say in the same section that God is spirit, and so is "light, power, and life'" and, Hilary says, God is life, and so is "light, power, and spirit." He seems here to juxtapose "spirit" and "life" since both can describe the divine nature in a way that leads to simplicity. In the case of God as 'living', everything in him is whole and one, and so everything in God *lives*.[111] The Son having been born from God, he, too, can be nothing but 'a living being'. Here is where Hilary returns to John, stringing together 6:58 and 5:26:

> Jesus says: 'As the living Father (*uiuens Pater*) has sent me, and I live through the Father (*ego uiuo per Patrem*),' he taught that life was in him through the living Father (*uitam in se per uiuentem Patrem inesse*). Hence, when he states: 'For as the Father has life in himself, so he has given to the Son also to have life in himself (*Filio dedit uitam habere in semetipso*),' he gives witness that everything living within him is from the living. But that which was born alive from the living has the advantage of birth without the newness of nature. That is not new which is generated from the living one into the living one (*ex uiuo generatur in uiuum*), because life was not sought for from the non-existent to bring about the birth, and the life which receives its birth from life by reason of the unity of nature and the mystery of the perfect

[110] *De trin.* 7.27 (SC 448:340).
[111] Cf. *De trin.* 9.69.

> and undescribable birth must live in the living and have the living life in itself (*in uiuente uiuat et in se habeat uita uiuentem*).[112]

Accordingly, we can begin to see how Hilary links life to an eternal birth, but in the course of this chapter's argument the wholeness of the Father's nature is seen and how that wholeness entails a full giving from himself to the Son without partiality or temporality.

To understand the nature of this wholeness articulated through simplicity, Hilary turns to a chastened use of analogy where analogies help in understanding how the Father and Son relate. They provide clues without giving complete understanding.[113] Analogies rely, of course, on material reality, and so find their weakness there.[114] Nonetheless, they are especially helpful for human minds in understanding relations, even within the divine. So Hilary turns first to human birth as an analogy in order to understand that the origin of the begotten remains in the one who gives birth. That is, there is a common nature that remains in both the parent and the child because birth necessitates the same nature between parent and child. Now, Hilary is keen to stress that in human birth there are 'many parts'. But the reality that in God is 'life', and so everything in him lives, and the reality that "everything that is born from him is power (*totum quod ex eo nascitur uirtus est*)," lead him to understand the divine birth as "the living one from the living one (*uiuens ex uiuente*)" which cannot but fully communicate the divine nature.[115] Another analogy Hilary works with is that of fire. While fire fluctuates in its appearance, Hilary submits its nature never changes – "it is totally a fire, and this totality is one nature (*totum tamen ignis est, et haec uniuersa una natura est*)."[116] And when there is 'fire from fire', the nature of fire is transmitted from one to the other without any separation or division.

Hilary ties both the analogy of human birth and fire to John 3:6.[117] These examples provide insight into the "divine confession," because they demonstrate how you can have two persons, or two fires, and yet have one nature between them. You can have a 'first' and a 'second' and yet not have something "different (*diuersam*)."[118] With the Father,

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[112] *De trin.* 7.27 (SC 448:340).

[113] In *De trin.* 1.19 Hilary asserts that analogies are "useful to man" but beneath the dignity of God (Cf. 4.2; 6.9). Their function is to hint at divine truth, not explain or exhaust it.

[114] Cf. *De trin.* 12.10.

[115] *De trin.* 7.28 (SC 448:342).

[116] *De trin.* 7.29 (SC 448:344).

[117] *De trin.* 7.30: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."

[118] *De trin.* 7.32 (SC 448:350).

he is all 'life'. In the birth, then, nothing that is 'not life' can enter into the Son. The Son, too, is 'all life' for he has the very same nature as the Father.

As book 7 progresses, the combination of concepts surrounding divine simplicity and the *nativitas* lead Hilary to explore the mutual indwelling of the Father and the Son. Before exploring that in the next section, though, simplicity first highlights for Hilary that if the Father gives of himself it always and forever must be a *full* gift.[119] Over and over again, the Son is demonstrated to have *all* that is the Father's.[120] And the unique category that enables this full giving of *everything* that is the Father's – all his attributes – so that the Son can make such claims is clear: the *nativitas.* Why does Hilary rely so heavily on this theological concept in order to teach on the nature of the Father-Son relation? And why is it uniquely equipped, as explicated by Hilary, to communicate the order between Father and Son while maintaining their fully unity? The following section answers these question as it moves us deeper into Hilary's theological reasoning and its implications.

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[119] This is something brought out again in book 8, where Hilary brings together judgment, power, glory, nature, and life in order to say that *all* these that are possessed by the Father, how has given such that "this does not bring about a distinction of nature (*non tamen diuersitatem generis adfert*), since it was given in such a manner as it was also possessed" (*De trin.* 8.43 [SC 448:448]). And once more Hilary emphasizes that *all* that is the Father's is given to the Son when later in book 8 he goes to Colossians 2:8-9. While Hilary's explanation of this passage comes in the context of the *forma servi,* its widest application to the Son of God obtains, that is, that the full Godhead is in the Son, "not in part, but entirely; not in a portion, but fully (*non ex parte, sed tota. Neque portio est, sed plenitudo*)" (*De trin.* 8.56 [SC 448:468]). In book 8 Hilary provides another analogy that reinforces the capabilities of *nativitas.* In 8.43-44 he compares it to a seal (using John 6:27). What the comparison reveals about the *nativitas* is that just as a seal receives the "entire object that has been impressed" (*totum…quod inprimitur*) so that nothing is wanting, so the Son in the birth possesses "in himself the complete fullness of the Father's form" (*omnem in se paternae formae plenitudinem*) (*De trin.* 8.44 [SC 448:450]).

[120] A number of passages in *De trin.* bring together statements where Hilary makes clear that the Son 'has' all that is the Father's: In book 9, when exegeting John 5, Hilary is making a case for the Father's nature being in the Son through an observation of the power at work within him. He uses this to make an epistemological point that one can only know of the Father through the Son. When the Son says "and I work" he is saying that the Son is fully engaged in what the Father is doing (*De trin.* 9.44. Cf. 7.17). His work reveals that everything that is the Father's – the nature and its power – are his. Earlier, as he closes out book 7 and is speaking about the mutual indwelling of the Father and the Son, Hilary stresses the lack of distinction between Father and Son in nature and honor. Indeed, "the Son of God is nothing else than what God is (*Dei Filius non aliud quam Deus est*)" (*De trin.* 7.41 [SC 448:370]). This is so because "the Son takes everything from the Father that a son is (*Filius totum sumit ex Patre quod Filius est*)" (*De trin.* 7.41 [SC 448:370]. Earlier Hilary relates this same thought to another affirmation of what the Son possesses when working from John 5:23 to highlight the reality of all judgment being given to the Son. This leads Hilary to conclude: "The Son ought not to be distinguished from the Father in anything (*Neque aliter potuit aut debuit Filius a Patre distingui*) except it be taught that he is born, but is not distinct" (*De trin.* 7.20 [SC 448:318-320]. John 10 gives occasion again to stress the unity of power between the Son and the Father so that the Son can say no one can "snatch [his sheep] out of his hand (*De manu sua nemo rapit*)" (*De trin.* 7.22 [SC 448:326]). This reiterates a claim of the Father's, which the Son can make, too, because the Father's power is fully the Son's.

3.3.4 *The Two Births: The Second Birth Helps Understanding the Eternal Nativitas*

Hilary's arguments investigated thus far attend to theological reasoning according to names, nature, and birth. Through these depth is gained in understanding the unique character of the *nativitas* and what it communicates about the shape of Father-Son relations within the Godhead. The nature of fatherhood within in these relations was deepened by the illustration of the Son's move within the economy from *forma servi* to *forma dei.* Hilary provides further depth to his account through utilization of the 'two births'. The Son's second birth is his human one through Mary within the economy--a temporal birth that Hilary focuses on in order to draw insight into the first birth, the eternal *nativtas.*

Hilary's ordering of the 'two births' clarifies how we understand the Father-Son relation in the *nativitas.* While the Son has been sent into this world by the Father in his name, and retained his divine nature which he demonstrated in powerful works, these point back to a birth that is a procession of the Son from God. In *De trin.* 9.30 Hilary glosses John 16:26-27 in order to show the Son linked his sending and birth into this world with his procession and eternal birth: "[The Son] comes from the Father (*A Patre*) into this world because he has come forth from God (*a Deo exierat*). To make us understand that by his procession he signifies his birth (*natiuitatem suam in exitione*), he adds that he has come from the Father (*a Patre uenisse*)."[121] Again, the confession of 'Father' leads to the perfect birth by the name itself. When the Son is sent into this world through the 'second birth' he continues to say that the Father remains in him (e.g., John 14:9-12). This is not a statement of merely being sent. For Hilary, this points back to the eternal birth, for it is in that birth which ensures the nature of God the Father is in him. So the words and manifestations of power and unity that emerge from the 'second birth' are intended to clue the believer in to the nature within the Son, and that will lead to the procession, the eternal birth – the *nativitas.*[122] Thus, attention to the 'two births' further draws out the Father-giver (and Son-receiver) dynamics explored thus far, and this sets this chapter on its way to firmer conclusions on the nature of fatherhood in Hilary.

My investigation of the 'two births' will involve books 9 and 11 of *De trin*. In book 9 Hilary touches on a few passages from the Johannine 'Upper Room Discourse'. Hilary

[121] (SC 462:74).
[122] Cf. *De trin.* 6.6-44.

begins with the "arrangement of the faith of the Church (*fidei ecclesiasticae modum*)" in 9.19 where Jesus consistently points to the one God, his Father, while also never "separating himself from the mystery of the one God (*a sacramento se Dei…separaret unius*)." He sees this 'arrangement' in Jesus' expression found in John 14:1: "Believe in God and also believe in me."[123] According to Hilary, it is the *nativitas* that enables this understanding where the Son is not separate but receives the same glory and honor,[124] since he calls on belief in himself alongside the Father. Thus, the Son is pointing not to himself 'as unto himself', but pointing to his nature. By calling believers to himself, the Son is pointing to the divine nature within him. At the same time, the Son is not another manifestation of the Father with a different name. The birth truly 'produced' a Son who calls for belief in God and himself.

In this segment of Hilary's argumentation, after establishing the unity of the Father and Son through a call for shared belief, and pushing back against any understanding that would say the divine is solitary,[125] he proceeds to call attention to the works, which means a return to John 5. However, here Hilary focuses on the latter half of John 5 and the reality of the Father *sending* the Son and the Father giving testimony to who his Son is. The fact that the Father *sent* the Son demonstrates there is nothing solitary in the Godhead (since the Son being sent *by the Father* means he is not the Father). Though he is not the Father, he does come in 'the name of the Father' (Cf. John 5:43). For Hilary this is wholly appropriate since the Son possesses the 'nature of the Godhead'. Even though that nature is proper to the Son, the 'arrangement of the faith' means the Son directs us to the Father who sent him.[126] And the Father not only sends his Son, he witnesses to the Son through the deeds he performs in his name. The deeds the Son performs are testimony from the Father that his nature is within the Son. The nature of the works, then, shows two things: the Son is sent *from the Father,* and the *Father gives witness* to the Son's divine nature through the works.[127]

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[123] (SC 462:50).

[124] Appeal to the unity of the Son with the Father from honor and glory is found in 9.23 where he pairs John 5:23 and 11:4.

[125] Thus, navigating between 'Arianism' and 'modalism'. He lists these opponents in *De trin.* 7.6-7. The polemics of the late 350s were very concerned with modalistic understandings of *homoousios.* Homoians wanted to jettison use of *ousia* language altogether. Basil of Ancyra thought *homoiousios* protected against modalistic understanding. While vociferously opposing Homoian rejection of *ousia* language, Hilary displays the influence of Basil in his concern to protect against modalism.

[126] *De trin.* 9.22.

[127] *De trin.* 9.20-22.

Hilary proceeds to build on this argument introduced from John 14 (with support from John 5) in order to speak more deeply into the order of the Father-Son relationship. As seen above, reasoning from works leads to an understanding of the power 'behind' those works. Indeed, if the Father gives witness to the Son's divine nature through the works, this was part of his intention. Hilary appeals to John 14:9-12 and 16:30 in order to demonstrate that the first disciples believed the Son because they discerned the power of God within him. That is, their faith 'travelled' from the works to the power to the nature: "[The disciples] declared to believe that he has *come forth* from God because the power of God's nature was in him (*quia naturae in eo Dei esset potestas*)."[128] Hilary at this point makes clear that the disciples here are not focusing their belief on the reality that the Son was "sent (*missus esset*)" as in born as the incarnate one in this world, but to his "coming forth from God (*a Deo exisset*)," that is, to his procession.[129]

As Hilary goes deeper into the 'Upper Room Discourse' the course of his argument reaches some of the clearest answers to the questions introduced by the divine order of giving and receiving. In light of John 17:1-2, for example, when the Son makes expression of *receiving* anything, such as glory or power, does this indicate a weakness of nature? Hilary concludes that if his acceptance is *full*, and the bestowal by the Father is *full,* then no weakness can be ascribed to the Son:

> The acceptance may indeed be a weakness if Christ is not the true God from the birth rather than from not being born. If the acceptance of power is the sole sign of the birth in which he has received that which he is, then the gift is not to be ascribed to weakness, since it accomplishes this, that the one born is everything that God is (*quae totum hoc nascentem consummat esse quod Deus est*). Since the unborn God is the author of the divine blessedness in the perfect birth of the only-begotten God, the mystery of the Father is to be the author of the birth (*auctorem natiuitatis esse sacramentum paternum est*).[130]

The *nativitas* is that through which the Son receives everything he is as God. What more demonstrates his divinity, Hilary thinks, than his ability to give eternal life, an ability the Father gave him? And yet when the Son gives that life it does not alienate him from the Father, since it belongs ultimately to the Father. The Son can say, "All things that the Father has are mine" (cf. John 16:15). Yet Hilary, in reasoning from the order of the

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[128] *De trin.* 9.29 (SC 462:72, emphasis added).
[129] *De trin.* 9.30 (SC 462:74).
[130] *De trin.* 9.31 (SC 462:76).

nativitas, always emphasizes that such statements are not only an indication of the Son's divinity, but also the Father's 'authorship'. Yes, the power to give life is "natural and congenital (*naturalis…congenital*)" to the Son, but that brings us back around to the source of this ability which is revealed in the *nativitas.*[131] And so Hilary engages the natural question that follows, that is, if the Father gives everything - if he 'authors' - does this produce within him any "degradation (*contumeliam*)"?[132] Of course, as one might expect, Hilary indicates that *as God* the Father cannot weaken. But a larger point is made about the Father in this discussion and that it is integral to the Father's identity to be the 'giver': "For this reason he is signified as the Father: that he has given (*significetur Pater esse, quod dederit*)."[133] If the 'second birth' reveals the first, and the procession of the Son from the Father is eternal, and the procession is the birth, then the dynamic of the eternal birth (*nativitas*) is one where the Father is the 'giver' and the Son the 'receiver'.[134]

Moving from book 9 to book 11 this section continues to examine the dynamic of the Father as giver (and the Son as receiver) within the 'two births'. Leading back to the eternal procession of the Son from the Father, the first birth, the *nativitas,* reveals the priority of the Father as the giver, the giver of the divine nature and its attributes. From this sense, Hilary often utilizes language of irreversible order and refers to the Father as *auctor*, *origo*, and *generans* (or *gignens*). In book 11 Hilary returns to this dynamic and resources some of this language in the context of refuting interpretations of 1 Corinthians 15:26-28 that would say the Son being in subjection to the Father weakens him. Hilary spends nearly the entirety of the book on this question and interacts with a number of other biblical texts defending his interpretation of this passage and how the Son's subjection, rightly understood, does not introduce any weakness in him.[135] I will focus on 11.8-12 in order to further understanding of the Son's generation and how this

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[131] *De trin.* 9.31 (SC 462:78). Cf. *De trin.* 7.27.

[132] *De trin.* 9.31 (SC 462:78).

[133] *De trin.* 9.31 (SC 462:78).

[134] Such a dynamic is revealed when Hilary speaks again to the attributes of God, attributes given for our comprehension that we might know the character of God. Hilary presents the attributes of God as 'first' the Father's, but, as we are examining now through the *nativitas,* all that is revealed to us about God is given from the Father to the Son. In addition to "life" (*uita*) given from the Father to the Son, Hilary adds to that "strength" (*uirtus*), "eternity" (*aeternus*), "providence" (*prouidentia*), and "power" (*potestas*). These are characteristic qualities of the *Father,* yet in the *nativitas* all of these are given to the Son and the *Son receives* all that has been handed over (*De trin.* 9.31 [SC 462:76-80]). In this section Hilary suggests but does not elaborate upon a further giving and receiving from the Father to the *Spirit.*

[135] As indicated in ft. 88 above, Hilary speaks to the issue of the Son's subjection in the context of teaching the mystery of Christ's glorified flesh.

contributes to an account of *nativitas* in *De trin.*

Hilary's 'heretic' in this book is using John 20:17[136] in order to introduce weakness in the Son who seemingly puts himself on the level of human beings who call on God. Hilary rejects this, of course, because it suggests that the Son has a created element in him. He responds by emphasizing the *nativitas*. 'Before' birth is not 'nothing', as in creation, but 'before' birth is the nature from which one is born:

> For to be born shows the cause of the birth (*causam natiuitatis*), yet it does not make him different in kind from the author (*in genere auctoris*). But a birth that does not become different in kind is certainly indebted to its author as the cause of its birth (*auctori causam nativitatis suae*), yet it has not rejected the nature of the author within itself (*naturam…auctoris*), because the birth of God is from nowhere else nor is it anything else. If it is from anywhere else it is not a birth; if it is really something else, it is not God. But, if God is from God, then God is the Father of God the Son, the God of his birth, and the Father of his nature (*Deus Pater Deo Filio et nativitati eius Deus est et naturae Pater*), because the birth of God is from God, and in it is the kind of nature as God is (*generis natura qua Deus est*).[137]

This kind of nature which God possesses is one where there is God the Father and God the Son, where both are *Deus* and yet one is Father, even Father of the Son's nature.[138] He elaborates on these assertions by turning again to the Gospel of John and layering text after text in order to show how the 'second birth' leads us to an understanding of the 'first', the *nativitas.*[139] These are all texts this chapter has interacted with in one way or another. Here, though, Hilary clusters them together in a short space in order to quickly draw out that the Son, in his earthly dispensation, was aware of his dependence on the Father ("the Father is his author [*sibi Pater auctor est*]"[140]), but the fact that in his words and actions the Father is seen though the Son demonstrates that the Father's nature subsists in him. While the unity of the works points back to a unity of nature, mention of reliance upon the Father's authority is "in accordance with the birth (*secundum natiuitatem*)."[141] When

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[136] "I ascend to my Father, to my God and your God."

[137] *De trin.* 11.11 (SC 462:314-316). Cf. 12.25.

[138] Cf. *De trin.* 6.6-44.

[139] John 14:9-10 ("He who has seen me has seen also the Father", and "The words that I speak I speak not on my own authority."); John 10:29-30 ("What the Father has given me is greater than all," and "I and the Father are one."); John 5:22-23 ("But all judgment he has given to the Son, that all men may honor the Son even as they honor the Father."); John 14:11, 28 ("I in the Father and the Father in me", and "The Father is greater than I."); and John 5:19 ("The Son can do nothing of himself, but only what he sees the Son doing. For whatever he does the Son also does in like manner.") (*De trin.* 11.12).

[140] *De trin.* 11.12 (SC 462:318).

[141] *De trin.* 11.12 (SC 462:318).

the Son speaks of "what the Father has given me is greater than all" this is an acknowledgement of the birth which the Son has received. Thus, in the *nativitas* the Father is the giver and the Son the receiver of the gift, making the Father the "author" and, therefore, "greater" with regard to his "authority (*auctoritatis*)."[142] Yet the gift is all that the Father is in his nature, so that what the Son receives is "his own substance (*substitutionis suae*)."[143] The dynamic at play once again reveals an irreversible order in the *nativitas* where the Father is the giver and the Son receives. The nature of the giving and receiving is whole, so that there is no remainder in the nature the Father gives, and there is no lack in what the Son receives. And while within this dynamic language of 'author' and 'greater' emerges, this points not to something greater 'in divinity' in the Father. Rather, it points to his unique position as *principium* and draws attention to the greatness of his gift. To draw the discussion in personal terms, the identity of the Father, according to Hilary, is one who always pours forth fully out of himself in order to give to another, the Son. It is the *nativitas* which enables this giving; and indeed, given the investment in 'birth' as that only which can 'produce' the same nature without weakening it, *only* the birth is equipped to fully communicate the nature to another.[144]

3.3.4.1 *The Shape of Fatherhood*

As I seek to isolate what is unique about the Father in a way of accounting for his fatherhood, the shape is provided by the *nativitas.* The language of irreversible order points to his uniqueness as he who *gives*. A concluding return to 7.16-19 highlights not only the order between Father and Son, but also the unique position of the Father. This chapter previously engaged this passage because of its important discussion of power and works of the divine nature from John 5. In that discussion is a vivid portrayal where the Father 'shows' and the Son 'sees' all things.[145] This is language that reveals the Son's

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[142] *De trin.* 11.12 (SC 462:316).

[143] *De trin.* 11.12 (SC 462:318).

[144] Cf. *De trin.* 7.15 where Hilary says, "There is no doubt that [the Father and Son] do not differ in equality (*aequalitas nihil differat*). Besides, will anyone doubt that a birth gives rise to a nature with no difference (*indifferentem naturam natiuitas consequatur*)? From this alone can come that which is true equality, because only birth is able to bestow an equality of nature (*quia naturae aequalitatem sola possit praestare natiuitas*). But, we will never believe that equality is present where there is a union; on the other hand, it will not be found where there is a difference. Thus, the equality of likeness does not accept either of solitude or of diversity, because in every instance of equality there is neither a difference nor is it alone" (*quia omnis aequalitas nec diuersa nec sola sit.*) (SC 448:306-308).

[145] Drawn from the language of John 5:18-23.

dependence on the Father and points back to his eternal birth, for it is in the *nativitas* where there is a full showing and seeing between the Father and Son. Indeed, in the show/see dynamic Hilary understands "the salutary order of our confession in the Father and the Son, where he revealed the nature of his birth (*salutaris in Patre et Filio confessionis nostrae ordo, naturam natiuitatis ostendit*)."[146] The Son's 'seeing' is by the power of the Father's nature which is in him by the birth. With full knowledge received from the Father the Son enacts the divine power in works, because the Father 'shows' him all things. Hilary concludes, therefore, that to show is to give and to see is to receive the whole divine nature, for the same dynamic of giving and receiving associated with the Father and Son is that which we see in the Father showing and the Son seeing everything. The dynamic of the *nativitas* in such an account of showing/seeing leads us, from John 5:20,[147] to the 'reason' behind the gift: the Father's love. It is "because of the Father's love (*per dilectionem Patris*)" that the Son sees everything (through the gift in the *nativitas*) and so could perform the works the Father had for him.[148]

The contours of the shape of divine fatherhood emerge in thinking through the dynamic of the one who gives and *why* he gives. To further this point, a return to a passage referenced earlier (from book 9) which addresses the glory of the Father: Hilary speaks of the Father as greater "by prerogative as the donor (*donantis auctoritate*)."[149] In his full reception of the gift from the donor, the Son is, of course, not "less (*minor*)." But Hilary elaborates on the 'greatness' of the Father in terms that resonate with an account of fatherhood where the *principium* of the Father is seen in his eternal giving:

> The Father is greater (*maior*) than the Son, and surely greater (*plane major*), since he allows him to be as great (*tantum donat esse*) as he himself is, since he bestows the image of his unbegotten nature upon him by the mystery of the birth (*innascibilitatis esse imaginem sacramento nativitatis inpertit*), since he begets him from himself (*ex se*) into his own form, since he again renews him from the form of a slave into the form of God, and since He permits (*donat*) him who was born in his glory as the God Christ according to the Spirit to be again in his glory after he died as God Jesus Christ according to the flesh.[150]

Through the *nativitas* the Father's identity as the giver is revealed. What 'explains' his

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[146] *De trin.* 7.17 (SC 448:310-312)
[147] "The Father loves the Son and shows him all that he himself does."
[148] *De trin.* 7.19 (SC 448:316).
[149] *De trin.* 9.54 (SC 462:128).
[150] Ibid.

giving here is the same as is found in 7.16, and points to something about the Father's character which suits his position as *principium.* In *De trin.* 9.61 Hilary says, "God does not know how to ever be anything else than love (*aliud...quam dilectio esse*), nor to be anything else than the Father (*aliud quam Pater esse*)." This statement comes in the context of an account for divine simplicity, so when God is referred to as 'Father' he is wholly 'Father'. That is, there is not one 'part' of God that is Father and another that is not: "The Father is the Father of everything that is in him (*Pater enim uniuersitatis eius quae in se est pater est*) and all that he has…. He is wholly the Father of him who is from him (*ex se est pater totus sit*)."[151] For Hilary, the perfection of God is seen in his simplicity where he is Father of "all his own attributes which are in the one whom he has begotten from himself (*ex se genuit*)."[152] It is at this point, where Hilary is considering the birth in simplicity in light of the Father's love, that he gives a striking line: "the perfect birth of the Son (*nativitas Fili perfecta*), with all of these attributes, completes him as the Father (*eum Patrem...consummat*)."[153] In what sense can one who is perfect in himself as Father be *completed*? While it strains the categories given by Hilary, if one reads out of the character of the Father as the eternal 'giver' out of his 'love', then to fully give of himself 'perfects' himself and 'completes him as the Father'.[154] In other words, the full working out of the dynamic of giver and receiver reveals the Father as the *principium* who out of his love gives everything to the Son. In his giving, he is fully working out of who he is *as Father* and manifesting his unique character.

With this I come to several summary observations on the way in which the Father constitutes the Father-Son relationship and reveals his fatherhood. At the point of speaking of the Father being 'completed', one senses being at the 'limit' of apprehending the nature of the Father's gift. It is clear enough, according to Hilary, that the Father's giving of his nature is full – he gives all of *himself*. For what is he but his nature with all of its attributes? And if it were not for his gift through the *nativitas,* the Son would not be who he is as fully divine and worthy of all honor and glory. In this sense the Father 'makes' the Son who he is and one can speak, with Hilary, of reliance and source of authority within the Godhead. Yet, what is the point of it all? It is first to give *of himself* out of love – the

[151] *De trin.* 9.61 (SC 462:140). Cf. *Synod.* 19.

[152] *De trin.* 9.61 (SC 462:142).

[153] *De trin.* 9.61 (SC 462:142). Cf. *De trin.* 3.3.

[154] Cf. *De trin.* 7.31. On the theme of the Son "completing" the Father, see Luis F. Ladaria, "'*...Patrem consummat Filius*'. Un aspecto inédito de la teología trinitaria de Hilario de Poitiers," *Greg* 81:4 (2000): 775-788.

Father *is* 'loving giver'. In his eternal giving enabled by the *nativitas,* the Father reveals his character. Possessing the full nature of the Father, the Son is sent in the 'second birth' *in his name.* All of the attributes of the Father's nature are within him by the simplicity of that nature. Out of the Father's nature he speaks and acts in order to reveal his power and draw attention back to the Father. But by the Father giving to the Son work that reflects the nature within him, he draws believers to honor the Son. What is more, at the end of Christ's work, when he is glorified with the glory he shared with the Father before all worlds, he again marks out his character as 'loving giver' for he gives the Son 'the name which is above every name' that the Son may be glorified in him just as he is glorified. So, on the one hand, the 'second birth' seems intended to reveal the order of the 'first birth' where honor and glory are brought to the Father as the one who constitutes the Godhead in his gift. But, on the other hand, as the 'first birth' is revealed in the 'second', the overflowing 'loving gift' of the Father is revealed in the Son in such a way that the Son 'is exposed' as fully possessing all that is the Father's. Thus, he is worthy of all honor and glory and to be considered no less God than the Father. In the course of the 'second birth', then, the Son comes to do the will of the Father and bring to him those who are his that he might be glorified, and the Father in giving the Son this work 'tears open the heavens' to the believing eye so that the Son, though *in forma servi*, may be seen for who he is and receive that same honor and glory that is his through the possession of the same nature.

3.3.4.2 *The Tensions of Divine Order and Mutuality*

When with Hilary divine fatherhood is conceived of in light of the *nativitas,* as soon as the mind settles on the Father's indisputably distinct position as *principium*, and begins to run though the variety of lineaments which track out from there, the nature of the divine gift causes thoughts to ricochet: and what is understood is that when the Father is considered as source and origin (or whatever other term might highlight his position as *Father* and the Son's as dependent), the character of the gift – and thus the character of the *nativitas* – resists pressing too strongly on the clear divine interpersonal *taxis.* For the same gift that eternally 'constitutes' the Father-Son relation also enables their unity. The unity is found in the nature, and the nature is the 'content' of the gift given through the

nativitas.[155]

This is a movement we find in Hilary's *De trin.* as he frequently turns to 'in' language to describe the Father-Son relation. I will now examine this language, and the teaching on unity in which it is rooted, through Hilary's understanding of divine simplicity and the inseparable works of the Father and Son. In book 3 Hilary follows his theological epistemology out from the divine names, 'Father' and 'Son', to the *nativitas* and finally to the nature.[156] In 3.23 he involves John 10:30[157] in order to apply it to the unity of the Father and Son. He quickly moves next to John 10:38[158] in order to stress that the unity of nature is understood through the language of the Father and Son being 'in' one another. This was revealed in the Son's works, for the works reveal their "similarity of power and fullness of divinity (*deitatis plenitudinem*) in each of them."[159] Hilary returns to John 10:30 early in book 7 where he anticipates many of the arguments he will make from book 7 through 12. Here he layers this verse on John 14:9[160] in order to present the unity as the support for our knowledge of the divine, for one cannot know them (here, the Father) unless they are 'in' one another.[161]

Moving further into book 7, 'in' language becomes more pronounced. Stopping at 7.21-22 Hilary is engaging John 5 and the unity of the Father and Son in light of their inseparable works. Every work must be referred to both of them, the Father and the Son, where the *nature* of operation in each is in no way different. This comports with the logic of the birth where the Son comes not from himself and so does the *Father's* work; but given there is no separation in the birth, the same power from the same nature is manifest in the same works: "He is the Son because he can do nothing of himself (*ab se nihil potest*). He is God because, whatever the Father does (*Pater facit*), he does the same (*ipse eadem facit*)."[162] The unity of the Father and Son is tied to their inseparable works. Indeed, the

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[155] Gonnet writes, "La génération incompréhensible résout le paradoxe suivant : comment deux, le Père et le Fils, peuvent en même temps être Dieu et, cependant, ne pas être deux dieux? Le fait que Dieu ne peut pas communiquer sa condition de Père rend possible cette unité en Dieu. L'un ne peut naître, et l'autre ne peut être le Monogène. Si la génération transmet la même nature, elle transmet la même divinité du Père est celle du Fils, la nature du Père naît dans le Fils. Il n'y a rien de nouveau dans le Fils" (*Dieu le Père chez S. Hilaire de Poitiers,* 292).

[156] *De trin.* 3.22.

[157] "I and the Father are one."

[158] "The Father is in me and I in the Father."

[159] *De trin.* 3.23 (SC 443:378).

[160] "He who has seen me has seen also the Father."

[161] *De trin.* 7.5.

[162] *De trin.* 7.21 (SC 448:322).

inseparable works are a manifestation of their unity where that which emerges from the 'second birth' reveals what is true of the 'first': "I and the Father are one." An example given by Hilary of the unity of the Father and Son related to their inseparable works is the text concerning 'hands' examined above (John 10:27-30). The Son says both that no one is able to snatch believers out of *his* hand, and that his hand *is the Father's*. The latter is true because the nature and the power are the same. Thus, we understand that though the Son fully receives the Father's nature in the *nativitas*, and can say all that he receives are 'his', it also must be said it is the Father 'in' the Son.[163]

As noted above, just as Hilary gives the biblical illustration of hands in order to highlight the unity, he also draws out analogies taken from the material realm. While these clarify various teachings on the *nativitas* (e.g., that you can have 'two' and yet they are 'one' because of the nature), they put focus on divine simplicity. For example, in comparing fire to God one understands that in 'fire from fire' you cannot discern any division or separation – *all is* fire. Likewise, Hilary teaches, God is 'all life' for the *nativitas* ensures God (the Son) is from God (the Father). When the idea of birth in the simplicity of God is combined with the inseparable works, the Son's expression that Hilary glosses from John 14:11 makes perfect sense ("Believe the works that the Father is in me, and I in the Father.").[164] Whereas the illustration of 'hands' in inseparable works in John 5 highlights that the Father is in the Son, the added teaching on simplicity pushes even further into the language of mutuality where the Father is not simply in the Son, but the Son is also in the Father:

> They are mutually in each other (*Insunt sibi inuicem*), while there is no birth except from the Father (*ex Patre natiuitas*), while he does not subsist as another God, either outside of him or unlike him in nature, while God who exists from God is that which God is from nowhere else…. The Son is in the Father and the Father in the Son (*Filius in Patre est et in Filio Pater*), not by a mutual transfusion and flowing, but by the perfect birth of a living nature (*per uiuentis naturae perfectam natiuitatem*).[165]

The language of mutuality through the inseparable works of the Father and Son, and the simple divine nature given and received through the perfect birth, are said, by Hilary, to be a part of God's divine accommodation to human understanding. That is, what better

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[163] *De trin.* 7.22.

[164] *De trin.* 7.31.

[165] *De trin.* 7.31 (SC 448:346-348). See also 7.40-41 and 8.43 where Hilary combines divine simplicity and inseparable works.

way could God have communicated to us in order to understand the Son's statement, 'I and the Father are one', than for him to elaborate by showing how "whatever the Son did and said the Father said and did in the Son (*in Filio Pater et loqueretur et gereret*)?[166] Such language bends down from the mystery of the birth and regulates our thoughts so that we do not consider the Son as separate or unequal, nor the Father as solitary. The reality that the Father is 'in' everything the Son has spoken and done, and that the Son is 'in' the Father by 'holding fast' to everything that has been given to him in the *nativitas,* necessitates an understanding of the Father and Son as perfectly united – they are 'one'. And since their union is not the mere partnership of two similar things, but one enabled by a perfect birth of the same nature, language of union presses into that which speaks of reciprocation and mutual containing.

At this point one might question whether there is too great a tension in Hilary's Trinitarian thought when he upholds such a distinct *taxis* of the Father and the Son in light of the *nativitas* while also pressing strong 'in' language. Hilary would likely reply that he is simply following the language of various Scripture passages (especially those out of the Gospel of John), which address the Father as 'greater' and the Father and Son being 'one' and 'in' one another. In *De trin.* 3.1 Hilary anticipates this potential tension in his account, because our "reasoning from human understanding (*intellegentiae humanae rationem*)" cannot put together "I in the Father and the Father in Me" with a consideration of the proper order or 'position' of the Father and Son.[167] Nonetheless, he pushes forward with what may seem incompatible because of the gift of "reasoning from divine truth (*diuinae ueritatis ratio*)" found when we discern the Father and Son in light of Scripture.[168] Finding therein the central mystery of the *nativitas,* the shape of this teaching revealed in Scripture enables him to 'put together' that which seems in great tension. As he understands it, we must fit together the following: "The Father is greater than I"; "And he gave him a name which is above every name"; "I and the Father are one"; "He who has seen me has seen also the Father"; "I in the Father and the Father in me."[169] The greatness of the Father is seen through the *nativitas* as he is the 'donor' of the gift that is his nature. What is more, after the Son completes the 'plan of salvation', the Father *gives* the Son 'the

[166] *De trin.* 8.52 (SC 448:462).
[167] SC 443:336.
[168] *De trin.* 3.1 (SC 443:336).
[169] *De trin.* 9.54.

name which is above every name'. The Son's status as God is completely reliant upon the Father's gift. But the Son fully receives that gift, and his possession of the nature means he is in no way 'less'. In the Father 'allowing' the Son to be as great as he is – to be 'in his glory' – they are one.

It is precisely here that I think Hilary's doctrine of divine fatherhood intersects and, indeed, upholds his teaching on unity and co-inherence. For if the priority of the Father is seen in the *nativitas* and his loving ability to give of himself so that the Son is all that he is, it is that same gift and reception that brings about the unity of Father and Son. And given the nature of the gift, seen especially in its power and simplicity, 'in' language describing the unity of the persons is fully appropriate. So where on the surface description of the order of the persons seems in great tension with their mutual indwelling, the centrality of the *nativitas* for Hilary in shaping divine relations relates them in such a way that the one, the unity, depends on the other, the Father's *principium*. In fact, if you take away the *principium* of the Father most clearly seen in his 'loving gift', you deny, then, the fullness of the Son and relegate him to 'less'. But that is not all: you also put into question the status of the Father if he is unable to fully give of himself.[170] Hilary is keenly aware of these dangers throughout his *De trin.,* and in a short span at the end of his pivotal book 7 he helpfully summarize why the *nativitas* is, for him, the 'central mystery' that integrates so much Christian teaching:

> [Through the birth] the Father loses nothing of himself in the Son, and the Son takes everything from the Father that a son is (*totum sumit ex Patre quod Filius est*)…. The abiding birth of the only-begotten is inseparable (*inseparabilis*) from the true divine nature of the Father. That is proper only to the only-begotten God, and that faith is in the mystery of the true birth, and it is to the spiritual power that this work belongs, so that there is no difference between to be and to inhere (*nihil differre esse et inesse*)…. The birth did not bring about any distinction or dishonor, because the nature of the birth completes the mystery of the one Godhead in the Father and the Son (*quia unius in Patre et Filio diuinitatis sacramentum natiuitatis natura consummate*).[171]

[170] In *De trin.* 9.54 Hilary says, "The Father is greater (*maior*) than the Son, and surely greater (*plane maior*), since he grants him to be as great as he himself is (*cui tantum donat esse, quantus ipse est*)" (SC 462:128). Hilary clearly attributes the Father's greatness to his ability to give fully of his nature to the Son.

[171] *De trin.* 7.41 (SC 448:370).

3.4 Conclusion

The theological category of *nativitas* is seemingly endlessly fruitful in the hands of Hilary, and stands at the center for this chapter's argument for fatherhood in *De trin.* It is significant, then, that some have questioned the stability of *nativitas* for Hilary as a theological category. These questions range from seeing movement in Hilary's use of *nativitas* within *De trin.* from book 7 to book 12 as a result of his exposure to Homoian thought, to proposing Hilary abandons the category altogether after writing *De trin*. The former position sees movement expressed through increasing reliance on God's eternity and infinity as a way of bolstering *nativitas* and providing ballast against temporal misunderstanding.[172] The latter and more bold position, recently proposed by Ellen Scully, relies on Weedman's work establishing movement within *De trin.,* yet extends this trajectory forward into Hilary's last substantial work, *Tractatus super Psalmos*—a trajectory she sees as leading to abandoning *nativitas* almost entirely as a "result of his engagement in anti-Homoian and, particularly, anti-Eunomian Trinitarian polemic."[173] Scully's factual observations on the paucity of *nativitas* in *Tractatus super Psalmos* cannot be denied. The question remains, however, as to the reasons why Hilary's use of the term shifted.[174] Even if Scully is right in the reasons she provides (and she very well may be), I do not see it as overturning the argument of this chapter. That is to say, even if Hilary saw polemical circumstances demanding he abandon *nativitas* as a central theological idea, in *De trin.* it bears much fruit in highlighting the *personal* nature of the fatherhood of God—personal insofar as *nativitas* enables a highlighting of the personal gift of the Father.

It is in highlighting the personal, 'loving gift' of the Father that Hilary achieves clarity where Athanasius was either unclear or merely suggestive. In the last chapter I explored some of the ways in which love might be identified with the Father within

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[172] Weedman, *Trinitarian Theology*; McDermott, "Hilary of Poitiers: The Infinite Nature of God." A third view is presented by Pierre Smulders in his monumental work *La Doctrine trinitarie de s. Hilaire de Poitiers*. He presents *nativitas* as central and rather static across Hilary's work.

[173] "The Evolution of Hilary of Poitiers's Trinitarian use of *Nativitas,*" *JECS* 24:3 (2016): 365.

[174] Scully notes that in *Tractatus super Psalmos* Hilary makes significant use of the common operation of the Father and Son as a demonstration of their shared nature. However, as this chapter demonstrated, this argument is already used in *De trin.* Use of this argument is not a 'substitute' for arguments utilizing *nativitas.* Evidently, Hilary thinks it can be used alongside it. In Scully's own words, "The Son's generation has not been eliminated from the argument of the *Tractatus super Psalmos,* but it has been demoted to a supporting role, while, correspondingly, the argument of common operation, which was a subsidiary argument in the *De Trinitate,* becomes central in the *Tractatus super Psalmos*" (Ibid., 392). At best, we can pinpoint a shift in emphasis, but this argument has to be made from silence (Hilary himself not flagging a change and providing rationale) and one must always be aware that shifts in emphasis can be guided by other factors than change in theological strategy or conviction.

Athanasius's thought, but, in the end, he does not bring any coherence to these thoughts by providing a way for the theological picture to fit together. Through his multifaceted use of *nativitas,* Hilary moves beyond Athanasius in a robust theological account of God the Father. He provides definition for divine fatherhood through pinpointing not only those places where he upholds the full equality of the Son, but in that upholding draws attention to that which constitutes him as a Father: his 'loving gift' of himself through the *nativitas.* Hilary thus delivers a theology of fatherhood that is unassailably pro-Nicene, and in its very argumentation for such principles is able to draw out an elegant understanding of the Father. Be that as it may, there are elements of fatherhood left unexplored by Hilary, especially when it comes to the Father's relationship with the Holy Spirit.[175] As I will explore in the following chapters, a more fully Trinitarian engagement will draw out dimensions to fatherhood left unexplored in Athanasius and Hilary.

[175] Hilary's attention to the *nativitas* obviously focuses his attention on the 'first' and 'second' persons of the Trinity. While his treatment of the Spirit is scant, in *De trin.* 2.29 Hilary does assert that the Father and Son are *auctores* of the Holy Spirit. And in *De trin.* 12.55 he uses the formula of 'from the Father through the Son.'

Chapter 4: Gregory of Nazianzus

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter and the next I take up two theologians who enjoyed a complicated friendship and have been identified with Basil's brother, Gregory of Nyssa, as the 'Cappadocian Fathers'.[1] Though they are often considered together, each possessed his own distinct 'accent'.[2] This will become apparent, at least with Gregory of Nazianzus and Basil of Caesarea, as I examine the fatherhood of God in their writings.[3] As much as they might be distinguished from one another, however, together they can be contrasted with Athanasius and Hilary. In light of their respective pneumatologies, Nazianzen and Basil's Trinitarian thought more fully integrates the three persons and explores the tensions of unity and diversity within the Godhead. Consequently, they give greater attention to the 'place' of the Father within the Triune life of God. With Nazianzen in particular, fatherhood is fundamental to his account of dynamic unity in the Trinity.

Throughout Nazianzen's corpus mystery dominates the initial question of divine knowledge; yet in the ways in which he frames the question it implies he does not have merely general epistemological questions in mind, but is adumbrating our approach to the knowledge of the Father.[4] Accordingly, pursuing an account of the fatherhood of God in

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[1] The rollercoaster friendship between Nazianzen and Basil has been illuminated by John McGuckin, *Saint Gregory of Nazianzus: An Intellectual Biography* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2001), 46-56, 88-98, 101-112, 167-206, 216-219, 372-374; and Raymond Van Dam, *Families and Friends in Late Roman Cappadocia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), 139-184.
For studies of Nazianzen's life and ecclesiastical and theological career, in addition to McGuckin, see Brian E. Daley, *Gregory of Nazianzus,* (London: Routledge, 2006), 1-60; Paul Gallay, *La vie de Saint Grégoire de Nazianze* (Lyons, France: Emmanuel Vitte, 1943); Jean Bernardi, *Grégoire de Nazianze: Le théologien et son temps, 330-390,* Initiations aux Pères de l'Église (Paris: Cerf, 1995); Frederick W. Norris, *Faith Gives Fullness to Reasoning: The Five Theological Orations of Gregory Nazianzen,* trans. Lionel Wickham and Frederick Williams, intro and commentary by Frederick W. Norris, Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae 13 (Leiden: Brill, 1991), 1-12.

[2] For examples of works that artificially group the Cappadocians together, see Hugo Weiss, *Die grossen Kappadocier: Basilius, Gregor von Nazianz und Gregor von Nyssa als Exegetin. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Exege.* (Braunsberg: A. Martens, 1872); Georg Friedrich Böhringer, *Die drei Kapadozier oder die trinitarische Epigonen* (2 vols.; Stuttgart: Meyer & Zeller, 1875); Brooks Otis, "Cappadocian Thought as a Coherent System," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 12 (1958), 97-124.
Christopher Beeley has rightly emphasized the uniqueness of each Cappadocian Father, yet in doing so unhelpfully suggests Nazianzen's achievements are more "properly theological" than Basil's or Nyssen's (*Gregory of Nazianzus on the Trinity and the Knowledge of God,* Oxford Studies in Historical Theology [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008], viiiff).

[3] A natural addition would have been to consider Gregory of Nyssa on divine Fatherhood here as well. Space, however, did not permit such an investigation. Nazianzen and Basil were chosen because their theology of Fatherhood seemed to be more promising.

[4] Andrew Louth, "St Gregory of Nazianzus on the Monarchy of the Father" in *Gott Vater und*

Nazianzen means situating it within his vision of God (θεωρία) where attentiveness and spiritual discipline yield knowledge.[5] The rhetorical construction of his theology possesses a certain inherent resistance to analysis—with apophatic gestures signaling wonder as more appropriate than description.[6] Yet, by carefully following him in his contemplative vision intersections of thought open where his account of fatherhood brings a measure of harmony to one of the great concerns of Nazianzen's thought: the paradox of unity and diversity in the Godhead. I will draw out his promising theology of fatherhood by first demonstrating an association between mystery and the Father (4.2 below) before giving attention to fatherhood more generally and how his account of the Triune nature of God necessitates the Father possessing the *monarchia*, yet in no rigid sense (4.3 below).

It is in Nazianzen's vision of dynamic unity that his account of fatherhood takes shape. He envisions the Father as the 'starting' and 'end' point of a movement flowing out of his abundant generosity and returning to him in unity. This dynamic movement integrates aspects of his thought, leading to a nuanced understanding of the place of the Father in the divine life. The result is a "timeless, unchanging rhthym" where a 'give and return' marks the heart of that divine life.[7] In the end, I will show his articulation of divine life results in a 'balancing effect', with the dynamic movements of the persons providing a certain ballast to consideration of the Father's monarchy (4.4 below). While this will produce some ambiguities, it does not make the Father's place within the Triune life any less important within Nazianzen's theology.

Schopfer: Forscher aus dem Osten und Westen Europas an den Quellen des gemeinsamen Glaubens, eds. Ysabel de Andia and Peter Leander Hofrichter (Innsbruck-Wien: Tyrolia-Verlag, 2007), 111.

[5] Nazianzen repeatedly insists "that the knowledge of God is inseparably related to the condition of the human knower" (Beeley, *Gregory of Nazianzus*, 63). Beeley notes Nazianzen speaks to the importance of the theologian's piety both at the beginning of *Or.* 27 and at the end of *Or.* 31, thus forming a large inclusio for the *Theological Orations* and "framing his great Trinitarian project within this theme" ("The Holy Spirit in Gregory of Nazianzen: The Pneumatology of *Oration* 31," from *God in Early Christian Thought: Essays in Memory of Lloyd G. Patterson,* ed. Andrew B. McGowen, et al. [Leiden: Brill, 2009], 162).

[6] McGuckin notes how readers must eschew literalistic readings of Nazianzen and adapt to "the subtlety of an ancient rhetor, who freighted every phrase with a precisely loaded nuance suitable for the occasion." *Saint Gregory of Nazianzus,* xxi.

[7] Brian E. Daley, S.J., *Gregory of Nazianzus,* The Early Church Fathers (New York: Routledge, 2006), 46. In the words of Claudio Moreschini, "El Padre es la unión de la Trinidad, de él provienen y a él vuelven todas las realidades sucesivas, es decir, las otras dos Personas, que no se confunden con la Primera, sino que están unidas a él, no divididas por tiempo o por la voluntad del Padre" ("Dios Padre en la especulacion de Gregario Nacianceno," *Estudios Trinitarios* 26 [1992]: 53).

4.2 Approaching the Father

I know that it is upon a flimsy raft that we set out on a great voyage,
or upon frail wings we hasten towards the starry heaven…[8]

As Nazianzen sets off in his *Poemata Arcana* to give poetic description to the Father, he presents two contrasts that highlight, through engaging the imagination, the near impossibility of reaching a destination.[9] The sheer scale of the 'journey' required for a human being to gain understanding of the Godhead, along with the weakness of the native materials to make that journey, are the first impressions Nazianzen is concerned to convey in a collection of theological poems that mirror, in part, his *Theological Orations*. In those orations, after some significant 'throat clearing' in *Or.* 27 on the need for restraint in theological discourse, he states tersely: "We must begin…with this in mind. To know God is hard… (Θεὸν νοῆσαι μὲν χαλεπόν)."[10] The challenge presented in knowing God foregrounds Nazianzen's exposition of the doctrine of the Trinity. There are difficulties in discerning the precise original arrangement of the theological orations and poems. Nonetheless, they are strikingly similar in their approach to the mystery of the Trinity.[11] There are also difficulties in privileging the orations and poems as definitive statements of Nazianzen's Trinitarian theology, especially since the former were presented in a polemical context tilted toward the concerns of his theological enemies. With that said, the descriptive reticence Nazianzen displays when approaching the mystery of the Trinity is a common theme throughout his writings, given picture in his frequent reference to the figure of Moses ascending the mount (found in Exodus 19-20 and 24).[12]

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[8] *Carm.* 1.1.1.1-2 (Moreschini and Sykes, 2).

[9] For helpful background and analysis of the *Poemata Arcana* see introduction and commentary in *Poemata Arcana,* trans. D. A. Sykes, ed. C. Moreschini, Oxford Theological Monographs (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997). See also Brian Daley's "Systematic Theology in Homeric Dress: Gregory of Nazianzen's *Poemata Arcana*" in *Re-Reading Gregory of Nazianzus,* ed., Christopher A. Beeley (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2012), 3-12.

[10] *Or.* 28.4 (SC 250:106).

[11] For a survey of the manuscript tradition of the *Theological Orations*, including the question of place of *Or.* 28, see Norris, *Faith Gives Fullness,* 71-80; G. Lafontaine; J. Mossay; and M. Sicherl, "Vers une edition critique," *RHE* 40 (1979): 626-640; Tadeusz Sinko, *De Traditione orationum Gregorii Nazianzeni: I; De traditione directa,* Meletemata Patristica 2 (Krakow: Sumptibus Academiae Litterarum, 1917), 11-12, 20-21; Jean Bernardi, *La predication des pères cappadociens: Le prédicateur et son auditoire,* Publications de la Faculté des Lettres et Sciences Humaines de l'Université de Montpellier 30 (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1968), 183-185.
Beeley notes the organization of the *Theological Orations* and the *Poemeta Arcana* matches Origen's *On First Principles* even as their content is touched by the concerns of Nazianzen's day. *Gregory of Nazianzus on the Trinity,* 3-4.

[12] See *Ors.* 2.92; 9.1; 18.14; 20.2; 32.16, 33; 28.2-3; 31.1; 37.3; 38.7; 39.9; 40.45; 45.11; *Carm.* 1.1.1.11-13. Beeley credits Nazianzen for the image of Moses as a primary model of Christian growth and

In *Or.* 20.2 a singular Moses is presented as one who receives divine knowledge, although in order to receive it he must ascend a mountain and walk into a terrifying cloud. The way of theology is considered by this image to be a mystical ascent to the peak of Mount Sinai. However, when one reaches 'the peak' what is seen, according to *Or.* 28.3, is an "averted figure" of God:

> What experience of this I have had, you friends and initiates and fellow lovers of truth? I was running with a mind to see God and so it was that I ascended onto the mount (Ἔτρεχον μὲν ὡς Θεὸν καταληψόμενος, καὶ οὕτως ἀνῆλθον ἐπὶ τὸ ὄρος). I penetrated the cloud, became enclosed in it, detached from matter and material things and concentrated, so far as might be, in myself. But when I directed my gaze I scarcely saw the averted figure of God (μόλις εἶδον Θεοῦ τὰ ὀπίσθια), and this while sheltering in the rock, the Word incarnate for us. Peering in a little I saw not the nature prime, inviolate, self-apprehended (by "self" I mean the Trinity), the nature as it abides within the first veil and is hidden by the Cherubim, but as it reaches to us at its furthest point. And it is, so far as I can understand, the grandeur, or as divine David calls it the "mystery" inherent in the created things he has brought forth and governs. For all these indications of himself that he has left behind him are God's "averted figure" (Θεοῦ τὰ ὀπίσθια), as if shadowy reflections of the Sun in water, reflections which display to eyes too weak, because too impotent to gaze at it, the Sun overmastering perception in the purity of its light.[13]

In this passage in the *Second Theological Oration* Nazianzen puts himself in the place of Moses in order to limit expectation of divine knowledge – shutting down altogether knowledge of God's being – and direct one's sights to Christ and the things of the visible world. Presenting himself as a model theologian, Nazianzen communicates that even he, who has ascended the mount as a 'Moses', deals in "shadowy reflections"—this because of God's transcendent light and limited human faculty. The message to his hearers and readers is cautionary and abundantly clear: if you desire to know God, prepare for an arduous, ascending journey the end of which does not promise a 'big reveal'; rather, even the successful seeker struggles to 'take in' divine knowledge because of limitations in human theological perception and, more importantly, the 'overmastering' nature of the Divine Light. Indeed, God *has* left certain 'revelations' of himself within the created order. One is even excitedly drawn to them due to their scintillating character (like "sun in water"). Nonetheless, the vision of God in this life will always be in some way distorted

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the vision of God. For potential antecedents of this motif in Origen, see *Gregory of Nazianzus,* 65n.6.

[13] (SC 250: 104-106).

(like "sun in water"). Clarity, however, can be gained when one enters into a process of purification.

After carefully calibrating expectations of theological knowledge according to the respective natures of the seeker and divine object, Nazianzen does hold out promise to grow in one's knowledge if committed to purification. Purification is a sine qua non, according to Nazianzen, in order to grow in the theological quest for the vision of God.[14] At the outset of *Or.* 20 Nazianzen introduces the image of a mirror and the necessity for human knowers to increasingly purify themselves so that their nature mirrors God's. This is done, according to Nazianzen in *Or.* 20.1, through detachment from materiality that drags downwards. What is needed is for the seeker to increasingly associate herself with the Pure One, thereby pressing forward to perfect knowledge which is reached when "mirrors are dissolved in true reality (λυθέντων τῶν ἐσόπτρων τῇ ἀληθείᾳ)."[15] While this perfection is an impossibility in this world, Nazianzen is encouraging a measure of growth in theological perception so long as the way is 'cleared' through the knower's purification. The nature of this purification takes on particularity in Christian living through the rejection of sinful practice and the keeping of biblical commandments.[16] In *Or.* 39.8 Nazianzen's estimation of materiality – the flesh – softens from that which one must detach from to that which must be cleansed, the cleansing of which clears the cloud "that blocks the soul's vision and keeps it from seeing clearly the rays of divine illumination (τὴν θείαν ἀκτῖνα)."[17] Again, this vision is sharpened while the knower purifies himself through increasingly "interacting…with what is pure (τῷ καθαρῷ)."[18] Such an association requires the negative of purgation while also suggesting a more positive counterpart: illumination.

According to Nazianzen, an increasingly clear vision of God is carried along by the two poles of purification and illumination. While speaking theoretically of bodiless spiritual beings in *Or.* 28.4, Nazianzen highlights the requirement of illumination for

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[14] Nazianzen refers to this need in several places: *Ors.* 15.1; 4.11; 6.1; 7.17; 9.1-2; 15.1; 20.1-4; 32.12; 36.10; 38.7; 39.8-10, 14; 45.11; *Carm.* 1.1.1.8b-15; 1.2.10.972f. See Thomas Špidlík, *Grégoire de Nazianze: Introduction à l'étude de sa doctrine spirituelle,* Orientalia Christiana Analecta 189 (Rome: Pont. Institutum Studiorum Orientalium, 1971), 113f. On purification through contemplation in Nazianzen, see Jean Plagnieux, *Saint Grégoire de Nazianze Theologien.* (Paris: Éditions Franciscaines, 1952), 81-111. On purification through *praxis* focused on the example of Christ leading to illumination, see T. Spidlík, S.J., "La *theoria* et la *praxis* chez Grégoire de Nazianze," *SP* 14 (1976): 358-364.

[15] *Or.* 20.1 (SC 270:58).

[16] *Or.* 20.12.

[17] (SC 354:164).

[18] *Or.* 39.9 (SC 354:164).

growing clarity in one's vision of God: these "through their nearness to God and their illumination by light (τῷ φωτὶ καταλάμπεσθαι) in its fullness know God if not with total clarity, at least more completely."[19] A seeker's illumination, therefore, comes from the light of God. When Nazianzen speaks of the Trinity he speaks of three lights, each equally manifesting the light of God—for each is God.[20] That includes, of course, the Holy Spirit.

Nazianzen stood out at his time for unashamedly contending for a vigorous articulation of the divinity of the Holy Spirit.[21] The light of the Holy Spirit is important for a consideration of illumination, because it is the Spirit who brings the light of God to seekers. Thus, Nazianzen's defense of the full divinity of the Holy Spirit was also, within his particular theology, a defense of the 'knowability' of God: "We receive the Son's light from the Father's light *in the light of the Spirit* (ἐκ φωτὸς τοῦ Πατρὸς φῶς καταλαμβανοντες τὸν Υἱὸν ἐν φωτὶ τῷ Πνεύματι)."[22] Nazianzen does not always draw a specific connection between illumination within the seeker and being indwelled by the Spirit, but in relating his Trinitarian theology with his spiritual epistemology the link is inevitable.[23] That is to say, as one grows in knowing God it is through purification and illumination, the latter being a process whereby the Spirit fills the seeker with the light of God.[24] We will come to see that the illumination wrought by the Spirit has a Trinitarian shape, which will, for our purposes, shed light on the Father. For now, it is enough to see that seekers after the vision

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[19] (SC 250:108).

[20] See *Or.* 31.3.

[21] *Or.* 31, on the Holy Spirit, is perhaps the best known of Nazianzen's *Theological Orations* and, in the judgment of Haykin, "his definitive statement on the Holy Spirit" (*The Spirit of God,* 174).

[22] *Or.* 31.3, emphasis mine (SC 250:280). See also *Or.* 2.39: "[By the Spirit] alone we are able to perceive, and to interpret, and to understand (νοεῖται καὶ ἑρμηνεύεται καὶ ἀκούεται) the truth in regard to God " (SC 247:140).

[23] In *Or.* 31.26-29 Nazianzen outlines his view of the progressive revelation of the Trinity within salvation history. The revelation of the Spirit stands in 'third place', as it were, as a result of the preparation for the coming of the Son and, then, the Spirit's 'gradual' revelation by the Son within the course of his earthly ministry culminating in his ascension. Within this section Nazianzen speaks of the gradual revelation of the Spirit, in accord with the disciples' capability to receive him. It is a light that shines "bit by bit (κατὰ μέρος)" (31.27 [SC 250:328]). Even though Nazianzen is primarily speaking here of a grand view of God's revelation of himself in salvation history, he is secondarily suggesting and then outlining the Spirit's unique work within the seeker—including "illumination' (φωτιστικόν)" (31.29 [SC 250:334]). Christopher A. Beeley notes that the close of *Or.* 31 (the *Fifth Theological Oration*) mirrors the opening of *Or.* 27 (the *First Theological Oration*), forming a large inclusio that highlights, for Nazianzen, the crucial role of the theologian's piety in knowing the Trinity. *Or.* 31 stresses the Spirit's role in this knowledge ("The Holy Spirit in Gregory Nazianzen: The Pneumatology of *Oration* 31," from *God in Early Christian Thought: Essays in Honor of Lloyd Patterson*, ed. Andrew McGowan [Leiden: Brill, 2009], 159-160).

[24] See *Carm.* 2.2.1 (PG 37:1017): "O Spirit who proceeds from the Father (πατρόθενεῖσι), the light of our minds (νόου φάος ἡμετέροιο), who come to the pure, and to divinized illumined human beings, be gracious and grant to me as the years roll on that even now and in the future I may be wholly joined with the Godhead (ὅλῃ θεόητι μιγέντα) and sing your praises with a boundless joy."

of God must leave behind their sin and begin walking in the commandments of the Lord, which is done as the light of God is progressively revealed through the indwelling of the Spirit.

In summary, while Nazianzen desires to warn off any half-hearted or deluded seekers after the vision of God, he does not want to instill hopelessness on the question of advancing in that vision. Despite God's unmeasured boundlessness, and limited human spiritual faculty, a measure of knowledge is possible; and it is received within a dynamic spiritual 'environment' where the seeker is increasingly, on the one hand, detached from that which would weigh down and, on the other hand, drawn by the Spirit to become like that which one seeks—to receive the light of the vision of God. Nazianzen states the mysterious object of our search breeds "wonder" in the seeker which, in turn, stirs up a deeper "yearning" leading to greater purification and, therefore, 'intimacy' with God:

> God always is…. For he contains the whole of existence in himself (Ὅλον γὰρ ἐν ἑαθτῷ συλλαβὼν ἔχει τὸ εἶναι), without beginning or end, like an endless, boundless ocean of being; he extends beyond all our notions of time and nature, and is outlined by the mind alone, but only very dimly and in a limited way; he is known not directly but indirectly, as one representation (φαντασία) is derived from another to form a single image (ἴνδαλμα) of the truth: fleeing before it is grasped, escaping before it is fully known, shining on our guided reason – provided we have been purified – as a swift, fleeting flash of lightening shines in our eyes. And he does this, it seems to me, so that, insofar as it can be comprehended, the Divine might draw us to itself – for what is completely incomprehensible (ἄληπτον) is also beyond hope, beyond attainment – but that insofar as it is incomprehensible (τῷ ἀλήπτῳ), it might stir up our wonder, and through wonder might be yearned for all the more, and through our yearning might purify us, and in purifying us might make us like God (καθαῖρον δὲ θεοειδεῖς ἐργάζηται); and when we have become this, that he might then associate with us intimately as friends (ὡς οἰκείοις, ἤδη προσομιλῇ) – my words here are rash and daring! – uniting himself with us, making himself known to us, as God to gods, perhaps to the same extent that he already knows those who are known by him.
>
> The Divine, then, is boundless and difficult to contemplate (Ἄπειρον οὖν τὸ θεῖον καὶ δυσθεώρητον); the only thing completely comprehensible (πάντα καταληπτὸν) about it is its boundlessness.[25]

I have been outlining Nazianzen's general approach to the question of the knowledge of God. The question is fraught with the tensions of mystery. Indeed the fact that he accents this at the beginning of his works 'ordered' by the Trinitarian persons (i.e.,

[25] *Or.* 38.7 (SC 358:114-116).

the *Poemeta Arcana* and *Theological Orations*) suggests an association with the Father and a judgment regarding his mysterious 'place' within the Trinity. In searching for appropriate ways to communicate the nature of divine mystery Nazianzen is adumbrating an approach to knowledge of the Father.[26]

We glimpse this connection by looking again to *Carm.* 1.1.1. Later in the poem, after briefly traversing the challenges in knowing God, Nazianzen associates 'God' and 'Godhead' with the Father. This is a relatively consistent association in his writings (though below we will examine whether he wavers in this). The equating of 'God' with 'Father' highlights the 'beginning point' of divine knowledge and associates mystery specifically with the Father:

> There is one God (εἷς Θεός ἐστιν), without beginning, without cause, not circumscribed by anything existing before or in time to come. He encompasses eternity, he is infinite; the great Father (Πατὴρ μέγας) of the great, only-begotten, excellent Son, the Father who experiences through the Son nothing corporeal, since he is Mind. There is one other who is God, though not other in point of Godhead (οὐκ ἄλλος θεότητι), the Word of God. He, the living image of his Father, is alone Son of the one who is without beginning, unique Son of the only God, equal in excellence, so that the one should remain entirely Father (ὁ μὲν μίμνῃ γενέτης ὅλον), while the Son should be the founder of the universe who steers its course, at once the strength and understanding of the Father (Πατρὸς σθένος ἠδὲ νόημα). There is one Spirit, God from the good God.[27]

We see that the Son and Spirit are invoked within this passage, but they are referred back to their origin, the Father. This is appropriate because while Nazianzen affirms they are God, it is so because they are "from God" or are not "other" in their Godhead. That is to say, they are *from the Father* who possesses the Godhead and gives it to the Son and Spirit. From this point, within the *Poemeta Arcana*, Nazianzen goes on to fill out an understanding of the Son and the Spirit. Much else of what he will say about the Father is how he is

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[26] Louth, "St Gregory of Nazianzus," 111. Louth's full section reads: "To grasp Gregory's understanding of the place of the Father in the Trinity, we need, I think, to take a few steps back and look more carefully at how Gregory approaches his exposition of the doctrine of the Trinity. Even though the present arrangement and order of the five so called 'Theological Orations', and the closely parallel first three *poemata arcana,* raise many problems, if we take them as they are, they are strikingly similar in their approach to the mystery of the Trinity. They both start with general considerations about how we are to approach our understanding of God, laying great stress on the mystery confronted, on the limitations of human understanding – emphasizing with all Gregory's eloquence what we might call the apophatic – and then move on to considerations of the Son and the Spirit. Either there is nothing specific on the Father, or alternatively what appear to be general considerations about divine knowledge are to be understood as adumbrating what Gregory has to say about knowledge of the Father. I believe that it is the second approach that is the correct one."

[27] *Carm.* 1.1.1.25-35 (Moreschini and Sykes, 2-4).

revealed through them, the Son and Spirit.

This same pattern is observed in the *Theological Orations*. After two orations stressing the need for purification and difficulty of approaching an infinite God, only then does Nazianzen go on and speak of the person of the Father. What he has to say, though, comes out of the ways the Father reveals himself in the Son and Spirit. Again, the 'Father' is presumed to be synonymous with 'God', in that the 'Begotten' "stems from God (ἐκ Θεοῦ)" as the 'Son' "stems" from the Father.[28] But in approaching the person of the Father, the 'starting point' for discourse on the Trinity, we are left with Nazianzen's rhetorical overflow of theological caution inspired by incomprehensible mystery. Pursue a vision of God, yes, Nazianzen might say; but be prepared for an arduous journey, a journey needing the supply of purification and illumination. And as you seek *the Father*, know you embark on an endless journey, where one asks, "What springs (πηγῶν) do the first springs (αἱ πρῶται πηγαί) have? Look for them and see if you, a man, are able to discover or track one down."[29]

4.3 The Trinity's "Timeless Beginning": Divine Fatherhood in Nazianzen

While understanding Nazianzen's general reticence to speak directly about the Father sets our inquiry within a certain apophatic mood, we are still left, in a more positive vein, with the sections in Nazianzen's corpus where he articulates Trinitarian doctrine and the specific ways fatherhood is revealed through the Son and Spirit. For it is primarily through the Trinitarian relations – specifically 'relations of origin' – that we gain a picture of divine fatherhood in Nazianzen. In addition to the *Poemata Arcana* and *Theological Orations* there are, of course, many places where Nazianzen touches upon the divine persons, often with great rhetorical panache and theological density. Rather than going through each of them seriatim, however, I will use *Or.* 40.41 as an integrating text. Within it there are the necessary ingredients for elaboration on how the Father is conceived within Nazianzen's Trinitarian theology. Within elaboration, integration of other salient passages from Nazianzen's works takes place in order to sketch a picture drawing in the complexities of speaking of the mystery of the Father.

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[28] *Or.* 29.11 (SC 250:198-200).

[29] *Or.* 28.27 (SC 250:160). Though Nazianzen is here speaking of the natural world, there is an analogical connection to the divine, and I think the association with the Father is apropos given the notes of generativity that we will hit upon in the remainder of this chapter.

Or. 40 is a sermon celebrating baptism. Given the biblical invocation of the Trinitarian names, and the nature of the Faith into which the baptismal subject is being initiated, the occasion provides rich opportunity for Nazianzen to outline the nature of God and participation in divine life. Toward the end of the oration he takes opportunity to speak to the Trinitarian confession of his subject. The relevant section in *Or.* 40.41 reads thus:

> Above all, guard for me the good deposit…, the confession of Father and Son and Holy Spirit. I entrust this to you today. With this I will both submerge you and raise you up. This I give you as a partner and protector for all your life, the one divinity and power (τὴν μίαν θεότητά τε καὶ δύναμιν), found in unity in the three (ἐν τοῖς τρισὶν εὑρισκομένην ἑνικῶς), and gathering together the three as distinct (καὶ τὰ τρία συλλαμβάνουσαν μεριστῶς); neither uneven in substances or nature (οὐσίαις ἢ φύσεσιν), nor increased or decreased by superiorities or inferiorities; from every perspective equal (ἴσην), from every perspective the same, as the beauty and greatness of heaven is one; an infinite coalescence of three infinities (τριῶν ἀπείρων ἄπειρον συμφυΐαν); each God when considered in himself (Θεὸν ἕκαστον καθ' ἑαυτὸ θεωρούμενον); as the Father so the Son, as the Son so the Holy Spirit; each preserving his properties (τῆς ἰδιότητος). The three are God when known together, each God because of the consubstantiality (τὴν ὁμοουσιότητα), one God because of the monarchy (τὴν μοναρχίαν). When I first know the one I am also illumined from all sides by the three (τοῖς τρισῖ περιλάμπομαι); when I first distinguish the three I am also carried back to the one (εἰς τὸ ἕν ἀναφέρομαι). When I picture one of the three I consider the whole, and my eyes are filled, and the greater part (τὸ πλεῖον) has escaped me. I cannot grasp the greatness of that one in order to grant something greater to the rest. When I bring the three together in contemplation (τῇ θεωρίᾳ), I see one torch and am unable to divide or measure (διελεῖν ἢ μετρῆσαι) the united light.[30]

Within this dense passage – just as packed with evocative rhetoric as with theological content – we perceive Nazianzen's characteristic connection between the knowledge and experience of God as with who God is himself. That is to say, God is not approached as a neutral object from which we can glean certain truths or characteristics; he is one upon whom we affectionately gaze, who progressively reveals himself to those who pursue that vision with their whole lives. As we saw above with regard to illumination, throughout Nazianzen's writings the vision of God is synonymous with the knowledge of God. Consistent with the approach to the Father we have already outlined, the "greater part (τὸ

[30] (SC 358:292-293).

πλεῖον)" always escapes view. *Light*, even a three-fold light, dawns upon the theologian through a contemplative vision—the theologian is not left in darkness.[31] Yet, while what is gained in Trinitarian knowledge is real, it is also mysterious; as soon as the spiritual eye is "filled (πεπλήρωμαι)" it is overwhelmed, for it cannot survey – "divide or measure (διελεῖν ἢ μετρῆσαι)" – the whole. What it endeavors to take in will always lead it to what is beyond circumscription.

Indeed, the drumbeat of divine incomprehensibility and a consequent apophatic mood accompanies any Trinitarian inquiry within Nazianzen. Nonetheless, this specific passage provides the elements for an outline for our purposes of considering the Father within the Trinity:

(1) Divine knowledge gained through a 'spiritual gaze' brought about by the Spirit.
(2) A contemplative vision leads one to consider a 'dizzying' manifestation of three and one.
(3) Two patterns emerge of a single light and yet three lights:
    i. Each light – person – can be known directly, but that knowledge is patterned.
    ii. The three lights have one origin, a source of 'light' that is the 'reason' for the three equal lights. As one observes the three, one is caught in their movement of convergence to return to the source, the Father.

In what follows, this brief outline will guide, and I will pull in, where appropriate, additional relevant sections from Nazianzen's larger oeuvre. Because of the integration of a Trinitarian spirituality and theology, I launch off in this inquiry with contemplation—who enables it and where it leads.

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[31] Light and contemplative vision are bound together in Nazianzen. On the pervasiveness of light imagery in his writings, see John Egan, "Toward a Mysticism of Light in Gregory Nazianzen's *Oratio* 32.15," *SP* 18:3 (1989): 473-482; Manfred Kertsch, *Bildersprache bei Gregor von Nazianz: Ein Beitrag zur spätantiken Rhetorik und Popularphilosophie,* Grazer Theologische Studien (Graz: Johannes B. Bauer, 1978); Claudio Moreschini, "Luce e purificazione nella dottrine di Gregorio Nazianzeno," *Aug* 13 (1973): 534-549; and SC 358:63-66. The most comprehensive study remains John Egan's unpublished dissertation, "The Knowledge and Vision of God according to Gregory Nazianzen: A study of the Images of Mirror and Light," diss., Institut Catholique de Paris, 1971.
Light imagery is tied to the analogy between God and the sun in Nazianzen. As Paul Gallay points out (SC 250:168n.1), this derives from Plato's *Republic* 6, 508C. Ben Fulford notes, "Gregory is quite aware that he is borrowing this figure from a non-Christian source, for, in *Or.* 28.30 he attributes it to 'a non-Christian thinker' (literally, 'one of the foreigners', SC 250:169). That Gregory should find Plato's analogy congenial in no way negates the great difference between them in their accounts of God and our relation to him" (*Divine Eloquence and Human Transformation: Rethinking Scirpture and History through Gregory of Nazianzus and Hans Frei,* Emerging Scholars [Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2013], 54n.16).

4.3.1 *The Spirit-enabled Vision*

In the foregoing we have already drawn the connection between illumination and the vision of God when speaking about the dual need of purification and illumination in order to clarify that vision. The connections between illumination, vision, and the Spirit are sometimes implied and other times made more explicit. When Nazianzen speaks of the Spirit as *light* the connections come together. The Spirit is not simply one of the lights of the Trinity, an object of our spiritual vision—he enables 'access' to the other divine lights. In the words of *Or.* 41.9, "He is light (φῶς) and distributes light (φωτός)…. He is the Spirit…through whom the Father is known and the Son glorified (δι' οὗ Πατὴρ γινώσκεται καὶ Υἱὸς δαξάζεται), and by whom alone he is known."[32] Put simply: the vision of God is *enabled* by the Spirit.[33] He has primary epistemological importance, which is to say the content of the vision of God that we receive through contemplation is *first received* on account of the Spirit. In *Or.* 31.3, Nazianzen explains this dynamic through David's prophetic vision in Psalm 36:9: "In your light we shall see light." Put 'Trinitarianly', in the 'Spirit's light' the light of the Father and Son are understood. And to put it even another way, through the Spirit's illuminating work wrought in contemplation, we are led to the other divine persons. Clarity on what ultimately guides and orders this vision is the subject I am exploring.

4.3.2 *The Unity and Diversity of the Godhead*

In the contemplative vision of God brought about by the Spirit one is led to a 'dizzying' manifestation of the threeness and oneness of God, his unity and diversity. Nazianzen pictures himself as a seeker who is *continuously* led in his contemplation from one to three and from three back to one: "When I first know the one I am also illumined from all sides by the three; when I first distinguish the three I am also carried back to the one."[34] There is much to unpack here, both in theological content and rhetorical framing.

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[32] (SC 358:334-336).

[33] Beeley provides an account of the development of Nazianzen's Pneumatology in *Gregory of Nazianzus*, 156-169, and helpfully highlights the Spirit as the "epistemic principle" of all knowledge of God and basis for his doctrine of grace (179-180). At the same time, however, his overall account in chapter 3 is too worried to present Nazianzen as the fourth-century hero: "Given the sort of Pneumatological argumentation we have just examined, it is not surprising that the same theologian who championed the doctrine of the Spirit with such power and insight should also be one who presents the most comprehensive and penetrating doctrine of the Trinity in his age" (185).

[34] *Or.* 40.41.

In fact, in Nazianzen's rhetorical framing of the theological question at hand he is suggesting something of the reality to which he speaks. Take Nazianzen's description of light that portrays a dynamic simultaneity to consideration of the three and one, a description paralleled in a few other passages.[35] For example, in *Or.* 39.11 Nazianzen says,

> When I speak of God, let yourselves be surrounded with a lightening flash of light that is both one and three (ἑνι φωτὶ περιαστράφθητε καὶ τρισί): three in properties (τὰς ἰδιότητας), or indeed in hypostases (ὑποστάσεις), if one wants to call them that, or persons (πρόσωπα)—for we will not become involved in a battle over names, as long as the syllables point towards the same notions—and one with regard to the concept of substance (οὐσίας), or indeed divinity (θεότητος). It is divided without division, if I may speak in this way, and is joined together in the midst of distinction. The divinity is one in three, and the three are one (Ἓν γὰρ τρισὶν ἡ θεότης, καὶ τὰ τρία ἕν)—in whom the divinity exists, or, to speak more accurately, who are the divinity.[36]

After this Nazianzus goes on to situate this description between two extremes (as he sees them): on the one side, the Sabellians and their "aggregation" of the three into an "unholy mass" and, on the other side, the Arians and their "alienation" of the one which cuts God into "inequalities (ἀνισότητα)."[37] Rather than Nazianzen giving description to the Trinity in a way that moves from the three to the one, or the one to the three, he upholds both simultaneously, characterizing his perception of this simultaneity as being somehow 'surrounded' on 'all sides'. Thus, within his vision he holds together that the divinity is simultaneously three in one and one in three. Bringing these two together is a rhetorical construction where two things that appear in tension are actually complementary, and given the nature of what is under consideration such rhetorical description is appropriate. That is to say, the mysterious nature of the divine requires certain tensions in speech concerning it.[38] And this 'both/and' concerning the nature of

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[35] Cf., *Or.* 31.3, 14; 39.11; *Carm.* 1.1.3.

[36] (SC 358:172). Gregory's ambivalence to ὑποστάσις demonstrated here stands in contrast with what will be seen in Basil in the next chapter, who himself grew in preference for it over πρόσωπον. Holl notes this difference between the two friends: "Dass die Idee der ὑποστάσις be Gregor sich nicht ganz mit der Basilius deckt, ist auch noch durch eine weitere Beobachtung zu erhärten. Gregor gebraucht das Wort ὑποστάσις überhaupt nicht allzuoft, weit seltener als Basilius, und, was noch wichtiger ist, er lässt gerne πρόσωπον (und ἰδιότης) als Synonyma dafür eintreten" (*Amphilochius von Ikonium in seinem Verhältnis zu den grossen Kappadoziern* [Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1904], 179).

[37] *Or.* 39.11 (SC 358:172). This method of navigating two extremes is also conceived in *Or.* 23.8 as that which is between what is "Judaic" and what is "Greek" and "polytheistic". Cf. *Or.* 38.8.

[38] John Anthony McGuckin writes that Nazianzen deliberately applies "rhetorical antitheses held in proximate tension to suggest a dynamic correlation" ("The Vision of God in St. Gregory Nazianzen," *SP* 32 [1997]: 145-152).

God stands in contrast with the 'neither/nor' vis-à-vis heretical constructions of the divine. It is as if after ascending the mount and attempting to reveal the fullness of his theological vision which demands rhetorical 'both/ands', he descends back to earth and clearly marks off its false theological attempts with 'neither/nors'. This gives him a certain vigor in the apophatic key, while rejecting clear positions to his 'right' and 'left'. Carving a 'golden mean', he then makes positive assertions that sit in tension. A case in point of Nazianzen juxtaposing his rhetorical 'both/and' with his 'neither/nor' is found in *Or.* 20.5-6:

> We worship the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, dividing their properties (τὰς μὲν ἰδιότητας χωρίζοντες) but uniting their Godhead (ἑνοῦντες δὲ τὴν θεότητα); and we neither blend (συναλείφομεν) the three into one, lest we be sick with Sabellius's disease, nor do we divide (διαιροῦμεν) them into three alien and unrelated things, lest we share Arius's madness. For why should we act like those who try to straighten a plant bent over completely in one direction by forcibly training it the opposite way, correcting one deviation by another? Rather, we should straighten it midway between the two, and so take our position within the bounds of reverence (ἐν ὅροις ἵστασθαι τῆς θεοσεβείας). When I speak of such a middle position, I mean the truth (τὴν ἀλήθειαν), which we do well to have sight of alone, and rejecting both a bad approach to unity (συναίρεσιν) and even as fouler version of distinction.[39]

What Nazianzen is *not* saying is that simply navigating a 'middle way' will lead one to the truth. Rather, the two 'rival' positions on each side emphasize either 'one' or 'three' to an extent unworthy of God's Triune character. In Nazianzen's understanding, both unity and diversity must be mysteriously held together in order to account for the richness of his vision.[40]

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[39] (SC 270:66-68).

[40] Antinomy is a structural element in Nazianzen's Trinitarian theology, as noted by Vladimir Lossky, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*, trans. members of the Fellowship of Saint Alban and Saint Sergius (Cambridge: James Clarke, 1957), 44-66. See also Verna E. F. Harrison, "Illumined from All Sides by the Trinity: Neglected Themes in Gregory's Trinitarian Theology," in *Re-Reading Gregory of Nazianzus,* ed., Christopher A. Beeley (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2012), 15-17. On Nazianzen's literary and rhetorical style shaping the framing of his theology see Harrison, "Illumined from All Sides by the Trinity," 15-22; McGuckin, "The Vision of God in St. Gregory Nazianzen," 145-152; Francesco Trisoglio, *Gregorio di Nazianzo il teologo,* Studia Patristica Mediolanensia 20 (Milan: Vita e Pensiero, 1996), 185-228.

4.3.3 *Is There a Pattern to these Three?*

In probing that vision further, I first take into account Nazianzen's assertion that each of the three 'lights' or divine persons can be known and is directly present to him. The picture provided by *Or.* 40.41 is of three lights – the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – surrounding him, "each God when considered in himself (Θεὸν ἕκαστον καθ' ἑαυτὸ θεωρούμενον)" and, therefore, each an object of worship. Earlier within the same oration, Nazianzen introduced this image of light within the Trinity in apophatic terms first by saying there is a "highest light (φῶς ἀκρότατον)" that is "unapproachable (ἀπόσιτον)" and "ineffable (ἄρρητον)."[41] Yet, through a purified contemplation it is able to be known, and is equally evident in the "Father and Son and Holy Spirit, whose wealth is the confluence and the leaping forth of this radiance (ἔξαλμα τῆς λαμπρότητος)."[42] While Nazianzen again upholds the knowability of each of the divine persons, and utilizes evocative light imagery to picture his direct knowledge of the Father and Son and Holy Spirit, there is also the suggestion of the singularity of the light which provides the "wealth" that, so to speak, manifests the divinity of each of the Trinitarian persons. Consequently, as Nazianzen speaks of the three divine persons he is brought back to what holds them together, to what, as it were, 'funds' their shared character. This move is not, therefore, a mere assertion of the mutual presence of the three and one or of the diversity and unity. It is, rather, a suggestion of underlying patterns that contribute to an understanding of their complementarity.

In his *Fifth Theological Oration*, Nazianzen, when addressing the unity and diversity of the Godhead, again utilizes the image of light and connects it to suns:

> To us there is one God because there is a single Godhead (Ἡμῖν εἷς Θεός, ὅτι μία θεότης), and what proceeds from him is referred to one, though we believe in three…. To express it succinctly, the Godhead exists undivided in beings divided, and there is a single intermingling of light (μία τοῦ φωτὸς σύγκρασις), as it were, existing in three mutually connected suns (ἐν ἡλίος πρισὶν ἐχομένοις ἀλλήλων). When then we look at the Godhead, the first cause (τὴν πρώτην αἰτίαν), the monarchy (τὴν μοναρχίαω), what we have a mental picture of is one. But when we look at the three in whom the Godhead exists, and at those who derive their timeless and equally glorious being from the first cause (ἐκ τῆς πρώτης αἰτίας), there are three whom we

[41] *Or.* 40.5 (SC 358:204).
[42] Ibid.

worship.[43]

In our integrating text, *Or.* 40.41, Nazianzen uses the phrase "infinite coalescence of three infinities (τριῶν ἀπείρων ἄπειρον συμφυΐαν)" to vaguely describe how the persons of the Godhead are three and yet are united. This gives way to his perception of the dynamic simultaneity of one light yet three lights. Here, in *Or.* 31.14, the image provides more description for the relationship between the one and three. For you do not simply have a whirling perception of the three and one; there is, rather, the image of *one* "intermingling of light (μία τοῦ φωτὸς σύγκρασις)"[44] existing in "three mutually connected suns (ἐν ἡλίος πρισὶν ἐχομένοις ἀλλήλων)." This suggests an underlying relationship that is further clarified when Nazianzen speaks of the "Godhead" which is also the "first cause (τὴν πρώτην αἰτίαν)." While this text has a certain logic within it, it is not entirely clear on its own *whose* is the Godhead and *who* is the primal cause. It would seem, then, that if we can identify the single light with the Godhead or primal cause, we can begin to understand how the three and the one complement, or 'fit together' within the Trinity according to Nazianzen.

4.3.4 *The Dynamic Father: The 'Beginning' and 'End' of the Trinity*

This brings us to my contention that the Father is the one whose dynamic relationship with the Son and Spirit accounts for their unity in diversity and diversity in unity—what I will call 'dynamic unity'. To return again to our integrating text, *Or.* 40.41, Nazianzen begins a long sentence on the Triune God by asserting "the one divinity and power, found in unity in the three, and gathering together the three as distinct (τὴν μίαν θεότητά τε καὶ δύναμιν ἐν τοῖς τρισὶν εὑρισκομένην ἑνικῶς καὶ τὰ τρία συλλαμβάνουσαν μεριστῶς)" and then closes that same sentence by saying each divine person is "God because of the consubstantiality (διὰ τὴν ὁμοουσιότητα), one God because of the monarchy (διὰ τὴν μοναρχίαν)."[45] Like the ambiguity in *Or.* 31.14, it is not abundantly clear within this section if the Father is equated with "one divinity" or has "the

[43] *Or.* 31.14 (SC 250:302-304).

[44] In an example of Nazianzen borrowing a philosophical term and deploying it theologically, σύγκρασις is a Stoic technical term. Harrison notes, "It refers specifically to a kind of mixture in which the things blended—in this case the *activities* of the three divine persons, named as light—each retain their own identity and properties" (Harrison, "Illumined from All Sides by the Trinity," 21).

[45] (SC 358:294).

monarchy." But, if he is, then it is clear that, despite the overwhelming mysterious character of the Father within the Trinity, he provides a coherence to Nazianzen's account of 'dynamic simultaneity' between the three and one.[46] In what follows I will provide evidence for the Father possessing the divinity and the monarchy and explain that this grants explanatory power for Nazianzen's 'both/and' account of unity and diversity. With the evidence in place, I will then consider whether an apparent countervailing stream within Nazianzen's writings overwhelm our picture or fits into to it.

We return to the *Poemata Arcana* and the clarity provided on the Father when Nazianzen gives poetic attention to the Son. As a product of the end of Nazianzen's 'career' when he was in a reflective state, these poems are invaluable for their mature perspective. In 1.1.2 he writes of the eternal birth of the Son from the Father:

> Nothing ever existed before the great Father (μεγάλοιο Πατρὸς). For he who contains the universe and is dependent on the Father knows this, the one who is sprung from the great Father (ὁ Πατρὸς ἐκπεφυὼς μεγάλοιο), the Word of God, the timeless Son (ἄχρονος Υἱός), the image of the original, a nature equal to his who begot him. For the Father's glory is his great Son and he was manifested in a way known only to the Father and to the Son made known by him.[47]

The eternal birth of the Son necessitates an eternal equality, which Nazianzen briefly

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[46] The philosophical sources of Nazianzen's thought are complex and his appropriation largely contingent on their usefulness in articulating the unity and diversity of the Triune God. As John Dillon has pointed out, it seems there is a clear connection with a Plotinian schema in Nazianzen's pattern of the Father, though it must be viewed through a Porphyrian filter. Porphyry provides, Dillon contends, the metaphysical understanding for Nazianzen and other pro-Nicene theologians to appropriate the reality of co-ordinate persons within the Godhead (John Dillon, "Logos and Trinity," in *The Philosophy in Christianity,* ed. Godfrey Vesey, 1-14 [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989], 10-14). While Plotinus' hierarchical triad of the One, the Intellect, and the Soul asserts separation inimical to the equality of divine persons, his articulation of the triadic schema proved quite fertile for Nazianzen's conception of the 'dynamic three'. First there is a parallel noted by Dillon in the passage already quoted in *Or.* 29.2, where there is a movement from the Father which goes out and returns to him. In *Enn.* 5.2.1 Plotinus states:

> This, we may say, is the first act of generation (γέννησις): the One (ὂν), perfect because it seeks nothing, has nothing, and needs nothing, overflows (ὑπερερρύη), as it were, and its superabundance (τὸ ὑπερπλῆρες αὐτοῦ) makes something other than itself. This, when it has come into being, turns back upon the One and is filled, and becomes Intellect by looking towards it (εἰς αὐτὸ ἐπεστράφη καὶ ἐπληρώθη καὶ ἐγένετο πρὸς αὐτὸ βλέπον καὶ νοῦς). Its halt and turning towards the One constitutes being, its gaze upon the One, Intellect (καὶ ἡ μὲν πρὸς ἐκεῖνο στάσις αὐτοῦ τὸ ὂν ἐποίησεν, ἡ δὲ πρὸς αὐτὸ θέα τὸν νοῦν) (LCL 444:58-59).

While Dillon is right to note the metaphysical incompatibility in Plotinus, the overlap in schema with Nazianzen—of going out and returning—is striking. Cf. Torstein Theodor Tollefsen, "God the Father and God the Trinity - Divine Causality in Cappadocian Thought," in *Gott Vater und Schöpfer,* 145.

[47] *Carm.* 1.1.2.5-10 (Moreschini and Sykes, 4).

translates in terms of image and shared glory.[48] Distinction between Father and Son is held up by the order demonstrated through begetting, but equal nature means that, despite having an ordered 'beginning', the Son is as eternal as the Father: the Father is the Son's "timeless beginning (ἄχρονον ἀρχήν)."[49] Nazianzen goes on within this poem to note the distinctiveness of the Father: "As God, as progenitor, he is a mighty progenitor. But if it is a great thing for the Father to have no point of origin for his noble Godhead (εἰ δὲ μέγιστον Πατρὶ τὸ μή τιν' ἔχειν κεδνῆς θεότητος ἀφορμήν), it is no lesser glory for the revered offspring of the great Father to come from such a root (τοίην ῥίζαν)."[50] Nazianzen is arguing for two things at the same time here: on the one hand, he is upholding the full divinity of the Son through his origin and "root" in the Father and, on the other hand, he is arguing for the uniqueness of the Father's divinity as having no origin. What the Son has he has by way of relation with the Father. Lest the Spirit be left out, Nazianzen in *Carm.* 1.1.3 describes the Spirit's divinity "coming from the Father (Πατρόθεν ἐρχόμενον)),"[51] the "unoriginate root (ῥίζαν ἄναρχον)."[52] What the Father has is the originless "divinity": he is the "endless beginning" of the Trinity. He is, as mentioned above, the 'starting point' of the Trinity, even if that starting point must be discerned from the vantage point of the Son and Spirit who provide the vision of the Father.[53]

The firm order of the Father in position as the origin of the Son and Spirit in the *Poemata Arcana* is echoed in *Or.* 20.6-7. As we have seen, he frames this section by navigating between two extremes, focusing in on how both "Arianism" and "polytheism" diminish the Father—the former by cancelling his fatherhood of one who shares his nature, and the latter by minimizing "the Father's rank (ἀξίωμα) as cause, insofar as he is Father and begetter (γεννήτορι)."[54] Thus Nazianzen asserts his position in the 'middle'

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[48] Cf. *Or.* 30.7: "The Son will share in the glory of the unoriginate because he derives from the unoriginate."

[49] *Carm.,* 1.1.2.21 (Moreschini and Sykes, 4).

[50] *Carm.,* 1.1.2.28-31 (Moreschini and Sykes, 6).

[51] *Carm.,* 1.1.3.7 (Moreschini and Sykes, 10).

[52] *Carm.,* 1.1.3.58 (Moreschini and Sykes, 12).

[53] The relations of origin where the Father is eternal origin of the Son (by begetting) and Spirit (by procession) are clearly upheld in a similar way in the *Third Theological Oration*: The Son and Spirit "are *from* him (ἐκεῖθεν), though not *after* him (μετ' ἐκεῖνο). For 'Being unoriginate' (ἄναρχον) necessarily implies 'being eternal' (ἀΐδιον) but 'being eternal' does not entail 'being unoriginate,' so long as the Father is referred to as origin (εἰς ἀρηὴν ἀναφέρηται τὸν Πατέρα). So because they have a cause they are not unoriginate" (*Or.* 29.3 [SC 250:182]).

[54] *Or.* 20.6 (SC 270:70). It should be noted that Nazianzen is very sensitive to the connotations of using "rank" or "greater" in association with the Father. He is aware of how this notion has been abused by

where the unity of God is preserved if "the Son and Spirit would be referred back (ἀναφερομένων) to one cause (εἰς ἓν αἴτιον), but not compounded (συντιθεμένων) or blended (συναλειφομένων) with it," and if they share "one and the same movement and will of the divinity and identity of substance (οὐσιας ταυτότητα)."[55] Yet, lest undue attention be given to the unity, Nazianzen likewise asserts the eternally preserved "individual characteristics (ἰδιότητες)" of each of the three hypostases. In delineating the individual characteristics, the Father's is the "origin (ἀρχῆς), as cause (αἰτίου) and as spring (πηγὴς) and as eternal light…. The Father, then, is without origin (ἄναρχος), for his being does not come from another, nor from himself."[56] It is worth noting here that while Nazianzen is very intent to uphold both unity and diversity, the way he goes about it makes the Father crucial to both. That is to say, the unity of the three is by way of reference to a common origin, which is the Father and simply the Father (not some subset of divinity possessed by the Father). And the individual characteristics of the divine persons flow out of the relations springing forth from the Father. If the Father has no origin, the Son stands out for being "not without origin (οὐκ ἄναρχος)"[57]: his characteristic is his "begottenness" which "runs parallel with the being of the Father (τῷ εἶναι τοῦ Πατρὸς); he has his existence from him and not after him, except in the sole concept of source—source, that is, in the sense of cause."[58]

In this section of *Or.* 20 Nazianzen includes the Spirit within the unity of God, but his explanation by way of relationship of derivation flows out of the Father-Son relationship.[59] We find a parallel section in the *Fifth Theological Oration* that does the same for the Father-Spirit relationship. Nazianzen begins in *Or.* 31.7 arguing for the Spirit's unique relationship of derivation[60] by distinguishing it from the Son's. He is keen to

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those who want to unduly exalt the Father above the Son and Spirit, thus cutting the Godhead into pieces. That is why here he immediately constrains the word here in *Or.* 20.6 within the context of being an eternal begetter of one of the same nature. Rank, then, is because he is the *cause* of others identical in being, not cause of those of "minor (μικρῶν) and unworthy (ἀναξίων) beings" (SC 270:70). In *Or.* 40.43 Nazianzen puts it succinctly: "For 'greater' (μεῖζον) does not apply to the nature (τὴν φύσιν) but to the cause (τὴν αἰτίαν)" (SC 358:298). Cf. *Ors.* 29.7, 15; 30.7; 31.14.

[55] *Or.* 20.7 (SC 270:70).

[56] *Or.* 20.7 (SC 270:72).

[57] Ibid.

[58] *Or.* 20.10 (SC 270:78)

[59] The procession of the Spirit from the Father is mentioned in *Or.* 20.11, though without significant elaboration.

[60] Which he labels "consubstantial derivation from God (τὸ ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ ὁμοούσιον)" (SC 250:288).

demonstrate that just because the Spirit is 'from' the Father does not entail his sonship. If it did, that would make the Son and Spirit brothers. To describe the Spirit's relationship by derivation Nazianzen settles on the traditional Johannine use of 'procession' (John 15:26): "Insofar as he proceeds from the Father (τοῦ Πατρὸς ἐκπορεύεται), he is not a creature; inasmuch as he is not begotten, he is not a Son; and to the extent that procession is the mean between ingeneracy (ἀγεννήτου) and generacy (γεννητοῦ), he is God."[61] Again distinguishing his position from alternative extremes, Nazianzen believes the language of procession leaves no room to subordinate the Spirit and preserves "the distinction of the three hypostases (τῶν τριῶν ὑποστάσεων) in the single nature and dignity (τῇ μιᾷ φύσει τε καὶ ἀξίᾳ) of the Godhead."[62] Therefore, Nazianzen argues for the full divinity of the Son and Spirit by way of their derived relationship with the Father, yet those relationships are distinguished from one another: two things can be from the same "source," thereby enjoying everything that is received from that source, and yet one be an offspring (the Son by way of begetting) and the other not (the Spirit by way of procession).

In arguing for the Son's relationship to the Father and the Spirit's relationship to the Father a common thread is seen that establishes both the unity and diversity of God. The unity is founded in the reality that the Father causes, or is the origin of those who share his being. It brings only a "false honor (κακῶς τιμῶν)" to the Father to argue that he causes, within begetting or procession, lesser beings.[63] Genuine dignity is accorded to him when it is acknowledged that the one he begets, or causes to proceed, fully shares his Godhead. Likewise, the diversity is founded through the unique relations each divine

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[61] *Or.* 31.8 (SC 250:290).

[62] *Or.* 31.9 (SC 250:292). The larger section reads: "It is [the Father, Son, and Spirit's] difference in, so to say, manifestation or of their mutual relations with one another, which has caused the difference in names. For it is not some deficiency in the Son (τῷ Υἱῷ λείπει τι) which prevents his being Father - for Sonship is no defect - yet that does not mean he *is* Father. According to this, there must be some deficiency in the Father which prevents his being Son—for the Father is *not* Son. But this is not due to either deficiency or subordination in substance; but the very fact of being unbegotten or begotten, and of proceeding, give them the names Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit (the one being spoke of), in order that the distinction of the three hypostases in the single nature and dignity of the Godhead might be preserved. For the Son is not Father; there is *one* Father, yet he is whatever the Father is (ὅπερ ὁ Πατήρ). The Spirit is not Son because he is from God; for there is *one* Only-begotten, yet whatever the Son is, he is. The three are a single whole in their Godhead and a single whole is three in properties (Ἓν τὰ τρία θεότητι, καὶ τὸ ἓν τρία ταῖς ἰδιότησιν)" (SC 250:290-292).

[63] Nazianzen 'shouts' at the Arians in *Or.* 31.12: "Stop giving a false honor to the Father (τὸν Πατέρα κακῶς τιμῶν) at the expense of the Only-begotten (it is a poor kind of honor, giving him a creature by robbing him of what is more valuable, a Son!)" (SC 250:298-300). In *Or.* 23.7 he concludes that the "source" is dishonored by importing into it beings that are "inconsequential (μικρῶν) and unworthy of divinity (ἀναξίων θεότητος)" (SC 270:296).

person shares with the other—relations established out of the origin of the Father.

So, to re-invoke *Or.* 31.14, where unity and diversity are described through the picture of a "single intermingling of light," existing in "three mutually connected suns," it is sufficiently clear, in my opinion, taking together the whole of Nazianzen's conception of the divine relationships (including his argument in *Or.* 31.3-13 leading up to this passage), that the "first cause (τὴν πρώτην αἰτίαν)" who provides the "single intermingling of light" is the Father. That same single light underlies the others "who derive their timeless and equally glorious being" from it. Returning, then, to our integrating passage found in *Or.* 40.41, Nazianzus attributes the divinity of each person to being 'consubstantial' and their unity to the 'monarchy'. The consubstantiality of the Son and Spirit comes from the Father timelessly begetting the Son and the Spirit eternally proceeding from the Father, thereby each having all that is the Father's. The monarchy, which entails a common light through one source, is the Father.[64] Whether it be the diversity or the unity, the Father is the 'beginning point' of discussion, the one who holds both together: "When I first know the one I am also illumined from all sides by the three; when I first distinguish the three I am also carried back to the one." Knowing the 'one' brings Nazianzen immediately to the three because of the Father eternally causing the Son and Spirit. Distinguishing the 'three' immediately carries the knower back to the one, because the distinctions flow out of their derived relationship with the 'one'. Consequently, for all its paradoxical character, the unity and diversity of the Trinity 'hang together' through the Father, yet in Nazianzen's perception of the Triune God there is a *dynamic* quality that we must not miss.

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[64] A crucial passage where Nazianzen clearly identifies the Father with the "unique characteristic" as the eternal source of the Son and Spirit is found in *Or.* 25.15. What this text draws out are the mutual relations of the Trinitarian persons defining what it is to be each person. This 'starts' with the Father as "first principle":

> Define…for us our orthodox faith (εὐσέβειαν), teaching us to recognize one unbegotten God, the Father and one begotten Lord, his Son, God, when he is mentioned separately, but Lord when he is named in conjunction with the Father; the one term on account of his nature (διὰ τὴν φύσιν), the other on account of his monarchy (διὰ τὴν μοναρχίαν); and the one Holy Spirit proceeding, or, if you will, going forth from the Father (προελθὸν ἐκ τοῦ Πατρὸς ἢ καὶ προϊόν), God to those with the capacity to apprehend things that are interrelated…. Neither should we place the Father beneath first principle (ὑπο ἀρχὴν ποιεῖν τὸν Πατέρα), so as to avoid positing a first of the first, thus necessarily destroying primary being; nor say that the Son or the Holy Spirit are not without beginning, so as to avoid depriving the Father of his unique characteristic (τὸ τοῦ Πατρὸς ἴδιον περιέλωμεν)- paradoxically, they are not without beginning, and, in a sense, they are: they are not in terms of causation (τῷ αἰτίῳ); for they are indeed from God although they are not subsequent to him, just as light is not subsequent to sun, but they are without beginning in terms of time since they are not subject to it" (SC 284:192-194).

In fact, it is this dynamic unity – flowing out of and returning to the Father – which undergirds the virtual simultaneity in perception of the three and one and, as I will seek to show below, accounts for an apparently countervailing passage regarding the monarchy.[65]

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[65] Nazianzen is not in the habit of explicitly sourcing aspects of his theology, so it is difficult to know with any precision whom he appropriated and where. We can be fairly certain, however, of a measure of influence on the dynamic pattern from Origen of Alexandria. Due to the appropriation of Origen's legacy by anti-Nicene theologians, Nazianzen had to be subtle in the ways he marshaled the Alexandrian theologian's categories. A number of scholars have sought to discern Origen's influence on discrete doctrines. Holl has noted Origen's greater influence on Nazianzen compared to Basil. See *Amphilochius von Ikonium,* 162-163. With Joseph W. Trigg, however, I note a more "pervasive pattern of thought" adopted from Orgien by Nazianzen: a dynamic and progressive knowledge of God ("Knowing God in the *Theological Orations* of Gregory of Nazianzus: The Heritage of Origen," in *God in Early Christian Thought: Essays in Honor of Lloyd Patterson,* ed. Andrew McGowan [Leiden: Brill, 2009], 86; see also Henri Crouzel, *Origen,* trans. A. S. Worrall [Ediburgh: T & T Clark, 1989], 187-188). The schema of moving from the Father to the Son and to the Spirit, and then returning to the Father as the 'goal' with which perfection is associated can be found in Origen's *De Prin.* 1.3.8:

> God the Father gives to all that they should be (*Deus pater omnibus praestat ut sint*); participation in Christ, who is word or reason, makes them rational beings. From which it follows that they are worthy either of praise or blame, because they are capable alike of virtue and of wickedness. For this reason, consequently, there is also available the grace of the Holy Spirit, so that those beings who are not holy by their nature may be made holy by participating in him (*ut ea que substantialiter sancta non sunt, participatione ipsius sancta efficiantur*). When, therefore, they first have from God the Father that they should be; secondly from the Word, that they should be rational beings; thirdly, from the Holy Spirit (*Cum ergo primo ut sint habeant ex deo patre, secundo ut rationabilia sint habeant ex uerbo, tertio ut sancta sint habeant ex spiritu sancto*): they become capable of Christ again, that he is the righteousness of God, those, that is, who have been previously sanctified through the Holy Spirit; and those who have been deemed worthy to progress to this degree through the sanctification of the Holy Spirit, nevertheless will obtain the gift of wisdom according to the power of the working of Spirit of God (*et qui in hunc gradum proficere meruerint per sanctificationem spiritus sancti, consequuntur nihilominus donum sapientiae secundum uirtutem inoperationis spiritus dei*). And this is what I think Paul means when he says that "to some is given the word of wisdom, to others the word of knowledge, according to the same Spirit" (1 Cor 12:8). And while pointing out the distinction of each separate gift, he refers all of them to the source of everything when he says, "There are diversities of operations, but one God, who works all in all" (1 Cor 12:6) (SC 252:162).

We note that Origen is here describing the Trinitarian activity of God in creation but then he reverses the Trinitarian *taxis* in order to describe how 'rational beings' are perfected through 'ascent' to the Father. This is a deft mirroring of creation and redemption in the guise of a trinitarian divinization where the final stage of the progression is participation in God the Father. Karen Jo Torjesen details the process of 'returning' to the Father in Origen:

> [For perfection] there are stages which they must pass through, each of which is the appropriate preparation for the next. The work of the Holy Spirit is purification. He is the principle of holiness. Through participation in the Holy Spirit the soul itself becomes holy. This is the preparation stage which makes it possible for the soul to receive the wisdom and knowledge of Christ. As Logos, Christ is wisdom and knowledge and the soul receives the gifts of wisdom and knowledge through participation in the Logos. The final stage of this progression is participation in God the Father. Participation in the perfection of the Father means the perfection of the soul, its own complete likeness to God or divinization (*Hermeneutical Procedure and Theological Method in Origen's Exegesis* [Berlin: Walter De Gruyter, 1986], 71).

There are obvious commonalities within Nazianzen to this Trinitarian schema. The shape and order is determined by the Father. What is more, just as the Father is source of the realm of creation as well as spiritual life, he is of a position to receive back the movement of spiritual growth found in his creatures

An extended section from *Or.* 23 gathers together the key points we have considered thus far while also moving us forward to consider this dynamic quality of movement that is essential to understanding the Father and the Trinity in Nazianzen:

> I…by positing a source of divinity (θεότητος ἀρχὴν) that is timeless, inseparable, and infinite, honor both the source (τήν ἀρχὴν) as well as that which comes from the source (τὰ ἐκ τῆς ἀρχῆς): the source (ἀρχή) because of the nature of the things of which it is the source; and that which comes from the source, because of their own nature as well as of the nature of the source from which they are derived, because they are disparate neither in time, nor in nature, nor in holiness, being one one in their separation and separate in their connection (ἓν ὄντα διῃρημένως καὶ διαιρούμενα συνημμένως), even if this is a paradoxical statement; revered no less for their mutual relationship than when they are thought of and taken individually. They are a perfect Trinity of three perfect entities; a monad taking its impetus from its fullness, a dyad transcended (Τριάδα τελείαν ἐκ τελείων τριῶν, μονάδος μὲν κινηθείσης διὰ τὸ πλούσιον, δυάδος δὲ ὑπερβαθείσης) — that is, it goes beyond the form and matter of which bodies consist—, and a triad defined by its perfection since it is first to transcend the synthesis of duality in order that the Godhead might not remain contricted, nor diffused without limit (Τριάδος δὲ ὁρισθείσης διὰ τὸ τέλειον, πρώτη γὰρ ὑπερβαίνει δυάδος σύνθεσιν, ἵνα μήτε στενὴ μένῃ θεότης, μήτε εἰς ἄπειρον χέηται). For constriction is an absence of generosity; diffusion, an absence of order. The one is thoroughly Judaic; the other, Greek and polytheistic.[66]

In his familiar mode of navigating between two erroneous alternatives, Nazianzen's description of source and issue bring together again the Triune God's unity and diversity. Each of the three are worthy of equal reverence: the Father because he is the source, and "the issue" because they share the source's nature and holiness. Yet a consideration of both what they share and how they relate brings one to the "generosity" and "order" established by the Father.[67] In seeking to avoid an absence of "generosity" in the Father, Nazianzen is distinguishing Trinitarian faith from what is "Judaic." In seeking

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inhabited by the Holy Spirit. Not surprisingly, the hierarchical element within Origen's Trinitarian theology is pronounced within his articulation of this schema, as perfection is equated with the Father who stands as the one fully divine. Nonetheless, what shines through as potential framing influence on Nazianzen is the integration of a dynamic movement among the Trinitarian persons out from and returning to the Father, which is discerned through a spiritual progression.

[66] *Or.* 23.8 (SC 270:296-298).

Even though Nazianzen does not directly refer here to the Father as the source and the Son and Spirit as the "issue," it is my understanding that this passage cannot be understood within his Trinitarian theology other than by these associations.

[67] As just seen, the order and relations are established out of the monarchy, where the Father is the "first principle" (*Or.* 25.15).

to uphold the ordered relations emerging from the Father, Nazianzen is protecting Trinitarian thought from diffusing into what is "polytheistic." Weaving these various elements together, Nazianzen uses the dynamic image of a 'superabundant' monad that, because of its generous character, cannot but issue forth into a dyad. Yet, to settle there would be to suggest a constriction held in duality. Consequently, a triad speaks to a generous perfection that flows out of the 'superabundant' one – that is, the Father – yet is, nonetheless, ordered within particular relations. With this image of a move from a monad to a dyad to a triad Nazianzen is addressing what he sees as the dynamic nature of the Trinity, containing within it a certain 'divine movement' that is set in motion from the Father leading to the Son and Spirit.[68] The dynamic movement that Nazianzen portrays within the Trinity necessarily entails a logical 'starting point', and so causes the knower to 'start' with the Father as it is his superabundance that prompts the dynamic movement. This 'outward' manifestation of the abundance of the one, the Father, also dynamically returns.

The 'return' of the movement converging on the 'one' brings us to the most famous countervailing passage on the nature of the divine monarchy in Nazianzus, *Or.* 29.2. In it Nazianzen appears to identify the *monarchia* with the three persons, rather than being the possession of the Father alone:

> Monarchy (μοναρχία) is what we hold in honor—but a monarchy not that is contained in a single person (μοναρχία δὲ, οὐχ ἣν ἓν περιγράφει πρόσωπον) (for, it is possible for a self-discordant one to become a plurality) but one that is constituted by equality of nature (φύσεως ὁμοτιμία), and harmony of will, and identity of action, and the convergence to the one of

[68] This 'movement' is also suggested in the passage we have looked at in *Or.* 20.7 where the Son and Spirit are referred back to their original cause, but not to be compounded or blended therein: "[sharing] one and the same movement and will of the divinity and identity of substance."
The notion of a dynamic outward movement within a Trinitarian frame is vaguely portrayed in a passage in *Or.* 38.9 on the apparent 'first' creation of the angels and other spiritual beings. God is a 'superabundant' "Goodness" that is not "set in motion only by contemplating itself (τῇ ἑαυτῆς θεωρίᾳ), but it was necessary that the Good (τὸ ἀγαθὸν) be poured and spread, so that there might be more beings to receive its benefits—for this was the height of Goodness (ἀγαθότητος)—it first thought of the angelic, heavenly powers; and that thought was an action, accomplished in the Word and perfected in the Spiri (Λόγῳ συμπληρούμενον καὶ Πνεύματι τελειούμενον)" (SC 358:120).
This dynamic movement out from the Father is again portrayed in *Or.* 38.15 but here within the life of the Son on earth: "Think of the good pleasure of the Father (Τὴν εὐδοκίαν τοῦ Πατρὸς) to be sent forth, and that [the Son] refers all that is his back to him, both as honoring the timeless source and in order not to seem to be God's rival" (SC 358:138). Ann Richard notes here how "L' œuvre de la Rédemption se présente dès lors comme une reiteration, dans un ordre supérieur, de l'œuvre de creation" (*Cosmologie et Theologie Chez Gregoire de Nazianze,* Série Antiquité 169 [Paris: Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, 2003], 350). See pp. 313-373 for her evaluation of Nazianzen's 'dynamic' language in light of his cosmology, theology of redemption, and intellectual sources (particularly Plotinus).

> what comes from it (καὶ πρὸς τὸ ἕν τῶν ἐξ αὐτοῦ σύννευσις)…, so that while there is numerical distinction, there is no division in the substance (τῇ γε οὐσίᾳ μὴ τέμνεσθαι). For this reason, from the beginning (ἀπ' ἀρχῆς) a monad is moved to a dyad and stops at a triad. And this is for us the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The Father is begetter and producer (ὁ μὲν γεννήτωρ καὶ προβολεύς), but I say passionless, and timeless, and bodiless; but of the others, the Son is begotten, the Spirit is produced (τῶν δέ, τὸ μὲν γέννημα, τὸ δὲ πρόβλημα)—I do not know how to express this in any way that does not reference visible things.[69]

Nazianzen explicitly states here that he does not uphold the *monarchia* of a single person. Is he inconsistent? Or comfortable being less than clear due to the mystery at hand. It is important to note, however, the overall sense of this passage. Intermingled with a mode of philosophical explanation, he is here speaking to the dynamic movement in the Godhead we noted in *Or.* 23.8. This dynamic nature apparently creates the flexibility to consider that there is a certain irreversibility to the 'starting point' of the Godhead[70] *and* that the nature of the 'movement' in the Godhead, where the two spring forth from the one in their respective ways, creates a divine receptivity with the monarchy also seen as possessed by all three. An argument for the complementarity of the Father possessing the monarchy and, because of the dynamism flowing out of the 'abundant' Father, speaking of the monarchy being found in all three as well, is strengthened by Nazianzen's reference to "convergence (σύννευσις)" in this passage.[71] While it must be said his language is vague, it

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[69] (SC 250:178-180).

[70] That is, the Father, for the Son and Spirit are *from* him as Nazianzen goes on to argue in the very next section, *Or.* 29.3.

[71] A possible philosophical source for σύννευσις is Plotinus, who in *Enn.* 3.8.11 uses the same word. Plotinus is commenting on the Good and the Intellect. He asserts the simple independence of the Good that is in need of nothing. The Intellect, however, is completed by gazing upon the Good, the Good leaving a trace upon the Intellect through its influence. Plotinus writes,

> The Good…has given the trace of itself on Intellect to Intellect to have by seeing, so that in Intellect there is desire, and it is always desiring and always attaining (ἐπ' αὐτοῦ ἴχνος αὐτοῦ τῷ νῷ ὁρῶντι ἔδωκεν ἔχειν· ὥστε ἐν μὲν τῷ νῷ ἡ ἔφεσις καὶ ἐφιέμενος ἀεὶ καὶ ἀεὶ τυγχάνω), but the Good is not desiring—for what could it desire?—or attaining, for it did not desire [to attain anything]. So it is not even Intellect. For in Intellect there is desire and a movement to convergence (σύννευσις) with its form (LCL 442:398-401).

Plotinus goes on to describe the Intellect in terms of light, the shadows of which are seen in "this beautiful universe (ὁ καλὸς οὗτος κόσμος)." Illumination is, of course, first received from the Intellect by turning toward the Good. This desire and move toward the Good that produces illumination in the Intellect pictures the dynamism of Nazianzen's pattern, even if carries overtones of dependence contrary to pro-Nicene Trinitarianism. What is interesting is the Plotinian use of light to describe ability to move toward the Good, for it is Nazianzen's use of light imagery that will add to not only the dynamism of Trinitarian life but also its discernment in θεωρία. This is not to draw a direct line from Plotinus to Nazianzen in their appropriation of light imagery, but for both it appears to evoke similar themes of dynamism and invitation to understanding while at the same time adding mystery to the depth of that understanding.

seems that Nazianzen is saying the 'extension' of the monarchy beyond the Father is upheld in that there is a convergence toward the source. That is to say, while out of the one abundant Father flow the divine riches possessed by the Son and Spirit, there is a 'return' or 'convergence' from the Spirit and Son returning to the Father. This hints at the later doctrine of *perichoresis* where there is a dynamic movement of the persons toward one another, though here it certainly seems that movement flows out of and returns to the Father—the 'beginning' and 'end' of the dynamic movement of the Trinity.

Such an interpretation is perhaps confirmed by examining Nazianzen's flow of thought in *Or.* 42.15. Here he is again dealing with the dynamic nature of the Godhead. He separates 'beginning' and 'without beginning' from being an element of the nature of God, since "nature (φύσις) is never a designation for what something is not, but for what something is."[72] For each of the three persons there is simply one nature: God. That one nature is first associated with the Father:

> The unity is the Father, from whom and toward whom everything else is referred not as to be mixed together in confusion (Ἕνωσις δὲ ὁ Πατήρ, ἐξ οὗ καὶ πρὸς ὃν ἀνάγεται τα ἑξῆς οὐχ ὡς συναλείφεσθαι), but so as to be contained, without time or will or power separating them.[73]

Tracing Nazianzen's lines of thought is not easy. He is dealing in a variety of contexts with differing theological enemies, often with rhetorical constructions designed more to evoke the mysterious character of his subject than provide crystal clarity. Nonetheless, we gain an overall sense of the dynamic nature of the Triune God in his thought when we consider the Father. From the Father's monarchy we see Nazianzen's willingness to associate the unity of the three with him, 'God' in the primary position of the Son and Spirit coming from him. Yet, as the two come from him, they 'return' to him in a "timeless, unchanging rhythm." Thus it is appropriate, in a certain sense, to say the Father's monarchy is the monarchy of the whole Godhead for in the dynamic, superabundant life springing forth from him there is a movement that goes from one to two to three only to return back to him in a dynamic unity.

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[72] (SC 384:80-82).

[73] *Or.* 42.15 (SC 384:82). Nazianzen argues similarly (from 1 Corinthians 8:6) for the unity of the Godhead being found in the Father in *Or.* 39.12, though without the corresponding notions of divine movement: "'For us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things, and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things,' and one Holy Spirit in whom are all things. The phrases 'from whom' and 'through whom' and 'in whom' do not divide natures (μὴ φύσεις τεμνόντων)—for then there could be no change of prepositions or of the order of the words—but rather express the peculiar characteristics of one unconfused nature (χαρακτηριζοντων μιᾶς καὶ ἀσυγχύτου φύσεως ἰδιότητας)" (SC 358:172-174).

Given this dynamic character of fatherhood in Nazianzen, his dominant use of light within Trinitarian contemplation is fitting.[74] Light is a material reference we can perceive as shining forth from a source (such as the sun), yet when consideration is given to rays from that source our eyes are led out only to return to the source. While we can think in terms of separating source from ray, the dynamic and overwhelming radiance of the whole makes it near impossible—our eyes run from the one to the other seeking to take in the common thread of light as well as the distinction between source and ray.[75] What is more, light speaks to the apophatic character of the Triune nature: it attracts and draws one in to consider, yet in doing so leads one beyond what any human faculty can take in. Within the 'third' *Poemata Arcana,* on the Holy Spirit, Nazianzan brings together light imagery as he seeks to give picture to the 'threeness' and 'oneness' of the divine:

> The single nature is firmly established in three lights (ἐν τρισσοῖς φαέεσσιν). It is not a unity unrelated to number, since it consists in three excellent forms. Nor is it a Trinity to be worshipped as plural, since its nature (φύσις) is indivisible. The oneness inheres in Godhead (ἡ μονὰς ἐν θεότητι); those to whom Godhead belongs are three in number (τρισάριθμα). Each of them is the one God, when you mention only one. Again, the one God is unoriginate (ἄναρχος), whence comes the richness of Godhead (πλοῦτος θεότητος), when there is any reference to the three, so as to bring about among mortal men a reverent proclamation of the three lights and also that we may glorify the clear-shining unity of rule (μονοκρατίην ἐριλαμπέα), rather than finding pleasure in some Babel governance by a host of gods.[76]

Assuming the foregoing argument, this passage reveals a 'harmony' of the unity and the plurality of the Godhead through the "clear-shining unity of rule (μονοκρατίην ἐριλαμπέα)." If the one God is the 'beginning-less' Father who provides his "richness (πλοῦτος)" so that his nature fully shines "in threefold lights (ἐν τρισσοῖς φαέεσσιν)," then consideration of what provides the 'threefold' character of worship will bring one back to reflect again on the perfect unity founded in the "clear-shining unity of rule (μονοκρατίην ἐριλαμπέα)." Accordingly, we are still in the mode of contemplating the vision of our integrating text (*Or.* 40.41): "When I first know the one I am also illumined from all sides by the three; when I first distinguish the three I am also carried back to the one."

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[74] See ft. 31 above.

[75] Recall Nazianzen's assertion in *Or.* 40.41 that we are unable to "divide or measure" the divine light.

[76] *Carm.* 1.1.3.71-80 (Moreschini and Sykes, 14).

Nevertheless, our extended consideration of the Father, and the dynamic life flowing out of and returning to him, has provided a deepened understanding for the harmony Nazianzen finds in his contemplative vision of the unity and diversity of the Godhead.

4.4 Conclusion

At the center of this chapter's argument for the harmony between the unity and diversity of the Godhead in Nazianzen has been the *monarchia* of the Father—specifically a 'dynamic' monarchy. Reflecting upon the variety of ways Nazianzen refers to the monarchy, there are essentially four options for its conception: (1) the monarchy *of the Father*; (2) a *shared* monarchy of the three persons or the Godhead in general; (3) *inconsistency* between numbers 1 and 2 resulting in a general incoherence; or (4) an *indeterminate vagueness*. If the variety of interpretations of Nazianzen's thought on this point is any indication, he is not overly perspicacious.[77] Be that as it may, one is able to account

[77] For diverging views on monarchy and causality in Nazianzen, see: Christopher Beeley, "Divine Causality and the Monarchy of God the Father in Gregory of Nazianzus," *HTR* 100:2 (2007): 199-214; idem., *Gregory of Nazianzus on the Trinity and the Knowledge of God: In Your Light We Shall See Light* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007); Richard Cross, "Divine Monarchy in Gregory of Nazianzus," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 14 (2006): 105-16; Volker Henning Drecoll, "Remarks on Christopher Beeley, *Gregory of Nazianzus on the Trinity and the Knowledge of God. In your Light We Shall See Light,* " *SJT* 64:4 (2011): 456-473; John P. Egan, SJ, "αἴτιος/'Author', αἰτία/'Cause' and ἀρχή/'Origin': Synonyms in Selected Texts of Gregory Nazianzen." *SP* 32 (1997): 102-107; Ben Fulford, "'One Commixture of Light'": Rethinking some Modern Uses and Critiques of Gregory of Nazianzus on the Unity and Equality of the Divine Persons," *IJST* 11:2 (2009): 176-181; André de Halleux, "Personalisme ou essentialisme trinitaire chez les Pères cappadociens? Une mauvaise controverse," *RTL* 17 (1986): 129-155; Louth, "St Gregory of Nazianzus," 109-116; E. P. Meijering, E. P. "The Doctrine of the Will and of the Trinity in the Orations of Gregory of Nazianzus," in his *God Being History: Studies in Patristic Philosophy* (Amsterdam: North-Holland Publishing Company, 1975), 112n43; Norris, *Faith Gives Fullness to Reasoning,* 43-46; Tollefsen, "God the Father and God The Trinity - Divine Causality in Cappadocian Thought," 143-149; Thomas F. Torrance, *The Trinitarian Faith: The Evangelical Theology of the Ancient Catholic Church* (Edinburg: T & T Clark, 1988), 320; idem., "The Doctrine of the Holy Trinity in Gregory Nazianzen and John Calvin," in *Trinitarian Perspectives* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994), 29-30.
The debate can be separated from my concerns here when it is understood how 'principle' and 'causality' apply to the Son and Spirit in the Godhead. McGuckin summed it up nicely: "[Principle and causality] is something other than what is meant by God's origination of the created order. When it refers to the Father's divine 'generation' of the Only Son, and the mystical 'procession' of the Spirit, in other words when it is used in precise theological terms rather than economic terms, the causality indicates the manner in which the Father relates his being to the other two persons. It thus connotes the equality of the persons: a sameness of nature and order (since there is no priority in the timeless God) and of divine honor" (*Saint Gregory of Nazianzus,* 263). He says later, "The Son is from the Father, certainly, but not after him. The Father is the Cause but as he timelessly causes the Son priority cannot be involved in the process since it is a time-bound notion. It is a subtle thought. Order is not the same as sequence" (Ibid., 290). Whatever might be said about the vagueness of Nazianzen's 'cause language', my concern is with the shape of Trinitarian relationships established by the Father. Within the question of the Father's relation to the Son and Spirit Nazianzen's thought is relatively consistent even if it is philosophically arbitrary. John Egan, "Primal Cause and Trinitarian Perichoresis in Gregory Nazianzen's *Oration* 31.14," *SP* 27 (1993): 21-28. On this point, see also John Behr, *The Nicene Faith, Part 2,* Formation of Christian Theology, Volume 2 (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2004), 343-344; McGuckin, "'Perceiving Light from Light in Light' (Oration

for the different ways Nazianzen speaks if the Father's monarchy is connected with the dynamic movements of the Godhead, resulting in a view of divine fatherhood established through dynamic unity. And rather than this seeking to probe more deeply into the divine mystery than is appropriate, such an account adds to the overall mystery.

I began by noting that not only does mystery designate the nature of God; it especially refers to the Father. The very construction and content of Nazianzen's 'multi-volumed' works on the Trinity (i.e., *Poemata Arcana* and *Theological Orations*) indicate nothing much at all can be said of the Father in a direct sense. Only by examining his relations of derivation with the Son and Spirit do we begin to move out of apophatic determinations of who he is. Within the Triune relations we do understand the Father's unique position as the 'starting point' – as the origin and cause – and so to conceive the monarchy as his unique possession is appropriate. As Father, this means he never *becomes* Father, nor *accumulates* anything to his 'fatherhood', nor *loses* it—he *is always* Father in the distinctive manner in which he has one eternal Son, and from him come both the Son and Spirit.[78] Yet to consider the Father's monarchy as 'dynamic' takes into account the sense of movement within the Trinity, where all that is the Father's springs forth in the Son and Spirit and then returns as the Son and Spirit converge upon their source. Such movements create a "timeless, unchanging rhythm" within the Godhead resulting in the rather fluid vision Nazianzen returns to again and again (e.g., "When I first know the one I am also illumined from all sides by the three; when I first distinguish the three I am also carried back to the one."). The fluidity of this vision – even its 'virtual simultaneity' – matches the fluidity of the divine life itself as described by Nazianzen—a divine life 'set in

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31.3): The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Gregory the Theologian," *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 39 (1994): 11, 27-28. Cf. T. A. Noble, "Paradox in Gregory Nazianzen's Doctrine of the Trinity," *SP* 27(1993): 94-99.

[78] *Or.* 25.16: "We should believe that the Father is truly a Father (ἀληθῶς πατέρα τὸν Πατέρα), far more truly father, in fact, than we humans are, because he is only Father, for he is distinctively (ἰδιοτρόπως) so, unlike corporal beings; and that he is one alone, that is, without partner, and Father of one alone (μόνου), his Only-Begotten; and that he is a Father only, not formerly a son; and that he is wholly Father (ὅλον Πατήρ), and father of one wholly his son, as cannot be affirmed of human beings; and that he has been Father from the beginning and did not become Father in the course of things. We should believe that the Son is truly a Son in that he is the only Son of one only Father and only in one way and only a Son. He is not also Father but is wholly Son, and Son of one who is wholly Father…. We should also believe that the Holy Spirit is truly holy in that there is no other like him in quality or manner and in that his holiness is not conferred but is holiness in the absolute, and in that it is not more or less nor did he begin or will he end in time. For what the Father and Son and Holy Spirit have in common (κοινὸν) is their divinity and that they were not created, while for the Son and the Holy Spirit it is that they are from the Father (ἐκ τοῦ Πατρός). And, the uniqueness (Ἴδιον) of the Father is his ingenerateness (ἀγεννησία), of the Son his generation, and of the Holy Spirit his procession" (SC 284:196-198).

motion' by the dynamic Father.

As Nazianzen contemplates God he is not led to a nature with certain common attributes that set it apart. He is led, rather, to the divinity of the *Father*—the "personal way of the supreme being's existence: how he is; how he acts."[79] This means the integration of θεωρία and θεολογία within Nazianzen's thought entails a 'journey' through the personal relations of the Godhead. From the standpoint of the seeker, the Spirit plays a crucial role in 'casting' the contemplative vision: he 'brings' light to the knower; he illuminates the seeker; he opens up the possibility of divine knowledge. But that vision opened up by the Spirit carries the theologian in the convergence to the 'one' then out to the 'three' and then, again, to the 'one'. This 'dizzying' θεωρία is a product of the Father's initial 'action' – the Father as *verb* – that gives rise to the divine life manifest in three distinct persons. Yet, these divine persons are continually moving toward one another rather than existing in static separation.

The generative power 'moving out' from the Father is not explicitly characterized as that of 'love' within Nazianzen, nor the convergence. But with the Father as the beginning and end of a 'rhythmic' going forth and returning, one is tempted to associate Nazianzen's conception of fatherhood with the dynamics of biblical love. For example, 1 John 4:7-12 expresses a Christian love each for the other that flows from God's love. The rhythmic reciprocity of divine life within Nazianzen's thought patterns this loving 'give and return'. However, since Nazianzen does not explicitly link to this conception of love in his framing of *fatherhood* one must balk at tightly associating the Father with 'loving gift' in his theology. In the Conclusion of this thesis I will make this association through interpreting the trajectory of pro-Nicene thought on the Father. For Nazianzen, though, while fatherhood does possess a fruitful and self-giving quality;[80] it is a step beyond his explicit writing to say the Father sets *love* 'in motion' and enables its full reception and return.

The Spirit's involvement in this 'rhythmic reciprocity' is crucial, for he is often presented by Nazianzen as the 'perfection' of the Trinity. It is the Spirit that enables the

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[79] John McGuckin, "Gregory of Nazianzus," in *The Cambridge History of Philosophy in Late Antiquity*, Part 1 (ed., Lloyd Gerson; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 491.

[80] Beeley also observes how Nazianzen's Trinity "intrinsically possesses a divine generosity and potency…. He contrasts the Trinity with doctrines that leave God either alienated, disconnected, and unlimitedly diffuse, or else constricted and grudging, whether out of envy or fear" (*Gregory of Nazianzus*, 214-215).

'dyad' to move beyond constriction as another eternally equal manifestation of the Father's generosity. Nazianzen's theological attention to the status of the Spirit as eternally proceeding from the Father is not incidental to the overall role he plays in his Trinitarian vision. His essential epistemological role is in opening up to human beings knowledge of the divine light. That is to say, he brings 'illumination' even as he draws one into the threefold light of the Godhead. His drawing in, however, follows the 'rhythms' of the Godhead, so that convergence upon the unity of the Father is the lodestar of that vision.

In Nazianzen's explication of the Holy Spirit his theology moves beyond the subjects of the previous two chapters, Athanasius and Hilary. It moves beyond not just by offering a denser pneumatology—his pneumatology actually expands a theology of fatherhood. Given his almost singular attention to the *nativitas,* Hilary does not offer a robust theology of the Spirit.[81] Athanasius offers more, but, as chapter 2 details, his pneumatology is initially an extension of his 'correlative' logic applied to the Son's relationship with the Father. As a consequence, it does not appear to capture anything of divine fatherhood not already seen in his theology of the Father-Son relationship. As Athanasius gives description to the Spirit and redemption through the παραδείγματα in *Serap.*, however, he frames an understanding where the Spirit 'retraces' the divine relations and brings humanity to the 'source' of the gracious movement extending to humanity: the Father. That is to say, grace rolls from the Father through the Son to the Spirit who communicates it to humanity; the Spirit then unites believers to the Son through whom they know and love the Father. The Father is the 'beginning' and 'end' of this gracious movement. As such, it anticipates Nazianzen's dynamic notions of fatherhood explored in this chapter. However, whereas Athanasius does not integrate his description of the gracious economy into his overall theology of fatherhood, Nazianzen fully integrates his sanctifying vision with his notion of the eternal relations of the Godhead. In his integration the Father is not just the initiator of a grace that meets humanity through the Spirit and returns to the Father through the Son; rather, such a movement is the very movement of the dynamic unity of the Godhead set in motion by the Father. By bringing illumination through a saving vision, the Spirit, then, brings human beings into the very movements of the Godhead. Thus, the Spirit highlights the dynamism of the Father—a dynamism that pulsates from all of eternity yet overflows into and draws up humanity

[81] Fragmentary attempts are made in *De trin.* 8-9.

through the Spirit-enabled vision.

Yet, rather than the vision 'settling' on the Father's light, it moves out and in among the dazzling threefold lights of the Godhead. Is there something here of there being too much light to take in, so it races to and fro? Is there something to the Father that 'repels' attention as his selfless generosity moves 'outward' to the other persons? As much as is 'gained' in dynamic unity stemming from fatherhood, is there a loss of rest due to the unsettled ambiguity of dynamism?

While Nazianzen's categories expand beyond or deepen what was found in chapters 2 and 3, ambiguities remain. The dynamic nature of fatherhood has its own benefits in framing Nazianzen's overall Trinitarian theology, yet it presents particular challenges in communicating 'content' regarding the Father. This agrees with Louth's assertion: "Gregory's notion of fatherhood, or divine fatherhood, is not an explicit and developed ideology: it is largely apophatic."[82] Louth goes on to highlight Nazianzen's theological portals leading to fatherhood in and through the revelation of the Son and Spirit. Yet, the dynamism that follows, and Nazianzen's interest in "evocative imagery,"[83] result in a certain 'slipperiness' in drawing a dense account of fatherhood from his writings. As I will set up in the following chapter, it is my contention that Basil provides a more integrative account with sturdier categories through which to understand the Father.

Be that as it may, our consideration of the *mystery* of the Father is deepened through Nazianzen's connections between light imagery, the Spirit, and the contemplation of the Triune character of God. Movement toward the source of light never settles but sends one back out only to return again and again as the seeker is drawn into an infinite source of light that gradually illumines even as it continually exceeds one's grasp.[84] The extensive consideration given to the *dynamic* nature of the Father's monarchy has the result of mitigating overly rigid notions of rank or position within the Godhead, and, consequently, heeds Nazianzen's warning not to "show a perverse reverence for divine monarchy (τὴν μοναρχίαν κακῶς τιμήσῃς)"[85] Interestingly, this strong warning comes soon

[82] "St Gregory of Nazianzus," 111.

[83] Ibid., 113.

[84] Further comment could be made here regarding the sections that refer to the dynamic movement of the Godhead but do not explicitly state the personal names of the Trinity within that movement. Within the overall structure of Nazianzen's Trinitarian thought, the attributions are clear, and, I think, only reinforce the monarchy of the Father. However, there may be an argument to be made that the vagueness is deliberate in adding to the mysterious character of the divine life.

[85] *Or.* 25.18 (SC 284:200).

after one of Nazianzan's clearest assertions of the priority of the Father in the life of the Trinity.[86] On the one hand, Nazianzen's teaching on the monarchy of the Father is quite traditional and occupies an essential place in his Trinitarian theology. On the other hand, his conception of the teaching in terms of the dynamic outflow and convergence has a 'balancing' effect on notions of rank and position that are often emphasized in light of the monarchy. This brings us to the persistent suggestion within Nazianzen's teaching of the later doctrine of *perichoresis.* To be sure, Nazianzen himself did not elaborate on this term. But within the sweep of his thought we see the divine persons in or with one another through a dynamic movement toward unity.[87] While the convergence is upon the source, that is, the Father, it entails the co-presence of each of the divine persons. Consequently, Nazianzen has found a way to uphold a traditional sense of the monarchy of the Father while at the same time providing the 'theological tools' for a robust expression of divine three-in-oneness.

Nazianzen's theology is a rhetorical theology requiring our attention to the *way* he argues as much as to the words he uses. There is a suppleness to the theological constructions he chooses to employ depending on the enemies before him and whether he is writing verse or in the more pedagogical mode of an oration. Finding absolute consistency of expression among these is a fool's errand. Gregory had several ways of putting his teaching. Nevertheless, this chapter has entered into the structures of his Trinitarian thought in order to find a coherence to the unity and diversity of the Godhead through a dynamic conception of the monarchy of the Father: "it is the fatherhood of God, the monarchy of the Father, that guides Gregory's theological vision."[88]

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[86] *Or.* 25.15.

[87] Ayres and McGuckin both agree Nazianzen theologically anticipates the doctrine of Trinitarian perichoresis. See Ayres, *Nicaea,* 246; McGuckin, "Trinitarian Theology," 28-29.

[88] Behr, *The Nicene Faith, Part 2*: 349.

Chapter 5: Basil of Caesarea

5.1 Introduction

Basil of Caesarea offers an integrative account of the Fatherhood of God that incorporates multiple aspects of his overall theology.[1] Starting with his anthropology, I will show in the following section (5.2) that Basil's connection between human origins and destiny reveals a Trinitarian shape where the *terminus a quo* and *terminus ad quem* is the Father. In light of the fall of humanity, redemption through Christ reawakens believers to their destiny. Basil 'maps' that destiny through a theological epistemology I will explore in section 5.3 below, finding that knowledge of God is tracking the Trinitarian persons. In tracking the persons two prominent metaphors emerge within Basil's writings for understanding the Trinity: 'image' and 'kinship'.

Through a convergence of realities communicated by these metaphors Basil teaches the fundamentals of his Trinitarian theology, yet does so through a contemplative spiritual vision where the believer is 'returning' to the One for whom he or she was created (section 5.4 below). Believers must get 'inside' the Trinity through redemption, and progress from one's baptism through spiritual worship and ascetical practice in order to see God for who he is. That greater vision carries with it a corresponding growth in likeness where one stands in relation to the Father by grace in adoption as the Son does by nature. Within this vision of 'return to the Father', the monarchy of the Father is made manifest in Basil's theology.[2]

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[1] For details on Basil's life, see Philip Rousseau, *Basil of Caesarea* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994). For summary accounts, see Hanson, *The Search,* 679-686; Stephen M. Hildebrand, *The Trinitarian Theology of Basil of Caesarea: A Synthesis of Greek Thought and Biblical Truth* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2007), 18-29; Andrew Radde-Gallwitz, *Basil of Caesarea: A Guide to His Life and Doctrine* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2012); Raymond Van Dam, "Emperor, Bishops, and Friends in Late Antique Cappadocia," *JTS* 37 (1986): 53-76.
For Basil's Trinitarian theology, see Hildebrand, *Trinitarian Theology*; Stephen M. Hildebrand, *Basil of Caesarea,* Foundations of Theological Exegesis and Christian Spirituality (Grand Rapids, MI: BakerAcademic, 2014); Bernard Sesboüé, *Saint Basile et La Trinité. Un acte théologique au IV^e^ siècle* (Paris: Dresclée, 1998). Volker Henning Drecoll's *Die Entwicklung der Trinitätslehre des Basilius von Cäsarea: Sein Weg vom Homöusianer zum Neonizäner* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996) is a significant work in the field. However, I agree with Ayres' judgment that Drecoll's account suffers from arguing for Basil's dependence upon Athanasius and Basilian authorship of *Letter* 38. See Ayres' significant contribution in *Nicaea,* 187-221, as well as Simonetti, *La Crisi,* 455-525.

[2] *Spir.* 18.47 (SC 17 bis:412): "The way…to knowledge of God is from the one Spirit, though the one Son, to the one Father (τῆς θεογνωσίας ἐστὶν ἀπὸ ἑνὸς Πνεύματος, διὰ τοῦ ἑνὸς Υἱοῦ, ἐπὶ τὸν ἕνα Πατέρα). And conversely the natural goodness and holiness according to nature and royal dignity (τὸ βασιλικὸν ἀξίωμα) reach from the Father, though the Only-begotten, to the Spirit (ἐκ Πατρός, διὰ τοῦ Μονογενοῦς, ἐπὶ

Section 5.5 reverses the direction and explores the ordered 'reach' of the Father, which also goes through image and kinship. This section will examine the challenge of relating two ways Basil likes to argue regarding the Triune life: through the unity of the substance and distinguishing marks of the persons. I will contend there is a theological logic Basil applies that connects these 'two ways' through his account of fatherhood. His theology of the fatherhood of God pulls together the following into an integrative account: a derivational unity from the Father, whose monarchy ensures shared divinity among the persons, and thus a contemplative vision involving human beings has intelligibility as it moves from the Spirit, through the Son, to the Father. This intelligibility is 'mapped' according to the very shape of divine life ordered by the Father's eternal relations.

Basil's theology of fatherhood possesses the same fundamental traits as his friend, Nazianzen, and thus with him reaches depths beyond Athanasius and Hilary. This commonality will especially be seen in his utilization of a contemplative vision enabled through a robust account of the person and work of the Holy Spirit. It is my judgment, however, that Basil provides a more integrative account. This is not only because of his incorporation of concepts that reach even to his anthropology. It is because of the range of concepts he holds together with clarity. Nazianzen's at times enigmatic expressions regarding the Father, and, more generally, rather fluid expressions about the Trinity, prevent a confident appraisal of his account of fatherhood. That is not to say Nazianzen does not meditate upon the Father through the mystery of the Son and Spirit; he does. But, as I demonstrated in the last chapter, there is an overall apophatic mood to his understanding of divine fatherhood. Coupled with the ambiguous dynamism of his Trinitarian theology, in the end there is very little 'content' communicated concerning the Father. In contrast, Basil's theology of fatherhood is given density through the sharpness of the categories that feed into it. These categories provide confidence that, despite the mysterious nature of the object, there are predictable 'access ramps' leading to clear portals through which one can attend to the Father. Attending to the Father through Basil's categories does not collapse the mystery, however. Rather, they provide assurance to one's orientation and that, properly oriented, there is a drawing in to the mystery fitting with anthropology, epistemology, and Trinitarian theology. The result is an account of

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τὸ Πνεῦμα διήκει). In this way the persons are confessed and the pious dogma of the monarchy (τὸ εὐσεβὲς δόγμα τῆς μοναρχίας) does not fall way."

divine fatherhood that draws one into the incomprehensible mystery of the Father in such a way that his priority is held in tension with the effects of his gifts. For indeed the Father's eternal gifts stand behind the principles of pro-Nicene Trinitarianism championed by Basil: The Father shares his being through generating a Son who is distinct from yet equal with him; the Father's self-gift through generation (and procession) resulting in the co-ordinate nature of the divine persons which is manifest in their activities; and the Father providing clarity on the distinction between person and nature within the Godhead. Each of these is integrated within Basil's thought through his theological epistemology and spiritual vision where the Father has a central role. Thus, while Basil's theology contains a mature pro-Nicene Trinitarianism, his account of the Father is fundamental to these principles. What is more, divine fatherhood in Basil highlights the contemplative cast of pro-Nicene Trinitarian thought.

5.2 Human Origin and Destiny

"You were created that you might see God."

This is Basil's message in the closing sections of the final homily in his *Hexaemeron* (*Hex.*), a series of sermons written late in his life on the creation of the world.[3] The last

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[3] The quote is an alteration of Ἐγένου ἵνα Θεὸν βλέπῃς found in *Hex.* 11.15 (SC 160:270). In *Hex.* 11.15-17 Basil contrasts the way human beings were made with beasts whose heads incline downward. God created humans "upright" and gave a special and distinct structure, including a head that is uniquely placed so that the eyes can gaze upward – "where Christ is." After making a spiritual association between the position of the head and eyes and humanity's purpose of seeing God, Basil details how the physical structure of human beings supports the position of the head and eyes.

I follow Philip Rousseau in understanding that, whatever the final editing, "Basil was…the source of all that [*Hex.* 10 and 11] contain" ("Human Nature and Its Material Setting in Basil of Caesarea's Sermons on the Creation," *HeyJ* 49 [2008]: 222). For readings of these homilies, see Ayres, *Nicaea,* 314-317; Yves Courtonne, *Saint Basile et l'Hellénisme: Étude sur la rencontre de la recontre de la pensée chrétienne avec la sagesse antique dans L'Hexaméron de Basile le Grand* (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1934); Hildebrand, *Basil of Caesarea,* 17-36; Rousseau, *Basil of Caesarea,* 318-349.

Ayres and Radde-Gallwitz note that the *Hexaemeron* provides a good example of the challenge in tracking down Basil's precise philosophical sources: "Not only is he highly eclectic – showing knowledge of Aristotelian, Stoic and Platonic doctrines – his positions are often driven by demands either of the Scriptural text or of developing Christian belief. We are, however, unclear how far his knowledge of philosophical doctrines was mediated via doxographies and more proximate texts" ("Basil of Caesarea," in *The Cambridge History of Philosophy in Late Antiquity: Volume I,* ed. Lloyd P. Gerson [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010]: 1:461). Agreeing with this general judgment, John M. Rist digs in to see what precise philosophical sources Basil is resourcing in his "Basil's 'Neoplatonism': Its Background and Nature," in *Basil of Caesarea, Christian Humanist, Ascetic: A Sixteen-Hundredth Anniversary Symposium,* ed. Paul Fedwick (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1981), 138-220.

In addition to being a source for examining Basil's philosophical influences, the *Hexaemeron* has served as a springboard for scholars looking to make judgments on Basil's exegetical practices. Recent work has sought to move beyond the breakdown of Antiochene and Alexandrian categories and the need to place Basil in one or the other. For a careful overview of relevant scholarship that concludes Basil's methods were more or less consistent throughout his career (though "more mindful of the perils of allegory" as he matured), see

two give special attention to Genesis 1:26-27 and the theological implications of the creation of humanity. Basil's vision for human beings emerges from a Trinitarian matrix where the "Let us make" of Genesis 1:26 is a unique deliberation (rather than a simple command) between Father, Son, and Holy Spirit:

> "The Father created through the Son, and the Son created by the Father's will (Πατὴρ ἐποίησε διὰ Υἱοῦ, καὶ Υἱός ἐκτίσατο πατρῴῳ θελήματι); that you may glorify the Father in the Son (Πατέρα ἐν Υἱῷ), and the Son in the Holy Spirit (Υἱὸν ἐν Πνεύματι ἁγίῳ). Thus you have been made a common work, that you may be a worshiper of both together, not dividing the worship but uniting the Godhead (μὴ σχίζων τὴν προσκύνησιν ἀλλὰ ἑνῶν τὴν θεότητα)."[4]

Basil invites his 'audience' to consider themselves as 'in' the first humans so that they, too, relate to God as the first human beings did. That relation finds its *telos* in worship. For Basil the return to 'origins' in Genesis has the greater purpose of contemplating human destiny.

When Basil reflects on God's creation of the human being he parses Genesis 1:26 to communicate two distinct things: humanity has been created according to the *image* and according to the *likeness* of God. This is not a simple parallelism, according to Basil, but reveals a 'two-part plan' for humanity.[5] First, 'according to the image' speaks to what the human being always is, specifically in the inner, rational part. There is a sense in which the 'image' is static – a *given* by creation – and relates to an irrevocable status.[6] The 'likeness' of the human being, on the other hand, has an 'incomplete' element where, throughout life, human beings can progressively be conformed to God's likeness. Christianity, with its worship and scriptural asceticism, is "*likeness* to God (Θεοῦ ὁμοίωσις) as far as is possible for human nature."[7] For Basil, shorthand for increasing 'likeness' is "putting on Christ" (Galatians 3:27). That starts with baptism and extends through the Christian's life through worship and ascetical practice. Thus, where humanity is 'from' connects to where it is going: just as we are from a Trinitarian God with distinct relations

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Hildebrand, *Basil of Caesarea,* 44-56. For Basil's interest in the ascetic way of life providing the context for proper exegesis, see Peter W. Martens, "Interpreting Attentively: The Ascetic Character of Biblical Exegesis according to Origen and Basil of Caesarea," in *Origeniana octava* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2003), 2.1115-2121.

[4] *Hex.* 10.4 (SC 160:172).

[5] *Hex.* 10.15.

[6] See, though, ft. 86 below for an undeveloped thought in Basil where the soul's kinship with the Spirit entails restoration of a "royal image" to its "ancient form".

[7] *Hex.* 10.17 (SC 160:210).

demonstrated in the creative act itself, so we are 'returning' to God through "glorifying the Son in the Spirit" and "the Father in the Son." Basil bends the protology in *Hex.* in a doxological return to God that suggests concepts pervasive throughout his theological corpus. The constitution of humanity being established, the next section takes up human ways of knowing God.

5.3 The Question and Parameters of Divine Knowledge

Basil's thought requires spending some time with his theological epistemology before directly investigating his Trinitarian language. In the relationship between epistemology and theology in his writings it is appropriate to first recognize and understand his own reticence to even speak of God (5.3.1). According to Basil, knowledge and description of God have necessary constraints. Only when these are understood should one venture with holy fear to speak of the divine. Basil himself would rather confess the 'simple faith' of the church than write volumes on the Trinity; yet, he felt pressed to engage and refute those threats he discerned to the faith which the church confessed in its worship. To speak beyond the simple faith demanded, for Basil, a theological epistemology that is properly chastened by an understanding of divine and human order (5.3.2), and what can and cannot be known about God in light of his resplendent transcendence and rich revelation (5.3.3). The wealth of theological knowledge is augmented, according to Basil, through 'conceptualization'. Within his Trinitarian theology conceptualization is utilized in order to better understand the unique relationships between the divine persons (5.3.4). For the purposes of this chapter, this provides insight on the Father within the divine life and how a clarifying vision of him is provided within the context of worship (5.3.5).

5.3.1 *Reticence in Speaking of the Divine*

At the start of Basil's theological epistemology is a tension between the fundamental difference between God and the human being and what he calls the "demands of piety." The desire to know more about the God one worships pushes against the reality that not only is God radically different from the created order; sin has entered into the equation. My investigation into Basil's theological epistemology begins with a look at an edificatory sermon and a few letters where he teaches what he sees as the proper order of knowing God. While polemical concerns are never entirely out of view,

the intent of these writings is first to build up the faithful by presenting the knowledge of God in such a way that will lead to spiritual growth.[8] His *Hom.* 15, *De Fide*, has no explicit polemics and is concerned with ascending to the knowledge of the Trinity.[9] Its date and context cannot be known with certainty. However, its focus on the Holy Spirit has led many to consider it as a product of the time right before or after his writing of *Spir.* This means it is most likely from late in his career and representative of his mature Trinitarian thought.[10] Before turning to the divine persons at the heart of his sermon, though, Basil

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[8] The clearest statement by Basil of his awareness of context and genre is from a preface he wrote to his *Moralia*. Like *Hom.* 15, it is known as *De Fide.* It is also known as *Prologus viii.* He presents the preface as a simple exposition of what he has learned, particularly about the Trinity, from Scripture. Yet, before presenting his confession, he mentions the other places he has spoken on the faith where it was appropriate to marshal "arguments gleaned from various sources as the need of those weak in faith (ἡ χρεία τῶν νοσούντων) required." There were specific arguments that Basil felt compelled to address with non-scriptural argumentation yet "not out of harmony with reverent Scriptural teaching (τὴν Γραφὴν εὐσεβοῦς διανοίας)." In this he saw the Apostle Paul in Athens on Mars Hill as an example, where he used "even pagan words which did not go against his special purpose (ἴδιον σκοπόν)" (PG 31:677). It seems Basil here is speaking of his controversial treatise *Eun.* where he was, in his language, drawn into an occasion where the implements of war were needed. That is one genre, and an exposition of the straightforward and simple faith is another: "There is a speech which refutes (ἐλεγχων), as there is another kind which reproves (ἔλεγκτικου) and another kind which exhorts (παρακλητικου)" (PG 31:680). Basil's sensitivity here probably stems from those who misunderstood what he was doing in *Eun.* He counters that he did not divert from the sense of Scripture even while he had to remain flexible and resourceful in what 'arms' he used to defeat his foe. While Basil defends the necessity of such an approach in polemical contexts, he certainly postures a preference for the "profession of a sound faith (τῆς ὑγιαινούσης πίστεως ὁμολογία) and manifestation of a simple exposition (ἁπλῆ πρόκειται)" (Ibid.) in order to strengthen the saints. This is, I think, because Basil understands knowledge of the Trinity primarily emanating within the context of worship, where it is guided by Scripture and tradition and leads to spiritual contemplation rather than speculation. Cf. *Hom.* 24.4 where Basil says, "I especially wish that, just as I received the tradition simply (ἁπλοϊκῶς), just as I agreed to it without refinements (ἀνεπιτηδεύτως), so too may I hand it on thus to my audience, without always being challenged on these issues, but having disciples persuaded on the basis of one confession (ἐκ μιᾶς ὁμολογίας πεπεισμένους)" (PG 31:608). Paul Fedwick notes that while he knew Scripture from his upbringing "the older Basil grew the more he turned to Scripture" ("A Chronology of the Life and Works of Basil of Caesarea," in *Basil of Caesarea, Christian Huminist, Ascetic,* 8n.29).

[9] The theme of intellectual ascent suggests Platonist influence, of course, but Basil turns this idea to communicate the challenges of coming to know God. For sources on the scholarly debate over whether Basil accessed Platonist material in *Hom.* 15, see Mark DelCogliano, trans. and intro., *On Christian Doctrine and Practice,* Popular Patristics Series 47 (Yonkers, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2012), 229.

[10] This is the conclusion of Hermann Dörries, who notes similarities between this homily and *Spir.* 9.22. *De Spuritu Sancto. Der Beitrag des Basilius zum Abschluss des trinitarischen Dogmas* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1956), 99-100; see also Jean Gribomont, *In Tomum 31 Patrologiae Graecae ad editionem operum rhetoricorum, asceticorum, liturgicorum Sancti Basilii Magni Introductio* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1961), 5. Specifically, Dörries and Gribomont date *Hom.* 15 and *Spir.* 9.22 around 375. The lack of polemics with which to index the homily, however, necessitates caution on assigning a precise date. Given its attention to the Holy Spirit and similarity with *Spir.,* a date of 372 onwards "may be more likely" (DelCogliano, *On Christian Doctrine*, 233).

Given what will be examined below, it is appropriate here to sketch further the sequence of Basil's works relevant to this chapter as well as address the question of development in his thought.

Basil's two major dogmatic works serve as guideposts. Basil 'came on the scene' first in his refutation of Eunomius's apology found in the three-part work of *Eun.* He continued to exposit on theological matters throughout his ecclesiastical career by letter and homily, leading up to his late theological work, *Spir.* Basil

begins his homily concerned with this question of what should we even speak. We have minds that want to know God, but they are fallen from the grand realities of God. What is more, our speech is even more inadequate to express divine realities.[11] Thus, speaking of God is "audacious" and risks diminishing the wonders of theology with the "poverty of our words (ῥημάτων εὐτελείᾳ)."[12] Nonetheless, with desire for theological instruction in the church and the "demands of piety (εὐσέβειαν),"[13] Basil is compelled to use "inadequate words (μικρῶν ῥημάτων)"[14] for the task. And so, with those notes of caution, he proceeds to expound upon the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Basil further explores the boundary marker of our knowledge and the one the believer seeks in a series of letters he writes late in his life to a younger disciple in the faith, Amphilochius.[15] Not only does he have words' *natural inadequacy* in mind here, but also

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finished *Eun.* in 363 or 364 when the Homoiousian and Nicene parties were coming together (Ayres, *Nicaea,* 191). *Spir.* is from 375 (Fedwick, "A Chronology of Basil," 16-17). *Ep.* 233-236, addressed to Basil's spiritual son and student, Amphilochius of Iconomium, "sum up a great deal of [Basil's] theological thought in its mature form. They were written after *On the Holy Spirit* and recapitulate the theological vision of *Against Eunomius.*" Basil dedicated *Spir.* to Amphilochius. At this point "most of his theological development and most of his episcopal struggles were now over" (Hildebrand, *Trinitarian Theology*, 27).
What one finds in examining these works is that though the opponents and contrary viewpoints shift, there is a consistency to Basil's understanding of the Trinity. That is not to say his own language and concepts are static; indeed, they are not – debate produces a dynamism within consistency (For a brief account of Basil's developing theology, see Ayres, *Nicaea,* 191-198; for more extensive ones, see Hildebrand's *Trinitarian Theology* and Drecoll's *Trinitätslehre*). Nonetheless, throughout his career Basil operates in a variety of contexts with a remarkably sturdy vision of the Trinity.

[11] In his *Hom.* 16*, In illud, In principio erat Verbum,* Basil appears more sanguine on the ability of words to express thought, even saying "our word (λόγος) reflects the whole of our thought (ὅλην ἡμῶν ἀπεικονίζει τὴν ἔννοιαν)" (PG 31:477). Basil's comment comes in the context of arguing for why 'Word' is appropriate in the Gospel of John for the only-begotten, because it expresses fully the Father. Basil's argument rests on the comparison to our words' ability to fully express our thoughts. However, in *Hom.* 15 Basil says that our speech expresses our thoughts "vaguely (ἀμυδρῶς)" (PG 31:464). It appears the reason for this inconsistency on Basil's part is that in *Hom.* 16 he is speaking in ideal terms and in *Hom.* 15 he is speaking in light of the Fall's effect on our minds. Like *Hom.* 15, we cannot be certain as to the date of this homily; unlike *Hom.* 15, it likely falls within a wider time span (365-378). See DelCogliano, *On Christian Doctrine*, 249.
Cf. *Ep.* 7 where Basil writes to Gregory of Nazianzus, "Speech (ὁ λόγος) is naturally too weak (ἀσθενέστερόν) to serve (διακονεῖσθαι) perfectly the conceptions of our minds (τοῖς νοουμένοις)" (Courtonne 1:21-22).

[12] *Hom.* 15.1 (PG 31:465).

[13] *Hom.* 15.1 (PG 31:464).

[14] *Hom.* 15.1 (PG 31:465). Cf. *Hom.* 29.4*, Adversus eos qui per calumniam dicunt dicit a nobis deos tres,* where Basil makes it clear some matters should always be treated with reverential silence, such as the nature of the begetting of the Only-begotten: "For only the one who has begotten him and the one who has been begotten understand it. Indeed, we ought to know about what we can speak (λαλεῖν) and about what we must keep silent (σιωπᾷν). Not all words can be uttered by the tongue, for fear that our intellect (νοῦς), just as an eye that wants to see the whole sun (ὅλον τὸν ἥλιον), will lose even the light (φῶς) that it is has. For in this you know, if you will know, that you do not fully comprehend (κατείληφας). Therefore, let us revere in silence (σιωπῇ τιμήσωμεν) that begetting (γέννησιν) which is inexpressible" (PG 31:1496).

[15] These letters to Amphilochius show how one must be careful in drawing a strict separation between Basil's polemical and non-polemical writings. One could say they have indirect polemical elements as he answers Amphilochius' questions sparked by *heteroousian* concerns. Their edificatory nature derives

their *limits* when speaking about the divine. In *Ep.* 233 he tells Amphilochius that the mind is indeed noble, in the image of the Creator, yet also susceptible to deception. Inclining to its more "divine (θειοτέραν) part"[16] and tempered "with the divinity of the Spirit (τῇ θεότητι τοῦ Πνεύματος),"[17] the mind is able to observe and apprehend divine realities. Apprehension of truth, however, is always in line with human limitation and the extent of grace given. Even with this provision of divine knowledge, one can only hope for *partial* apprehension of the truth. Just as the eye cannot take in and know the grand sweep of physical realities with just a glance, so the mind, when faced with heavenly realities, cannot receive whole the glorious transcendence of God. Even with the distance that remains due to susceptibility to deception and the transcendence of God, one can still know God in part and progress in what one knows of God.

In his next letter to Amphilochius, *Ep.* 234*,* Basil furthers discussion of divine knowledge and makes clear that it is not of God's substance. Rather, knowledge of God progresses through understanding his many attributes. These attributes are revealed through God's activities, which are manifestations of his power. Knowledge of God's power through his activities is communicated through faith, and following that 'knowledgeable faith' comes worship:

> From the activities is the knowledge (γνῶσις), and from the knowledge is the worship (προσκύνησις)…. Worship follows faith, and faith is strengthened by power (πίστις ἀπὸ δυνάμεως)…. We understand (γινώσκομεν) God from his power. Therefore, we believe (πιστεύομεν) in him whom we understand, and we worship (προσκυνοῦμεν) him in whom we believe.[18]

Knowledge of God involves knowledge not of 'what' but of 'that', that is, his attributes or his attributes observed *in his activities*.[19] The fact that God's attributes and activities are numerous means the ways we come to know God are manifold. Worship is the proper

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from his aim to strengthen Amphilochius' Trinitarian understanding.

[16] (Courtonne 2:39).

[17] (Courtonne 2:40).

[18] (Courtonne 3:43-44).

[19] Radde-Gallwitz has noted this distinction can be seen as corresponding to Aristotle's distinction between knowing "the 'that'" and knowing "the 'because'." This does not mean Aristotle (or his commentators) served as Basil's source. Origen (*De prin.* 1.3.52-53) and Athanasius (*Serap.* 1.18) made the same distinction, with Athanasius appealing to Hebrews 11:6 (as does Basil). Highlighting Aristotle is useful because the distinction functioned for him as it did for Basil: "[It is a] way around the principle of the epistemological priority of definition…. In so far as knowing why or because involves knowing essences or definitions, Basil holds that one never fully makes the transition. This is the force of his denial that one never knows God's essence. However, progress in theological understanding is, like Aristotelian moral education, a process of moving from basic concepts to reflection upon those concepts" (*Transformation,* 123).

context where the knowledge of God flourishes, something I will continue to expand upon in this chapter.

In *Ep.* 235, again addressed to Amphilochius, Basil continues on the theme of what can be known of God, where our faith follows the revelation of God's power. It is proper to call what is received through faith 'knowledge' even if it does not meet the unrealistic demands of knowledge proposed by Eunomius, who holds a kind of 'all or nothing' position on knowledge where true knowledge of God is a comprehending knowledge of his substance. If knowledge is constrained in such terms, indeed, Basil submits, knowledge of almost everything is ruled out – including of oneself. There is a built-in ignorance of all things, insofar as the substance of realities, human and divine, is beyond our powers of comprehension. Even so, if knowledge is not reduced to such absurd, "sophistical (συκοφαντία)" extremes, then we can speak of knowledge that is at the same time partial and true.[20] Just as God's diverse attributes and activities produce multiple means in knowledge of the divine, a result of human knowledge lacking the power to comprehend God 'all-at-once' is that apprehension proceeds in a variety of ways.

To sum up, through Basil's *Hom.* 15 and the letters to Amphilochius, we learn that there are always dangers in presuming to know and speak about God: we have fallen thoughts and our words are inadequate. Nonetheless, even though one must proceed with reverential caution, the gift of the Holy Spirit and the remains of God's image given in creation enable human knowledge of God. That knowledge comes first through the demonstration of power seen in God's activities, which is apprehended through faith and leads to worship. Basil holds wholeheartedly to a knowledge which informs our worship of God, yet, because of the understanding among heteroousians that knowledge of x = knowledge of its substance, he is careful to delineate the parameters of that knowledge. Basil builds a broad theological epistemology informed by human limitation and the transcendence of God, where *defining* God's substance is not the aim of thought and speech concerning him. Knowledge must reverently travel along the lines provided by God's revelation[21], where in manifold ways he communicates his power to humanity. The purpose of pursuing these lines of knowledge is that worship might be deepened and

[20] (Courtonne 3:45).

[21] Cf. *Hex.* 10.1, where Basil writes, "For the light (φῶς) reflected [in Scripture] becomes the cause of vision (τοῦ καθορᾶσθαι...αἴτιον) for each of us" (SC 160:166-168).

therein the vision of God clarified. This chapter will explore the nature of this knowledge apprehended by faith. First, though, in order to sharpen understanding of the parameters of divine knowledge according to Basil, I will probe further divine and human order in his thought.

5.3.2 *The Order of Divine Knowledge*

A study of the order of divine knowledge opens up the distinct *taxis* among the Father and Son, as well as, through understanding the divine 'position' of the Son, gives hope that human knowledge of God is possible. If human beings are 'created to see God', God has prepared a way for that vision within himself leading to the Father. This is a central question within Basil's writings, starting with *Eun.*: that is, any discussion of the knowledge of God entails the status of the Son of God.[22] In his refutations of Eunomius, at question is whether the Son is able to reveal the Father, or is he too far removed from the Father to be able to provide knowledge of him. Throughout his corpus, Basil stresses the Creator/created distinction. Within the closing chapters of book one of *Eun.*, he highlights Eunomius' teaching on the 'incomparability' of God, because he knows this is a means by which to exclude the Son from the domain of the Father (1.27). A byproduct of such teaching is that it relegates the Son to everything else that does not compare to the

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[22] For the historical and theological context of *Eun.,* see Mark DelCogliano and Andrew Radde-Gallwitz, trans., *Against Eunomius* (Washington: The Catholic University Press, 2011), 18-38. *Eun.* can be classified as an adaptation of juridical oratory. DelCogliano and Radde-Gallwitz sum up its genre succinctly: "[It] is a polemical treatise, a point-by-point refutation of the methodology and main tenets of Eunomius's Heterousian theology as presented in his *Apol.* Basil proceeds by citing a few lines of Eunomius, then arguing at length against the suppositions or ideas expressed in the quotation" (38). Precedents for this alternating citation and refutation methodology can be found in Origen's *Against Celsus,* Marcellus of Ancyra's *Against Asterius,* Eusebius of Caesarea's *Against Marcellus,* and Iamblichus' *On the Mysteries.*
Thus, the clear target in *Eun.* is Heteroousian thought represented by Eunomius. As for Basil's own theological sources in *Eun.*, though he was certainly influenced by Homoiousian thought, he was not beholden to it or any one previous theologian. One can find traces of Origen, Eusebius of Caesarea, Athanasius, and the Homoiousians. Already in *Eun.*, his first doctrinal treatise, Basil demonstrates himself to be "an independent and innovative thinker who drew on many theological currents…. Basil integrates various streams of thought in such a way that they could later coalesce, through further efforts on his part and those of others, into a viable pro-Nicene theology, that is, a set of doctrines and theological practices aimed at promoting the Nicene Creed as a cipher for orthodox Trinitarian theology" (Ibid., 34). Meeting Basil in *Eun.* one does not find, then, a fully developed systematic theology that he is wielding against his opponent; rather, Basil is developing his theology in the heat of argument with the goal of disproving the validity of Heteroousian thought.
On Eunomius and Heteroousian theology, see Mark DelCogliano, *Basil of Caesarea's Anti-Eunomian Theory of Names: Christian Theology and Late-Antique Philosophy in the Fourth-Century Trinitarian Controversy,* Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae 103 (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 1-134; Thomas A. Kopecek, *A History of Neo-Arianism,* Patristic Monograph Series 8 (Cambridge, MA: Philadelphia Patristic Foundation, 1979); Richard Paul Vaggione, *Eunomius of Cyzicus and the Nicene Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); Barnes, *Power of God,* 173-219; Radde-Gallwitz, *Transformation,* 87-112.

Father, that is, 'everything else' which is *created*. Basil agrees that what is created is, on one level, incomparable to the Father. But by including the Son in that which is incomparable, some of the Son's own words become unintelligible (see John 10:30). What is more, knowledge of God the Father himself is severed from the human realm because the 'way' of that knowledge falls as short as every other created thing. Leaving demonstration for a later point in this chapter, let it suffice to say that, for Basil, the status of the Son is crucial for ability to know God. If the Son is not fully 'on the side' of the Father, then one not only blasphemes the Son – genuine knowledge of God is in jeopardy:

> Even if they seem to attribute certain superiorities (ὑπερβολάς) to the God and Father (τῷ Θεῷ καὶ Πατρί) it is of no help to those who remove the knowledge (τὴν γνῶσιν) of the way which leads to him…. No one can say that they magnify (μεγαλύνειν) God [Luke 1:46] without faith in Christ (ἄνευ τῆς εἰς Χριστὸν πίστεως), through whom there is access to knowledge (προσαγωγὴ τῆς γνώσεὼς).[23]

In establishing on what side the Son falls in the Creator/creature divide, Basil is able to uphold what is the unique preserve of the Son (and Spirit). No one within the created realm[24] can comprehend the divine, but the Son's status as divine means, though distinct from the Father, he and the Spirit know the Father: "The very substance (οὐσίαν) of God is incomprehensible to everyone except the Only-Begotten (Μονογενεῖ) and the Holy Spirit."[25] Basil references Matthew 11:27 and 1 Corinthians 2:10-11 to uphold this claim.[26] How arrogant then, in Basil's mind, that Eunomius would claim knowledge of that which is the unique preserve of the Son and Spirit. In the already mentioned *Ep.* 236, Basil does address the biblical language which might appear to limit the Son's knowledge of the Father, found in Matthew 24:36 and Mark 13:32, and so appealed to by the Heteroousians. His explanation is important for the present point because through comparing these passages with John 16:15 and 10:15, where the Son speaks of full possession and knowledge of what is the Father's, Basil interprets Matthew 24:36 and Mark 13:32 as communicating the *order* of knowledge which runs from the Father to the Son, rather than the lack of any divine knowledge by the Son. That is to say, what the

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[23] *Eun.* 1.26 (SC 299:266).

[24] It is not merely a 'human' limitation, for the angels are created beings of a rational nature and they, too, are unable to comprehend God's substance, according to Basil (*Eun.* 1.14).

[25] *Eun.* 1.14 (SC 299:220).

[26] Sesboüé writes, "En definitive, la connaissance de le substance de Dieu est reserve, au témoignange de l'Écriture, au Fils (*Mt* 11, 27) et à l'Esprit (*1 Co* 2,10-11)" (*Saint Basile et La Trinité,* 154).

passages in Matthew and Mark teach is that the Son *would* know nothing without the Father, for "from the Father was knowledge (γνῶσις) given him from the beginning."[27]

Basil's theological epistemology is built upon the understanding that there is within the divine persons an 'order of knowing' that moves from the Father to the Son, where "the cause of the Son's knowing issues from the Father (ἡ αἰτία τοῦ εἰδέναι τὸν Υἱὸν παρὰ τοῦ Πατρός)."[28] Basil uses texts that might appear to drive a wedge between the Father and the Son in order to think through the basis for the Son knowing anything at all. If some biblical texts speak clearly to the full knowledge of the Son, then texts that appear to limit put the focus on the source and order of all knowledge. There is, for Basil, an order of knowing between the Trinitarian persons themselves which helps make sense of biblical language and, as we will see, the Trinitarian relations. One cannot avoid strong hints of dependence in such language by Basil, but a dependence that is in no way contrary to the full divinity of the Trinitarian persons as he sees them. Indeed, he goes so far as to say, "And this is most reverential and befitting divinity (θεοπρεπὲς) to say of the Son, that from him with whom he is of one substance (ὁμοούσιος) he has both his power of knowing and, in his divinity (θεότητι), his being beheld in all wisdom and glory."[29] The order between the divine persons of the Father and Son that we discern in such language will serve as a pattern for the order of human knowing of the divine, as it moves 'up' the divine persons to the Father.

By highlighting Basil's use of the Creator/created distinction in order to distinguish the Son from created things, and place him among what is incomparable, one key tenet is discerned that orders the human and divine. And by placing the Son on the side of the Creator, not only is his own status secured, there is hope for some measure of human knowledge of the divine. That measure will never reach the fullness of the Son's (and Spirit's) knowledge of the Father, however, for his is perfect and full—comprehensive.[30] Being and knowledge move from the Father to the Son, and the Son

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[27] (Courtonne 3:50).

[28] Ibid. Cf., *Eun.* 2.12.

[29] (Courtonne 3:50-51).

[30] *Eun.* 1.14 (SC 299:220): "What, then, will remain distinctive about the knowledge that the Only-Begotten or the Holy Spirit (τῇ γνώσει τοῦ Μονογενοῦς ἢ τοῦ ἁγίου Πνεύματος) has, if indeed they themselves [that is, Eunomius and his followers] have comprehension of the very substance? (τῆς οὐσίας αὐτῆς ἔχουσι τὴν κατάληψιν;)."

receives all fully.[31] Thus, it is the unique preserve of the divine persons to comprehend the divine, yet intra-divine knowledge follows the order of persons from the Father to the Son. Such patterning of knowledge within the persons of the Godhead will serve as a map of the human order of knowledge of God as it 'returns to the Father'. With these cautions and distinctions in understanding Basil's theological epistemology, this chapters turns to the nature of human knowledge of the divine, which while never reaching the substance, or comprehending the persons, nevertheless apprehends what is true in its vision of God.

5.3.3 *The Nature of Human Knowledge of God*

It has been suggested in the foregoing that, according to Basil, knowledge of God is dependent upon his existence and his activities ('that he is' and 'what he does'). Consequently, growth in knowledge involves first locating those areas where God has demonstrated himself. Once the activities of God are discerned, one can proceed to understand his attributes: "We are led up from the activities (ἐνεργειῶν) of God and gain knowledge of the maker through what he has made (διὰ τῶν ποιημάτων τὸν ποιητὴν ἐννοοῦντας), and so receive an understanding of his goodness and wisdom."[32] In order to find a template in Basil for ascertaining the activities of God, I turn to a late homily, *Hom.* 24[33], where Basil is concerned with polemics against Sabellians, Anomoians, and Pneumatomachians and addresses the Trinitarian errors he sees in each of these groups. Toward the middle of the sermon, as he is transitioning to speaking about the Holy Spirit, Basil reaches an apparent point of exasperation, where he suggests those in his audience have stopped listening to him out of boredom, wanting to get on with the current debates over the Spirit. It is here that Basil again makes a comment that highlights his underlying 'wish' for a simple faith. It is only because of such groups as the 'Pneumatomachians' that he is driven into greater Trinitarian elaboration. He tells his listeners, "I especially wish that, just as I received the tradition simply (ἁπλοϊκῶς), just as I agreed to it without refinements, so too may I hand it on to my hearers, without a correction being constantly

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[31] As I will show below, the Holy Spirit is included in this full sharing of knowledge among the persons, but is not given much attention in the texts referenced thus far.

[32] *Eun.* 1.14 (SC 299:220).

[33] Given the attention in this homily to the Holy Spirit, it is thought it was either written in the years running up to the writing of *Spir.* or soon after, putting it around 372-375. This is the judgment of Philip Rouseau, who noted "its treatment of the Holy Spirit looks more like a build-up toward the *De Spiritu sancto* than something subsequent to so assured a formulation" (*Basil of Caesarea,* 247n.60). DelCogliano essentially agrees, but bases his conclusion on rhetorical similarities between what is found in this homily and several texts dated around this time period (*Spir.; Ep.* 210; *Ep.* 226) (*On Christian Doctrine,* 289-290).

demanded concerning these issues, but having disciples persuaded on the basis of one confession (ἐκ μιᾶς ὁμολογίας πεπεισμένους ἔχων τοὺς διδαχθεντας)."[34] In line with what has been observed already, it is clear that the need for refutation has pushed Basil to make 'refinements' when simple confession is his desire. But what would that confession follow? As he puts it just a little later in the sermon, "We exhort you to hear…what is acceptable (εὐάρεστον) to the Lord, harmonious (σύμφωνον) with the Scriptures, and not in conflict (μὴ μαχόμενον) with the fathers."[35] While one should be careful not read too much into one line from a sermon, this does serve for Basil as a handy summary of the initial deposit of divine knowledge accessible by humans.

First there is the context of worship: 'what is acceptable to the Lord'. Knowledge of God is communicated to his faithful worshippers.[36] Progressive knowledge comes as worshippers grow in likeness to God (οἰκείωσις in *Ep.* 235), the object of their worship.[37] Increasing likeness is gained through ascetic living, which produces intimacy with the divine. Taking these together, intimacy through worship and ascetic living characterizes divine knowledge in Basil. In his last theological work Basil emphasizes this point at the very beginning where he commends listening carefully to all the "theological words (τῶν θεολογικῶν ῥημάτων)"[38] in order to discern meaning in each word and syllable. This effort, though, must take place within an understanding of "the goal of our calling: it is offered to us to become like God (ὁμοιωθῆναι Θεῷ) as much as human nature allows. Likeness to God, however, cannot be gained without knowledge (οὐκ ἄνευ γνώσεως), and knowledge

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[34] *Hom.* 24.4 (PG 31:608).

[35] *Hom.* 24.4 (PG 31:609).

[36] Cf., *Ep. 235*.

[37] Thus, there is an ethical hue to Basil's theological epistemology. οἰκείωσις is a Stoic technical term employed by Basil to describe "the natural relation of affection among family members and close friends and of oneself to oneself. For Basil, the Christian life, especially in its ascetic form, is a matter of growing in 'affinity' with God, which is something humans by nature are set up to do" (Radde-Gallwitz, *Transformation,* 128; see ft. 41 on the same page for sources in Basil's ascetical works where he uses οἰκείωσις).

[38] *Spir.* 1.2 (SC 17 bis:254). Like *Ep.* 233-236, *Spir.* is addressed to Amphilochius, though the context is Basil's broken friendship with Eustathius of Sebaste that had been brewing since 372 over the latter's denial of the Spirit's divinity. At issue are doxologies. Basil thinks there is a theological elasticity to the pronouns used within them and argues that the Holy Spirit is to be glorified because of what he does. Basil's language in this work is careful so as not to offend those he hopes win over to the Nicene cause, specifically avoiding homoousios and homoios, it is thought, in order to woo Macedonians (Stephen M. Hildebrand, trans., *On the Holy Spirit,* Popular Patristics Series 42 (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2011), 22-23. His more subtle approach is to draw attention to the Spirit's activities through which we learn 'what' the Holy Spirit is. For a careful discussion of Basil's sensitive approach to language in *Spir.,* see Benoît Pruche's introduction to SC 17bis, 79-104. Pruche notes Basil's pastoral motives and the space he allows to show the audacity of the heretics while inviting the timid. In the end, Basil says much in accord with the Spirit's divinity even if he does not use specific language.

comes from teaching (ἐκ διδαγμάτων)."[39] There is an interrelationship here between worship, likeness with God, and 'teaching'. Likeness comes through worship, and indispensible within this transformational context is teaching. In what follows in *Spir.* Basil makes clear that teaching involves the words of Scripture and the "non-scriptural tradition of the fathers (τῆς ἀγράφου παραδόσεως τῶν πατέρον)."[40] A faithful worshipper accessing Scripture and the tradition of the fathers has the initial 'materials' to make a simple confession. But in light of the need for refutation, 'refinements' must be made. Basil makes such refinements through what he calls conceptualization.

Basil's theory of conceptualization is born out of his debate with Eunomius in *Eun.* over the status of 'unbegotten'. For Eunomius, unbegotten provides a direct link to the substance of God – to know the meaning of unbegotten is to know God (what he *is*).[41] Such an understanding is problematical on many levels for Basil, not least that human knowledge is impotent to grasp at the substance of God. The reasons we cannot grasp have been suggested already – God is too transcendent and we are too finite, frail, and fallen – yet the alternative is not no knowledge; rather, many concepts must be used in order to know God. Comprehension of the Father is reserved for the Son and Spirit, of course, but a gradual knowledge is available to humanity if it proceeds along the lines God has made available. Those lines are followed in knowledge through 'conceptualization' (ἐπίνοια). This is a process of reflection described by Basil based on the revealed attributes and qualities of God observed in his activities. What one gathers from these attributes and qualities is a 'concept', 'sense, or 'notion' of God (ἔννοια). Further reflection, what one might call 'second-order' or 'second-degree' reflection,[42] is the process of conceptualization (ἐπίνοια) that produces greater complexity and subtler understanding. It moves from an initial concept to a "more subtle and precise reflection (τὴν λεπτοτέραν καὶ ἀκριβεστέραν τοῦ νοηθέντος)."[43] In other words, the process of

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[39] Ibid. (SC 17 bis:254).

[40] *Spir.* 9.22 (SC 17:323). Cf. *Spir.* 10.25. An even stronger section on this topic is found later in *Spir.:* "Of the dogmas and proclamations (δογμάτων καὶ κηρυγμάτων) that are guarded (πεφυλαγμένων) in the Church, we hold some from the teaching of Scriptures (ἐκ τῆς ἐγγράφου διδασκαλίας), and others we have received in mystery as the teachings of the tradition of the apostles (ἀποστόλων παραδόσεως διαδοθέντα)" 27.66 (SC 17 bis:478-480).

[41] On the centrality of the name 'unbegotten' (ἀγέννητος) in heteroousian theology, see Mark DelCogliano, *Basil of Caesarea,* 28-36.

[42] Radde-Gallwitz uses "second order" (*Transformation*, 144) and Rousseau uses "second degree" (*Basil of Caesarea,* 112).

[43] *Eun.* 1.6 (SC 299:186). In this move there is not a separation in reality. Rather, there is a

conceptualization is a refining process where, in theology, knowledge becomes more dense and descriptive of God even as it always falls short of definition.

For Eunomius, conceptualization is too uncertain. Knowledge must be of God's substance for it to be true, and that is only known through defining who he is.[44] Conceptualization is a way of speaking where existence is tied to the utterance and has no real referent in God. Thus, for Eunomius, it is existence in name only, and ceases to exist as soon as the name is no longer pronounced.[45] Basil, rather, sees conceptualization as aiding in the true knowledge of God, where it enables 'space' between words and realities where human reflection can probe deeper into divine knowledge.[46]

Putting it this way make things seem tidy in Basil, where what is basic and general (ἔννοια) is 'complexified' through a process of reflection (ἐπίνοια). But Basil's language of concepts and conceptualization is not systematic (as with many other things in his writings). Sometimes ἐπίνοια might refer both to the product and the process of reflection.[47] He uses other terms as well, such as νόημα for 'concept' and ἐπενθύμησις for

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separation in analysis in order to gain a deeper understanding of the reality. This use of conceptualization is found in Plotinus' *Enn.* 6.2.7: "Now there are many species of being and there is a genus of being; but movement is not to be classed under being nor yet over being, but with being (μετὰ τοῦ ὄντος); it is found in being not as inhering in a subject; for it is its active actuality and neither of them is without the other except in our conception (ἐπινοίᾳ) of them, and thse two natures are one nature: for being is actual, not potential" (LCL 445:130-131).

[44] *Eun.* 1.4-5. Alluding to Aetius as a source for Eunomius' heteroouisian doctrine, Basil quotes their confession as "We believe unbegottenness to be the substance of the God of the universe (Πιστεύομεν τὴν ἀγεννησίαν οὐσίαν εἶναι τοῦ Θεοῦ τῶν ὅλων)" (*Eun.* 1.4 [SC 299:164]).
In focusing in on ἐπίνοια Basil is directly addressing Eunomius' dismissal of it: "When we say 'unbegotten' (Ἀγέννητον), then, we do not imagine that we ought to honour God in name alone (ὀνόματι μόνον), in conformity with human invention; rather, in conformity with truth (κατ'ἀλήθειαν), we ought to repay him the debt which above all others is most due God: the acknowledgement that he is what he is (τὴν τοῦ εἶναι ὅ ἐστιν ὁμολογίαν). Expressions based on invention (κατ' ἐπίνοια) have their existence in name an utterance only (ἐν ὀνόμασι μόνοις)…. So then…'the unbegotten is based neither on invention (κατ' ἐπίνοιαν) nor on privation, and is not applied to a part of him only…'the unbegotten' must be unbegotten essence (οὐσία ἀγέννητος)" (*Apol.* 8 [Vaggione, 40-43]). Eunomius opposes human terms and discursive reasoning about God. For Basil "this confuses God's ontological status with our process for thinking about God" (Ayres and Radde-Gallwitz, "Basil of Caesarea," 469).

[45] *Eun.* 1.5.

[46] Rousseau, *Basil of Caesarea,* 108-116. Radde-Gallwitz notes that placing concepts between external realities and words is found in Aristotle (*Transformation,* 145n.8).

[47] See *Eun.* 1.6. Sesboüé writes, "Dans ce texte Basile définit l'ἐπίνοια come l'activité reflexive de l'esprit capable d'abstraction à partir des donées de la perception, abstraction qui décompose et recompose rationellement un objet en fonction de ses différents aspects formels. Il s'agit proprement de l'activité conceptuelle de l'esprit. Et comme l'ἐπίνοια désigne le plus souvent le résultat de cette activité, nous avons choisi de traduire par *concept*" (SC 299:182-183n.2). For discussions of conceptualization in Basil, see Ayres, *Nicaea,* 191-95; Drecoll, *Trinitätslehre,* 75-78; Vaggione, *Eunomius of Cyzicus*, 241-246. For more a more in-depth study of ἐπίνοια, see I. Owen, "'Επινοέω, ἐπίνοια and Allied Words," *JTS* 35 (1934): 368-376.

additional reflection.[48] We are not concerned here so much with his semantic range and usage as with understanding a process of divine knowledge apparent in Basil where one moves from observed concepts of God to deeper understanding through reflection upon those concepts. For the concerns of this chapter, I want to discern where these concepts are 'gathered' and what can be said about God through them once they are 'refined' by conceptualization.

One might think this is getting pretty far afield in Basil, moving from his desire for a 'simple' faith to more philosophical and speculative ways of knowing. And while it is true that he is making 'refinements' in order to address the concerns brought up by Eunomius, one could still see his efforts here in light of his overall intent to confess the church's faith expressed in her worship, where worshippers are brought into a clarifying vision of God. For Basil, the process of conceptualization actually brings increased honor to God. So while he may present a frustration in his need to counteract false teaching, in his 'refinements' he still seeks what is 'acceptable to the Lord' – that is, what brings honor to God within the transformative stance of worship.

The first step in the process of conceptualization is identifying the exact resources that produce ἔννοια. Basil demonstrates the process from examples drawn from sense perception, where the concepts derived from conceptualization are real within the soul of the person conceiving them. *Eun.* 1.6 contains his example of wheat, which through conceptualization can be understood in a more subtle way than simply the singular 'wheat'. Wheat can be considered as fruit, seed, or nourishment. Sense perception understands 'wheat'; conceptualization provides the subtler, further understanding. This example supplies a picture for how conceptualization *works* for Basil, but the concepts that aid the knowledge of God are not gathered primarily through sense perception. Scripture is the primary resource. Basil references the titles used by Jesus to refer to himself in the Gospel of John as a fecund supply (i.e. 'door,' 'way,' 'bread,' 'vine,' 'shepherd,' and 'light').[49] These are names that are in accord with different divine activities and his

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[48] *Eun.* 1.6.

[49] *Eun.* 1.7. Basil goes on within this section to demonstrate that 'unbegotten' is actually a conceptualization stemming from the ἔννοια of divine 'life' rather than being an immediate definition of God's substance. In the end, it tells us 'how' God is not 'what' he is (Cf., *Eun.* 1.15). Use of the titles for Christ found in John goes back to Origen, as we saw above in chapter 2 in the background of Athanasius's arguments from correlativity. Origen considers these titles as 'conceptualizations' (ἐπίνοιαι) (an idea he picks up from Clement of Alexandria). According to Radde-Gallwitz, for Origen conceptualizations "are ways of thinking about Christ that are distinct in meaning, yet equally true. Each of these scripturally based conceptualizations provides some vantage point that others do not" (*Transformation,* 65-66).

"relation (σχέσιν) to the objects of his divine benefaction."[50] Each title or name produces a different conceptualization, even though "for all there is one substrate (ὑποκειμένου) according to the substance (οὐσίαν)."[51] *Many* names can refer, therefore, through conceptualization, to *one* God. Yet, because God is so transcendent and his revelation so rich, various conceptualizations are needed to know that one God and honor him. No one title or name defines God, but, through conceptualization, they can constitute "a confession (ὁμολογίαν) of what belongs (προσόντος) to God concerning truth."[52] What is more, there is a sense in which conceptualization honors God because it follows the variety of ways he has made himself known. To dilate on just one (e.g., Eunomius's 'unbegotten') is to rob God of the honor accruing through many conceptualizations.[53] Basil is chastening the knowledge Eunomius seeks – that of substance – while at the same time working out a theological epistemology that keeps the door open for a true and manifold knowledge of God:

> There is not one name (ὄνομα) that encompasses the entire nature of God (τὴν τοῦ Θεοῦ φύσιν περιλαβόν) and suffices to express it adequately (ἱκανῶς). Rather, there are many diverse names and each one contributes, in accordance with its own meaning (σημασίαν), a notion (ἔννοιαν) that is altogether dim and petty as regards the whole but that is at least sufficient (ἐξαρκοῦσαν) for us.[54]

Accordingly, human knowledge of God must proceed, through the concepts, 'bit by bit'. Basic concepts or notions are provided in Scripture. Conceptualization based upon such concepts produces even further notions.[55] There are also basic notions that could be classified as 'common notions', that is, those naturally available to men and women due to God placing them within his creation.[56] These, too, are able to spawn further notions

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[50] *Eun.* 1.7 (SC 299:190). Cf., *Spir.* 8.17.

[51] *Eun.* 1.7 (SC 299:192).

[52] Ibid.

[53] *Eun.* 1.8.

[54] *Eun.* 1.10 (SC 299:204). Though beyond the reach of this chapter, what is outlined here suggests a whole host of questions regarding how Basil conceives of divine simplicity. He does not see a problem, as would Eunomius, in attributing many names to God through ἐπίνοια. Many names, for Basil, does not equate dividing the substance of God into many parts, where each name names a part of God. Nor does Basil understand the names as ultimately synonymous. The properties indicated by the names are in some way coextensive with the substance while not defining it. Names like 'light', 'life', and 'goodness' do not speak of just one person but the whole divine substance – they are *propria* of the substance. See especially chapter 6 of Radde-Gallwitz's *Tranformation.*

[55] *Eun.* 1.14.

[56] *Eun.* 1.5.

through conceptualization. God's existence and 'unbegottenness' would be examples of such 'common notions', available to both Eunomius and Basil alike.[57] Scriptural notions and common notions get the process of conceptualization started, as it were, by both relaying what *is* 'present' to God and what *is not*, what would be *proper* and what would be *improper* to say about God. They are an initial provision by God and, in that provision, guard against the manufacturing of inappropriate notions from the human imagination.[58] That said, given that Basil and Eunomius disagree so sharply, the issue is not so much their availability as their interpretation.[59]

5.3.4 *Conceptualization and the Trinity*

In coming to conceptualization's relationship to Basil's Trinitarian theology, and, for the purposes of this chapter, specifically the Father, I need to introduce two ways Basil developed for speaking about the Trinity.[60] One is on the level of the *ousia* and what is

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[57] On common or natural notions, both in the philosophical background as well as in Eunomius and Basil, see Mark DelCogliano, "Basil of Caesarea's Anti-Eunomian Theory of Names" (Ph.D. diss., Emory University, 2009), 189-193.

[58] *Eun.* 1.10, 12.

[59] In a few places Basil speaks of 'preconceptions' (προλήψεις). It is not entirely clear that it has any consistent meaning. In *Ep.* 2 preconceptions are what are in the soul by habit and need to be 'sanctified' in order to be ordered properly for the knowledge of God. Basil speaks of this as a process that begins with baptism and where the soul continues to unlearn "teachings (διδαγμάτων) which already possess it, derived from evil habits (συνηθείας). For it is no more possible to write in wax without first smoothing away the letters previously written thereon, than it is to provide the soul with divine teachings (ψυχῇ δόγματα θεῖα) without first removing its preconceptions (προλήψεις) derived from habit (ἔθους)" (Courtonne 1:7). As preconceptions are "derived by habit" they must be replaced through the practice of asceticism where one's habits are reoriented.
In *Eun.* 1.5 preconceptions are what are commonly understood about things that make discussion of it possible. Here the formation of a preconception appears to be more tied to a common human nature, whereas in *Ep.* 2 it is the product of a 'former way of life' that is being reformed through asceticism. Finally, in *Eun.* 2.25 Basil speaks of a 'Christian' preconception that understands that the Son comes from the "lifegiving source and paternal goodness (τῆς ζωοποιοῦ πηγῆς καὶ τῆς πατρικῆς ἀγαθότητος)" (SC 305:104). This appears to be a common preconception yet one common only to those of faith.

[60] These two ways are apparent in his early controversial work, *Eun.* Prior to that Basil wrote *Ep.* 361 to Apollinarius of Laodicea where his way of speaking of the divine persons is not parsed so finely and appears in terms expressive of what has been called his *homoiousian* phase. Of concern in this letter is the Father generating the Son, a generation that in some way establishes unity ("like without a difference [ἡ τοῦ ἀπαραλλάκτως ὁμοίου]") and distinction between the persons because one is from the other. His language is as follows, "For we have supposed that whatever by way of hypothesis the substance of the Father (τοῦ Πατρὸς οὐσία) is assumed to be, this must by all means be assumed as also that of the Son. So that if anyone should speak of the substance of the Father (τὴν τοῦ Πατρὸς οὐσίαν) as light perceptible to the mind, eternal, unbegotten, one would also call the substance of the Only-begotten (τὴν τοῦ Μονογενοῦς οὐσίαν) light perceptible to the mind, eternal, unbegotten. And in such a meaning the expression 'like without a difference' seems to me to agree (ἁρμόττειν) better than 'consubstantial' (ὁμοουσίου). For light which has no difference from light in the matter of greater and less cannot be the same (because each is in its own sphere of substance), but I think that 'like in substance entirely without difference' (ὅμοιον δὲ κατ' οὐσίαν ἀκριβῶς

common among the divine persons. Along these lines, Basil speaks of a 'formula of divinity' through which each person is understood to be equally divine.[61] Another way of speaking in Basil arises from the plurality of the divine persons and their distinct relations, revealed from the Father, through the Son, to the Spirit; and understood from the Spirit, through the Son, to the Father.[62] Within this latter way of speaking on the Trinity, the 'place' of the Father is clear, and the map one is to follow in understanding what might be unique about the Father more readily at hand. When starting with the divine substance, however, it is more difficult to discern the distinct theological position of the Father and how he relates to the other divine persons. There is a tension here I will return to later in this chapter. At this point, these 'two ways' prepare for some distinctions that need to be made in how notions or concepts function within Basil's Trinitarian theology.

As Basil is faced with the variety of ἔννοια it appears some run in the direction of revealing the divine unity through the common divine nature, and others point to what Basil calls the peculiar 'distinguishing marks' (ἰδιώματα) of the Trinitarian persons.[63]

ἀπαραλλάκτως) could be said correctly" (Courtonne 3:221). On the relevant chronology here, see Fedwick, "A Chronology of the Life and Works of Basil of Caesarea," 1:6-8. For the authenticity of this correspondence, see G. L. Prestige, *St. Basil the Great and Apollinaris* (London: SPCK, 1956).
As noted in ft. 22 above, the immediate backdrop to Basil's early career is the Homoiousian alliance led by George of Laodicea and Basil of Ancyra in the late 350s. At this point in 361 Basil is not a homoiousian partisan, but he does reveal himself to be influenced by their ideas and comfortable with likeness language (see Steenson, "Nicene Orthodoxy" and Ayres, *Nicaea,* 188-189; *pace* Johannes Zachhuber, "Basil and the Three Hypostases Tradition: Reconsidering the Origins of Cappadocian Theology," *ZAC* 5 [2001]: 65–85). Basil's theology develops from this point through the foil of those opposed to *ousia* language, which will, in turn, make him increasingly comfortable with the language of *homoousios.*

[61] A representative passage comes from *Eun.* 1.19 (SC 299:240): "But if someone takes the commonality of the substance (τὸ τῆς οὐσίας κοινόν) to mean that one and the same formula of being (τὸν τοῦ εἶναι λόγον) is observed in both [Father and Son], such that if, hypothetically speaking, the Father is conceived of as light in his substrate, then the substance of the Only-Begotten (τὴν τοῦ Μονογενοῦς οὐσίαν) is also confessed as light, and whatever one may assign to the Father as the formula of his being (ἐπὶ τοῦ Πατρὸς τὸν τοῦ εἶναι λόγον), the very same also applies to the Son. If someone takes the commonality of the substance (τὸ κοινὸν τῆς οὐσίας) in this way, we accept it and claim it as our doctrine (τὸ δόγμα). For this is how divinity is one (Κατὰ τοῦτο γὰρ καὶ θεότης μία). Clearly, their unity is conceived to be a matter of the formula of the substance (κατὰ τὸν τῆς οὐσίας λόγον τῆς ἑνότητος νοουμένης). Hence while there is difference in number and in the distinctive features that characterize each (ταῖς ἰδιότησι ταῖς χαρακτηριζούσαις ἑκάτερον), their unity is observed in the formula of the divinity (τῷ λόγῳ τῆς θεότητος)." Cf., *Ep.* 9. DelCogliano and Radde-Gallwitz claim that "[p]erhaps Basil's single greatest contribution to Trinitarian theology in *Against Eunomius* is his argument that there are terms predicated of the Father and Son in common and with the same sense" (*Against Eunomius,* 50). Drecoll highlights "light" as a common term (*Trinitätslehre*, 103-111).

[62] A representative passage revealing such language, which has already been quoted in ft. 2, comes from *Spir.* 18.47 (SC 17 bis:412): "The way…to knowledge of God is from the one Spirit, though the one Son, to the one Father. And conversely the natural goodness and holiness according to nature and royal dignity reach from the Father, though the Only-begotten, to the Spirit. In this way the persons are confessed and the pious dogma of the monarchy does not fall way."

[63] *Eun.* 2.9 (SC 305:38).

Examples of the former would be 'light' and 'Lord'. 'Light' or 'Lord', for Basil, is something shared by both Father and Son; it is predicated of the shared substance and so, through a 'formula of divinity', teaches the unity of the persons in a common substance.[64] The Father and Son (and Spirit) share a *single* 'light' or 'lordship'. An example of a notion that leads to a distinguishing mark is 'image'. It is something attributed to one of the persons, the Son. Thus, it signifies what is unique – the distinguishing marks of the persons – and not the shared divinity.[65] Yet these are not unrelated. The fact that the Son is called 'light', through the formula of divinity, means that as 'image', in the person of the Son, he 'images' the 'light' of God perfectly. What is more, he images light connected relationally to the Father. This is a connection I will return to below.

In understanding the 'distinguishing marks' one is led to the divine persons and their interrelationships.[66] In *Hom.* 24 Basil calls the confession of the 'Father' and 'Son' *not* the attribution of two names to one reality. Instead, one learns from each designation a "distinct notion (ἰδίαν ἔννοιαν)."[67] That is to say, both 'Father' and 'Son' express something unique. They are in a sense 'two', both able to be counted individually, even as they are not "disjoined in nature."[68] In terms of conceptualization, these distinct notions, named as Father and Son, lead to a whole host of their own 'concepts' that help in distinguishing the named persons rather than showing their commonality in substance. In rejecting Eunomius's teaching that difference in name means difference in substance, Basil uses the examples of apostles' names, such as Peter and Paul, which refer to the distinguishing marks of each person and lead to understanding their unique characters. Basil writes, "The name (τὸ ὄνομα) determines for us the character (χαρακτῆρα) of Peter…. When we hear 'Paul,' we think of a concurrence of other distinguishing marks (ἰδιωμάτων συνδρομὴν)."[69] Specific names, then, invoke a whole series of distinguishing marks that

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[64] *Eun.* 1.19.

[65] These could be further broken down into names that describe the nature of a person (his dignity) and those that describe the "manifold character (τὸ πολύτροπον) of his grace toward us" (*Spir.* 8.17 [SC 17 bis:304]).

[66] In a section of *Eun.* where Basil distinguishes between absolute and relative terms (2.9) he confusingly speaks of ἰδιώματα serving not to mark off the divine persons but the divine substance. That is, there are ἰδιώματα 'within' the divine substance that teach us about the persons and there are ἰδιώματα 'of' the substance which mark it off from other substances. Obviously, within this chapter I am speaking of Basil's use of the former.

[67] *Hom.* 24.3 (PG 31:604).

[68] Ibid. Cf., *Spir.* 17.43-18.44.

[69] *Eun.* 2.4 (SC 305:20).

'mark off' one person from another, yet at the same time do not point to different substances.[70] In the case of Peter and Paul, posterior to both is 'humanity', that is, a common nature. Father and Son, through the formula of divinity, share a common divine nature even as they are marked out from one another by their names and their individuating properties. Since I am still considering the topic of Basil's theological epistemology, I will not yet take this one step further in understanding the interrelationship suggested in the names of Father and Son. It is enough here to highlight Basil's underlying theological principles contained in his epistemology so that when the relationship between the persons is probed this foundational way of speaking and knowing is already discerned.

One might ask at this point whether Basil's account has introduced any contradictions. Within his account, both the individual properties of the divine persons and their shared substance are true. Seekers come to know both through revealed ἔννοια, some expressing the common substance and others the particular properties of the persons. Whether one is pursuing knowledge of God through the shared properties or through the ἰδιώματα, one cannot say, according to Basil's constructs, that either God's 'plurality' or 'commonality' are violated. The ἔννοια 'open the door' to knowing both. It remains to be seen, however, how these two ways of knowing and speaking can account for a consistent Trinitarian understanding of the persons, specifically, for our concerns, a way of discerning the Father and his relationship to the other persons of the Godhead.

5.3.5 *Worship and the Knowledge of God*

Before moving on to the second half of this chapter, where I will deal more directly with Basil's Trinitarian theology, a return to the context of transformative worship for the knowledge of God in Basil is instructive. I have stated the assumption that knowledge, for Basil, is related to worship and worship is related to growing in likeness to God, which was the purpose founded in the creation of humanity made in the 'image' and 'likeness' of God. On one level, worship is simply bringing proper honor to God.

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[70] As will be seen below with regard to οὐσία and ἰδιώματα (ft. 144), Basil's theory of proper names suggests an eclectic array of philosophical influences. For studies of those influences, see DelCogliano, "Basil of Caesarea's Anti-Eunomian Theory of Names," 255-282; Paul Kalligas, "Basil of Caesarea on the Semantics of Proper Names," in *Byzantine Philosophy and its Ancient Sources*, ed. Katerina Ierodiakonou (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002), 31-48; David G. Robertson, "A Patristic Theory of Proper Names," *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 83 (2002): 1-19.

When speaking of a plurality of ἔννοια Basil stresses that through exploring each by ἐπίνοια we honor and glorify God. By contrast, Eunomius does not give full honor to God because he speaks of simply τὸ ἀγέννητον.[71] God in his revelation of ἔννοια provides an opportunity, as it were, to recount his titles doxologically and thereby reflect back the fullness of his glory. Eunomius's 'unbegotten' is paltry in comparison, Basil thinks, and robs God of the honor we are to bring to him. Basil furthers these thoughts in *Spir.* by delineating titles for both the Son (8.17) and Spirit (23.54) by which we 'recount the wonders' belonging to each and thereby bring glory. One of the ways we recount their wonders is by reflecting upon the 'dignity' of the persons. Another way is recounting the wondrous 'graces' by which the divine persons minister in the midst of our neediness. It is humanity's reflection upon the 'graces' that leads to understanding our own 'status' as faithful worshippers. Simply recounting the wonders of God's dignity and grace is worship, yet, returning to the themes with which this chapter opened, there is a dynamic element where worshippers are drawn deeper into understanding as they recount the wonders and grow in likeness to God. This sets up an interesting parallel to be explored below, where the Son's status as begotten is that of 'likeness' to the Father by nature. The journey of a Christian is one of coming to adopted 'sonship' where growth is equated to increasing 'likeness' to God by grace. Possibility of likeness for human beings was established in creation, frustrated in the Fall, and reawakened through Christ's redemption. As believers appropriate redemption they increase in likeness, and that likeness is translated through the Trinitarian persons. This keeps exploration of the knowledge of God within the Basilean context of transformative worship, while also suggesting through the process of transformation in worship a 'map' that follows Basil's articulation of Trinitarian relations.

In wrapping up this exploration of Basil's theological epistemology many salient points come to the fore that connect to this chapter's continued study of the Trinitarian persons and the Father in particular. Knowledge of the infinite and transcendent God is made possible through God's grace which has touched humanity's fallen understanding, and God's revelation that has spread ἔννοια. Through conceptualization, one comes to know characteristics (attributes discerned from God's activities, which are manifestations of his power) of the one nature shared by the divine persons and, further, how the persons

[71] *Eun.* 1.8; 2.29.

are distinguished from one another through ἰδιώματα. While the substance is ultimately unknown, in that humans can never comprehend it, some progress can be made through recounting and describing those names or titles that are equally shared among the persons. The 'distinguishing marks' of the persons, however, provide a more stable map for how Basil's epistemology and Trinitarian theology connect. In the more abstract vein of the common substance, mere recounting highlights what is shared and what, in a sense, brings honor through their shared divine dignity. But in an exploration of what distinguishes the persons one begins to understand their interrelationships. It is these relationships which map human progress in divine knowledge as it moves in the Spirit, through the Son, to the Father. This returns to the point highlighted above: within the divine persons there is a certain 'order of knowing'. This order of knowing, where the Son and Spirit perfectly comprehend the divine, on the one hand 'proves' their full divinity, but, on the other hand, opens the door for access to that 'order of knowing' as it is reflected in the worshipful stance humans by grace inhabit among the divine persons. Basil's theological epistemology, then, both serves to chasten human investigation into the nature of the divine while at the same time sketching a pattern by which there is growth in likeness and knowledge of God.

5.4 'Returning' to the Father: Trinity and Spirituality

This chapter now introduces what can be understood of God's Trinitarian nature by probing the order of knowing men and women follow in growing in 'worshipful knowledge'. I will briefly set Basil's Trinitarian thought in the context of worship and the language found there. For Basil, his doctrine of the Trinity must first make sense and be expressive of this foundational reality of the Christian faith (5.4.1). I will then attempt *go with* the Trinitarian texture of human knowledge of the divine, which leads us in and around the two central metaphors of 'image' and 'kinship' (5.4.2). These metaphors are central to Basil's teaching on humanity, and so connect to 5.2, and also to the relationship between the divine persons that is learned through a contemplative vision. Basil's theology of fatherhood will be begin to emerge as I examine how these metaphors function within his Trinitarian thought.

5.4.1 *Basil's 'Simple Faith' and the Grammar of Worship*

Repeatedly, throughout his corpus, Basil highlights the 'grammar' of worship as resource for Trinitarian reflection (a grammar planted within the liturgy by Scripture). That is to say, what is confessed in the baptismal formula, for example, provides the initial language and framework for understanding God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It is that Trinitarian faith that not only saves humanity, according to Basil; it also provides the names that honor God in worship.[72] To deny those to whom one has been sealed in baptism is to deny the grace received there. To affirm is to have the "power of piety (τὴν δύναμιν τῆς εὐσεβείας)" and understand the "distinctive character (τὸν οἱονεὶ χαρακτῆρα)" of Christian worship.[73] It was Basil's wish for his theology, no matter how many 'refinements' it went through in the midst of controversy, to express or 'make sense' of the language of prayer and worship. This is the language which embodies the aforementioned 'simple faith' he often refers to as the core of what he desires to confess – the language of *worship.*

What is confessed simply at baptism and marks the distinctive character of Christian worship becomes, for the Christian, the outline for one's faith and, consequently, for one's own spiritual growth in that faith.[74] Given Basil's belief that we have been 'created to see God', and our spiritual growth is in some way a 'return' to our created purpose, Basil's Trinitarian theology emerges from this spiritual vision. The spiritually programmatic passage from *Spir.* (see ft. 2) will chart the way forward:

> "The way…to knowledge of God is from the one Spirit, though the one Son, to the one Father. And conversely the natural goodness and holiness according to nature and royal dignity reach from the Father, though the Only-begotten, to the Spirit. In this way the persons are confessed and the

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[72] *Spir.* 18.44 (SC 17 bis:402), where Basil says, "When the Lord handed over 'Father, and Son, and Holy Spirit,' [in Matthew 28:19] he did not hand it over with number (μετὰ τοῦ ἀριθμοῦ), for he did not say 'into the first, second, and third', and he did not say 'into one, two, and three'. Rather, through the holy names (δι᾽ὀνομάτων ἁγίων), he graciously bestowed the knowledge of the faith that leads to salvation (τὴν γνῶσιν τῆς πρὸς σωτηρίαν ἀγούσης πίστεως ἐχαρίσατο)." Cf., *Eun.* 1.16, 3.5; *Spir.* 10.24, 11.27; *Ep. 91, 151, 210.*

[73] *Eun.* 2.22 (SC 305:90). Cf., *Spir.* 11.27.

[74] The desire for a simple expression of faith common to all Christians was expressed by Eunomius as well (*Apol.* 6). That 'both sides' of this debate appeal to simple expression common to all Christians should alert us to the rhetorical advantage of such an appeal (see Vaggione, *Eunomius of Cyzicus,* 85-93). This commonality between Basil and Eunomius highlights both what they share and what causes them to divert. In the end, their interpretation of Scripture and traditions in Christian theology will set the terms of their disagreements. Basil's reflections on the Trinity found in *Eun.*, in particular, are designed to exclude Eunomius from the common Christian faith.

pious dogma of the monarchy does not fall way."[75]

It will be left to the side that this is the only place in all of Basil's corpus where he references *monarchia* (twice in chapter eighteen).[76] The Father, of course, is central to the concerns of this chapter, and I turn now to understandd his distinct 'place' in the lfie of the Trinity.

5.4.2 *'Image' and 'Kinship': Basilean Metaphors for Articulating Trinitarian Order and Spiritual Progress*

The metaphors of 'image' and 'kinship', observed in the creation of humanity, chart the course for knowledge of God's triune nature and highlight the integrative nature of Basil's thought. In beginning that course, the Spirit comes to the fore in his epistemological priority. As those created to 'see God' and redeemed to 'return to the Father', the clarifying vision of Christians begins with the work of the Spirit.[77] It is only 'in' the Spirit that Christians make way through the Son to the Father. Knowledge, then, proceeds on the 'inside', as it were. This is seen in Basil's explanation of the prepositions in the doxologies in *Spir.* When 'with' is joined with the Spirit it points to his eternal relationship *with* the other divine persons and the dignity shared with them.[78] 'In', however, directly relates to the Spirit's relationship to those of faith, to "the grace (τὴν χάριν) given to us"[79] and "the grace that works in those who share it (τὴν εἰς τοὺς μετόχους ἐνεργουμένην χάριν)."[80] As a 'giver of grace' the Spirit gives of his own authority as one "contemplated in the Trinity (ἐν τῇ Τριάδι θεωρούμενον)."[81] He gives without any personal diminishment because, as divine, "he is not diminished (ἐλαττοῦται) among those who

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[75] *Spir.* 18.47.

[76] In interest of space, I will also not get into what might be the possible polemical concerns for referencing the *monarchia* at this juncture in his career, with the specific group of the 'Macedonians' in the background.

[77] In *Spir.* Basil highlights the Spirit's work as united and indivisible from that of the Father and Son. He quotes 1 Corinthians 12:11 to explain, however, how the gifts given by God are understood from the 'human point of view'. While there is unity among the divine persons in the giving of gifts, the 'point of contact' for humans is the Spirit: "For [Paul] begins from our point of view, since when we receive gifts, we first encounter the one who distributes (τῷ διανέμοντι) them, then we consider the one who sent (ἀποστείλαντα) them, and then we turn our minds to the source and cause (τὴν πηγὴν καὶ αἰτίαν) of the goods" (16.37 [SC17 bis:376]).

[78] *Spir.* 26.63; 27.68.

[79] *Spir.* 27.68 (SC 17 bis:488).

[80] *Spir.* 26.63 (SC 17 bis:474).

[81] *Hom.* 15.3 (PG 31:469).

participate (μετεχόντων) in him."[82] His gracious presence is one interior to the soul.[83] The gifts he brings to souls include rebirth and adoption, which begin the purification process necessary to see God while also placing one into a real relationship with God where we call upon him as 'Father'.[84] Thus, the Spirit is the one who by grace enables worship from a familial place of 'sonship'.

Just as it is proper to say the Spirit resides *in* human souls, so, according to Basil, should we speak of our 'place' *in* the Spirit. He grants purification and knowledge of God by being 'in' us, but it is our place 'in' him that speaks to our adoption and ascent to the Father in worship. Basil elaborates on how 'knowledgeable worship' *in* the Spirit proceeds:

> Just as the Father is in the Son, so the Son is seen in the Spirit. Therefore, worship *in* the Spirit (ἐν τῷ Πνεύματι προσκύνησις) suggests that the activity of our thought is like light…. We speak of worship in the Son as worship in the image of God the Father (τὴν ὡς ἐν εἰκόνι τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ Πατρός), so also we speak of worship in the Spirit as worship in him who manifests the divinity of the Lord (τὴν τοῦ Κυρίου θεότητα). Therefore, in worship the Holy Spirit is inseparable (ἀχώριστον) from the Father and the Son, for if you are outside of him, you will not worship at all; but if you are in him, you will in no way separate him from God (ἀποχωρίσεις ἀπὸ Θεοῦ) – at least no more than you will remove light from objects of sight. For it is impossible to see the image of the invisible God, except in the illumination of the Spirit (τῷ φωτισμῷ τοῦ Πνεύματος), and it is impossible for him who fixes his eyes on the image to separate the light from the image. For the cause of seeing (τοῦ ὁρᾶν αἴτιον) must be seen together with the things seen (συγκαθορᾶται τοῖς ὁρατοῖς). And so fittingly and consequently, through the illumination (φωτισμοῦ) of the Spirit we behold the radiance of the glory of God (τὸ ἀπαύγασμα τῆς δόξης τοῦ θεοῦ καθορῶμεν); and, then, we are led up (ἀναγόμεθα) through the character to him of whom he is the character and duplicate seal (ἰσότυπος σφρωὶς).[85]

In this wonderfully dense quote Basil teaches it is the Spirit's role in human knowledge of the divine is to bring illumination, an illumination that comes from his very self. The Spirit brings illumination by making believers like himself – spiritual – through

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[82] Ibid. In *Spir.* Basil uses the analogy of iron and fire, where heat continues to exist and be felt in iron that is "on fire" even though the heat goes with the fire (and not the iron). So it is with the soul, which exhibits the heat of the Spirit even though the Spirit goes with the divine (26.63). On the Spirit as "undiminished giver" in Basil, see Lewis Ayres, "The Holy Spirit as Undiminished Giver: Didymus the Blind's *De Spiritu Sancto* and the Development of Nicene Pneumatology," in D. Vincent Twomey and Janet E. Rutherford, eds., *The Holy Spirit in the Fathers of the Church. The Proceedings of the Seventh International Patristic Conference, Maynooth, 2008* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2011), 57-72.

[83] *Spir.* 26.61.

[84] Ibid. Cf., *Eun.* 2.23; 3.4.

[85] *Spir.* 26.64 (SC 17 bis:474-476). For Basil, the image metaphor is an extension of Colossians 1:15.

communion with himself. In an earlier passage in *Spir.* Basil illustrates this spiritual reality by comparing the Spirit to a ray of light that "falls upon clear and translucent bodies (τὰ λαμπρὰ καὶ διαφανῆ τῶν σωμάτων)" which are consequently "filled with light (περιλαμπῆ) and gleam (ἀποστίλβει) with a light from themselves. Just so are the Spirit-bearing souls that are illuminated (αἱ πνευματοφόροι ψυχαὶ ἐλλαμφθεῖσαι) by the Holy Spirit: they are themselves rendered spiritual (ἀποτελοῦνται πνεθματικαὶ)."[86] When speaking about the Spirit, then, Basil on the one hand sees it as proper to understand him as interior to the soul, as 'in' believing humanity. On the other hand, as the Spirit makes a home in an individual, it is appropriate to see human beings as 'in' the Spirit. From this place – 'in the Spirit' – believers are able to contemplate and, like Moses, "see clearly (ἰδεῖν γνωστῶς) God."[87]

The 'journey' of this contemplation follows the texture of the divine relations. Therefore, the one 'seen' in the Spirit is the Son, and "the cause of seeing must be seen together with the things seen."[88] In this language Basil highlights the inseparability of the Spirit and Son, an inseparability experienced by the illuminated worshipper who, through the light, is inevitably brought to the image.[89] It is the Spirit who grants illuminating power for the eyes to be fixed "on the beauty of the image of the unseen God (τῷ κάλλει τῆς τοῦ Θεοῦ τοῦ ἀοράτου εἰκόνος)."[90] Yet, even as the Spirit moves the eyes to see 'another' (the Son, who is the image), that vision takes place from the inside, that is, 'in himself': "He supplies to those who love to see the truth the power to see the image in himself (τῆς εἰκόνος δύναμιν ἐν ἑαυτῷ). He does not make the manifestation from the outside (ἔξωθεν), but in himself leads to knowledge (ἐν ἑαυτῷ εἰσάγον πρὸς τὴν ἐπιγνωσιν)."[91] Basil connects

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[86] *Spir.* 9.23 (SC 17 bis:328). In this same section Basil speaks of the soul experiencing a process of cleansing where what is restored is its "natural beauty…the ancient form to its royal image (εἰκόνι βασιλικῇ τὴν ἀρχαίαν μορφὴν)" (Ibid.). This cleansing produces an increased intimacy with the Spirit. In turn the Spirit, according to Basil, shows the soul in himself the image, that is, the Son. This connection between restoration of the image in worshippers and revelation of the image, the Son, is suggestive but undeveloped here in Basil. Plotinus appears to be lurking here in *Spir.* 9. Scholars are relatively certain of direct or indirect influence from the Neoplatonic description of beauty that Basil applies to the Spirit (Rist, "Basil's 'Neoplatonism'," 199-202 and 207-208).

[87] *Spir.* 26.62 (SC 17:472).

[88] *Spir.* 26.64.

[89] *Spir.* 26.64 (SC 17 bis:476): "It is impossible for the one who fixes his eyes on the image (τῇ εἰκόνι) to separate the light from the image (τῆς εἰκόνος ἀποχωρίσαι τὸ φῶς)."

[90] *Spir.* 18.47 (SC 17 bis:412).

[91] *Spir.* 18.47 (SC 17 bis:412, referencing 1 Corinthians 12:3). Hildebrand makes the argument that 1 Corinthians 12:3 functions as a "scriptural center" in Basil's theology and governs how he reads other

Psalm 36:9 ("in his light we will see light"), which he sees as speaking of the illumination of the Spirit, with John 1:9 ("the true light that enlightens every man coming into the world"), in order to demonstrate the Spirit's work of illumination as a revelation *in himself* of the glory of the Only-begotten. Worship in the Spirit, then, is illuminated worship where the divinity and glory of the image are made manifest.

As this section has followed Basil in this initial move in divine knowledge 'in the Spirit' it is according to the logic he has adopted where 'light' and 'image' are interrelated. For a worshipper to be illumined by the Spirit means a beholding of the image, because an image cannot be 'seen' without light. This is an epistemological move – from light to the image – while also being a Trinitarian one. By that I mean while the worshipper is growing in divine knowledge by beholding the image, he or she is also understanding the relationship obtaining between the divine persons. The next 'step' in human knowing of the divine keeps with the Trinitarian texture outlined above and moves to the image, the Son.

To speak of the 'image' begs the question 'of what?'. Just as *to see* an image one needs illumination, so for there *to be* an image there needs to be an 'original'. In this metaphor each of its elements in the order of knowing suggests the other, making it especially suitable to express the interrelationships of the divine persons. In expressing those interrelationships it 'moves' quickly from one to the other, meaning the light is about the image and the image is about the 'original'. That is, in the image what is seen is an expression of the king or archetype: "in the blessed vision of the image (τῷ μακκαρίῳ τῆς εἰκόνος θεάματι) you will see the unspeakable beauty of the archetype (τὸ ἄρρητον ὄψει τοῦ ἀρχετύπου κάλλος)."[92] In the case of a king, the image is the "prototype" insofar as it imitates the original (the king), though Basil is quick to point out the Son is prototype of the divine king by nature and not imitation.[93] As this metaphor is used in the context of 'worshipful knowledge' that 'ascends' the divine persons, Basil uses "archetype (τὸ πρωτότυπον)" in order to show how the honor brought to the image "passes over (διαβαίνει)" to the archetype.[94] Indeed, Basil presents this movement as an inevitable one

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biblical texts regarding the Spirit (*Trinitarian Theology,* 173-187).

[92] *Spir.* 9.23 (SC 17 bis:323).

[93] *Spir.* 18.45. In *Hom* 24.4 (PG 31:606) Basil says the image in relation to the Father possesses "indistinguishability (τό ἀπαράλλακτον). Cf., *Eun.* 1.18.

[94] *Spir.* 18.45 (SC 17 bis:406).

that moves when with illuminating power worshippers "fix their eyes on the beauty of the image of the unseen God, and through the image are led up to the more than beautiful vision of the archetype (ἐπὶ τὸ ὑπέρκαλον τοῦ ἀρχετύπου θέαμα)."[95] The beauty of the archetype seen in the image that Basil has in mind here is the "radiance of glory" (Hebrews 1:3). Perfect radiance – the image – proceeds from the perfect glory, and through that radiance we are led to the beauty of the glory.[96]

What Basil presents in this metaphor is a fully Trinitarian vision that moves for the worshipper from the light through the image to the archetype. The metaphor draws out the connections between elements that then correspond to the divine persons. The texture presented is a spiritual vision of 'ascent' or 'progress' that moves up or to the archetype, that is, the Father. Yet, because of the interrelationships displayed in the metaphor, the presence of each of the divine persons is never 'left behind'. When beholding the image, the illumination (Spirit) is present. One is drawn to the archetype (Father) through the image, and so the image (Son) is always present to those beholding the vision of the archetype. Further, Basil speaks of the "Spirit of knowledge (τῆς γνώσεως Πνεῦμα)…somehow inseparably present" even when engaging in the "more than beautiful" vision of the archetype.[97] This must be so, according to the logic of the metaphor as laid out by Basil, for one 'needs' the illumination of the Spirit to see the image and through that image one has vision of the archetype. Thus, Basil's metaphor not only teaches the order of knowing that proceeds 'up' the Trinitarian persons to the Father; it also draws out, at the same time, the inseparability of the divine persons. Following John 14:23, Basil connects this inseparability to the previously mentioned presence of the Spirit within the soul of the worshipper: "When sanctified (Ἁγιαζόμενοι) by the Holy Spirit, we receive Christ who dwells in our inner person [Ephesians 3:16], and along with Christ we also receive the Father who makes a common home in those who are worthy (κοινὴν ποιούμενον τὴν μονὴν παρὰ τοῖς ἀξίοις)."[98]

Basil's theological epistemology tracks and draws out the intricacies of his

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[95] *Spir.* 18.47 (SC 17 bis:412).

[96] *Hom* 24.4. Cf. *Spir.* 26.64

[97] *Spir.* 18.47 (SC 17 bis:412). Cf. *Hom* 24.5; PG 31:609: "Wherever there is the presence of the Holy Spirit (ἁγίου Πνεύματος παρουσία), there also is the dwelling of Christ, and wherever Christ is, there also the Father is clearly present (ἐκεῖ καὶ Χριστοῦ ἐπιδημία˙ ὅπου δὲ Χριστὸς, ἐκεῖ καὶ ὁ Πατὴρ πάρεστι δηλονότι)."

[98] *Hom.* 24.5 (PG 31:609).

Trinitarian theology, yet within a transformative spiritual vision where 'ascending' through the persons to the Father corresponds to creational purpose. Human beings were created 'according to the image', and they reawaken to their purpose by regaining vision of 'the image', the Son. The Spirit's purification and illumination enables the vision, which from the image leads to the glorious 'archetype'. The image metaphor reveals the Father, then, as the *terminus ad quem* of a redemptive spiritual vision due to his unique 'place' within the Trinitarian relations. The 'two-part plan' for humanity revealed at creation also communicates its formation 'according to the likeness', which leads to the second metaphor Basil works with in his Trinitarian theology.

The metaphor of kinship emerges from the divine names of 'Father' and 'Son', and so I will turn to *Eun.* to follow how Basil sees this metaphor communicating Trinitarian reality. Yet in chapter eighteen of *Spir.,* quoted at the beginning of this section and referenced frequently already, Basil draws the Spirit into the kinship metaphor. After speaking of the divine unity being found in the "communion of the Godhead (τῇ κοινωνίᾳ τῆς θεότητος)," Basil explains how each of the divine persons, including the Spirit, is proclaimed "singly (μοναδικῶς)."[99] The Spirit is "uniquely pronounced (μοναχῶς ἐκφωνεῖσθαι)" and so shares "kinship (οἰκείωσιν)" with the Father and Son who are also uniquely named: "He is joined (συναπτόμενον) through the one Son to the one Father (δι' ἑνὸς Υἱοῦ τῷ ἑνὶ Πατρὶ), and through himself, he completes the famed and blessed Trinity (συμπληροῦν τὴν πολυύμνητον καὶ μακαρίαν Τριάδα)."[100] By this association Basil is clearly arguing against the Holy Spirit being counted among the 'multitude' of creation. Just as a 'monad' is apart from composites, so the Holy Spirit is apart from creation; and just as a monad shares kinship with another monad, Basil argues, so the Spirit shares kinship with the Father and Son. Basil is working this metaphor to include the Spirit with the other persons in communion in nature. It differs from the image metaphor in that it does not teach a corresponding order of knowing, at least not from the Spirit to the Son. Basil does use it to explain how he sees the Spirit as proceeding from the Father, but I will leave that exploration until the next section.

While the kinship metaphor by and large leaves out the Spirit from leading into an

[99] *Spir.* 18.45 (SC 17 bis:406-408).
[100] *Spir.* 18.45 (SC 17 bis:408).

order of knowing the persons, it clearly establishes the Son as the 'way' to our knowledge of the Father. In *Eun.* Basil uses as a launch text John 14:9 ("The one who sees me, he says, sees the Father."). In the section where this appears he is arguing against the Eunomian notion that there is no comparison between the Father and Son. Basil counters that by upholding the Son's ability to reveal the Father, which, of course, suggests his affinity or 'likeness' with the Father.[101] He actually overlaps the image metaphor with this one by comparing the Son (as image) to an impression and the Father (as archetype) to a seal. The comparison draws out the identity or likeness between Father and Son, which allows "the way upward of knowledge (τῆς γνώσεως ἄνοδον) that comes through the Son."[102]

A similar passage on the Son as 'way' is found in *Spir.* where Basil is addressing the doxologies and the appropriateness of "through him" used for the Son, given the manifold graces known through him. Because of the goodness and care of God found in the Son, he is presented as the "way":

> For we understand "way" (ὁδὸν) to be foundational and orderly progress (προκοπὴν) toward perfection through works of righteousness and through the illumination of knowledge, stretching ever onward and extending ourselves toward what remains until we arrive at a happy end (μακάριον τέλος), the contemplation of God (Θεοῦ κατανόησιν) that the Lord graciously bestows through himself to those who believe in him (δι' ἑαυτοῦ τοῖς εἰς αὐτὸν πεπιστευκόσι χαρίζεται). For that way being good, there is no straying and wandering, our Lord, leading to him who is truly good, the Father (πρὸς τὸ ὄντως ἀγαθόν, τὸν Πατέρα). For, he says, "No one can come to the Father, except through me" (John 14:6). Such then is our way up to God: through the Son (ἡ ἡμετέρα πρὸς Θεὸν ἄνοδος διὰ τοῦ Υἱοῦ).[103]

This passage is striking in its relationship to *Hex.* where for the human being 'according to likeness' presents room for dynamic growth in likeness to God (see 5.2 above). Basil presents the 'way' to that likeness as through the Son, who himself is generated in 'likeness' to the Father. Within this metaphor's communication of a spiritual vision of progress and the corresponding Trinitarian relations, the Father is again presented as the *terminus ad quem* – the way of progress leads "to him who is truly good, the Father."

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[101] *Eun.* 1.17 (SC 299:234): "For that which is unknown (τὸ ἀγνοούμενον) is not comprehended through that which is unlike and foreign (διὰ τοῦ ἀνομοίου καὶ ἀλλοτρίου) to it, but it is natural for something to become known by what has affinity with it (τῷ οἰκείῳ πέφυκε τὸ οἰκεῖον ἐπιγινώσκεσθαι)."

[102] *Eun.* 1.18 (SC 299:236). Cf., 1.26.

[103] *Spir.* 8.18 (SC 17 bis:310).

As soon as Basil traces the order of knowledge through the Son to the Father, he turns around and begins to detail what kinds "of abundant goods come to us *from* the Father through him (παρὰ τοῦ Πατρὸς εἰς ἡμᾶς δι' αὐτοῦ χορηγία τῶν ἀγαθῶν)."[104] In keeping with the quote at the start of this section (ft. 85), I have followed Basil 'up' the divine persons. Discerned in that 'ascent' is the order of our divine knowledge which traces the order of the divine persons. That order, however, is not revealed only through ascent in knowledge to the Father. Basil also sees it through what 'flows down' from the Father. That is to say, if there is a human order of knowing that moves 'up' to the Father in the Spirit through the Son, or through the Son to the Father, there is a divine way of 'knowing' that descends from the Father, as through the Son, to the Spirit.

5.5 Reversing Course: The Father's Reach

I now turn to this reversal of order where the Father is *terminus a quo*. Again, I will probe the two categories of kinship and image that both communicate the precise place of the Father within divine order as well as the 'order of grace' through which the Father draws worshippers to himself. In discerning the relations between the divine persons I will look first at affinity through the kinship metaphor (5.5.1) before turning to the ordered relations revealed through the image metaphor (5.5.2). This section will conclude by relating Basil's two ways of articulating the Trinity – the unity of the substance and the distinguishing marks of the persons – through his account of fatherhood (5.5.3).

5.5.1 *The Kinship Metaphor: 'Affinity' through Begetting and Procession*

I first take up the kinship metaphor, which thus far has clarified the Son being the 'way' to the Father and the Spirit being 'one' with the one Father and Son. As already seen, Basil's Trinitarian ideas were initially sharpened through his polemics with Eunomius, specifically with regard to Eunomius' desire to give divine definitional standing to 'unbegotten'. Basil is not opposed *per se* to 'unbegotten' as a theological notion properly ordered; he is opposed to *defining* the substance and avoiding divine names given in God's revelation.[105] In avoiding 'Father' and 'Son' Basil says Eunomius "conceals the names

[104] *Spir.* 8.19 (SC 17 bis:312, emphasis mine).

[105] Basil's favoring of 'Father' over 'unbegotten' comes through Homoiousian thought which was, on this point, reliant upon Athanasius. See Mark DelCogliano, "The Influence of Athanasius and the Homoiousians on Basil of Caesarea's Decentralization of 'Unbegotten'," *JECS* 19 (2011): 197-223. DelCogliano's article suggests the important larger issue of how dependent Basil was upon Athanasius,

(ὀνόματα κρύπτων) that belong to the saving faith."[106] Basil probably has in mind the faith expressed in the Trinitarian baptismal formula, but he also has specific concerns about Eunomius' alienating of the Only-Begotten, the Son, from the Father.[107] Basil accuses Eunomius of setting up an argument on the turf, as it were, of "things (τοῖς πράγμασι)" – the 'begotten' and 'unbegotten' – in order to put forward a radical difference between them and then transfer the ideas developed there to the 'Son' and 'Father'.[108] The most crushing aspect here for Basil's teaching on the Trinity would be separating the Only-Begotten from *fellowship* with the Father. This not only cuts off our "upward knowledge that occurs through the Son;"[109] it speaks to the Father's ability to 'cause' one like himself.

Eunomuis' focus on defining God according to 'unbegotten' and identifying the unbegotten with the Father cuts off any possibility, for Basil, of one being begotten and, therefore, sharing in the Father's nature. In fact, Eunomius' move of defining God as unbegotten actually "does not admit [God] of becoming Father (γενέσθαι Πατήρ)."[110] Basil attempts to demonstrate the absurdity of such notions through Jesus' words in the Gospel of John which speak to comparison and fellowship between the Son and Father (John 14:9; 12:45): "How could the Son show in himself (ἐν ἑαυτῷ ὁ Υἱός) the one who neither admits comparison nor possesses any fellowship (κοινωνίαν) with him? For that which is unknown is not comprehended through that which is unlike and foreign to it, but it is natural for something to become known by what has affinity with it."[111] Here Basil argues that for the Son to reveal the Father he *must have* some affinity with him. To change the metaphor, just as an archetype is known through its image, so the Father is known through the Son. When archetype and image are compared their identity is made clear. For an 'image' to function as an image it must be comparable.[112]

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concluding there is a "complexity of assessing the influence of Athanasius upon Basil due to the homoiousian use of Athanasius and Basil's use of the Homoiousians. The mere presence of similar ideas is an insufficient criterion for positing influence. One must examine in detail the precise arguments used and the scriptural texts cited to support these arguments when determining the contours of influence and borrowing, and differences in argumentative strategies and proof texts must be explained. Such a methodology has revealed the subtle modifications made to Athanasian source material on the part of the Homoiousians, and that Basil of Caesarea owes more to the homoiousian modification of Athanasius than to Athanasius himself" (222-223).

[106] *Eun.* 1.16 (SC 299:230).

[107] See *Eun.* 2.22.

[108] *Eun.* 1.16 (SC 299:230).

[109] See ft. 88. Cf., *Eun.* 2.12.

[110] *Eun.* 1.16 (SC 299:230).

[111] *Eun.* 1.17 (SC 299:234).

[112] *Eun.* 1.17-18.

In book 2 of *Eun.* Basil sharpens the import of the Father begetting the Son for there to be likeness between them. In opposing Eunomious' teaching that the divine substance does not admit a begetting, Basil highlights that when one is speaking of God concepts must be stripped of any notion of human passion. Eunomious avoids 'Father' and 'Son' with reference to God for this reason – they bring to mind human passion. What is lost according to Basil, though, is not only the Spirit-inspired and saving names repeated in the liturgy; notions of 'partnership' vanish. Once stripped of "lowly and fleshly meanings (τῶν ταπεινῶν καὶ σαρκικῶν νοημάτων)" one is led through 'Father' and 'Son' to understanding begetting according to what is "fitting for the holiness and impassibility of God (τῇ ἁγιωσύνῃ καὶ τῇ ἀπαθείᾳ τοῦ Θεοῦ πρέπουσαν)."[113] What results are the names and the relation suggested within them. That relation, which we understand through 'begetting', means a "likeness in substance (τὴν κατ' οὐσίαν ὁμοιότητα)": "For the Father is he who provides to another the beginning of being in a nature similar to his own (τοῦ εἶναι κατὰ τὴν ὁμοίαν ἑαυτῷ φύσιν τὴν ἀρχὴν), whereas the Son is he who has the beginning of his being from another in a begotten way (τοῦ γεννητῶς εἶναι τὴν ἀρχὴν)."[114]

'Affinity' or 'likeness' becomes the central idea that is communicated, for Basil, in the divine begetting. As seen in the purpose of creation and redemption, there is an affinity which humans experience in relation to God in a real sense when adopted as 'sons'. Basil is careful to say adoption and consequent likeness is *by grace*, and so unlike the Son's who is *by nature*. Nonetheless, in both cases there is a real and accurate sense in which God is Father: "God is called Father properly and suitably (κυρίως καὶ προσηκόντως), and this is not a name of passion but of affinity (οἰκειώσεώς), affinity either by grace (χάριν) as in the case of human beings, or by nature (φύσιν) as in the case of the Only-begotten."[115] Even though the ultimate manner in which the Father begets the Son

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[113] *Eun.* 2.22 (SC 305:90-92). Cf., 2.16. The issue of begetting was central to the debate with Eunomius, who wanted to shield the God's essence from anything suggesting passion. Thus, the name Father could be associated with the divine *activity* that produced the Son, but not with who God *is.* See *Apol.* 24: "We use the word 'image' (εἰκόνα), therefore, not as comparing the offspring to the unbegotten (ἀγεννήτῳ γέννημα) (for this is both incongruous and impossible for any creature), but as comparing the only-begotten Son and first-born to the Father (υἱὸν μονογενῆ καὶ πρωτότοκον πατρί), for the designation 'Son' makes his own substance clear (τὴν οὐσίαν δηλούσης), but that of 'Father' manifests the action of the one who begot him (τὴν τοῦ γεννήσαντος ἐνέργειαν)" (Vaggione, 66).

[114] *Eun.* 2.22 (SC 305:92).

[115] *Eun.* 2.24 (SC 305:98). Basil uses the term οἰκειότης in *Eun.* 1.27 for the Son's relationship to the

is ineffable and beyond the reach of human understanding, the relative names of 'Father' and 'Son' lead us to understand a begetting according to the divine nature which entails an affinity between the Father and Son.[116]

In the aforementioned late sermon, *Hom.* 24, Basil is careful to draw out the implications of his doctrine of divine begetting in taking on Eunomius' followers, the 'Anomoians'. Stressing the affinity and identity between the Father and Son is important for Basil because if there is opposition between them that introduces two first principles. What is more, if there is somehow a prior substance that "transcends (ὑπερκειμένης) them both" then they are brothers and not Father and Son.[117] Equating 'Anomoians' with polytheists, Basil seeks to demonstrate how he upholds the unity of God in the midst of the plurality of persons. Accordingly, there is one Father and so one God. And because the Son has identity with the Father through being the Only-begotten, he "naturally reflects (φυσικῶς ἐκτυπῶν) the Father in himself...[and] preserves sameness in substance (ὁμοούσιον διασώζει)."[118] One result of Basil's teaching on divine begetting is talk of a shared or common substance, which produces for each of the persons a 'formula of being' by which we understand their unity. I will turn to this Basilean teaching in the next section. Another entailment of Basil's emphasis on kinship through the names and begetting is the order between Father and Son.

Basil defends the singularity of divinity through there being one Father. As a father he "provides to another the beginning of being in a nature similar to his own, whereas the Son is he who has the beginning of his being from another in a begotten way."[119] This order of the Son's nature originating in the Father, where the one principle of the Father gives 'shape' to the Father-Son relation, is in accord with the "pious dogma of the

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Father. Radde-Gallwitz notes that it may be significant that "this was a Paripatetic, rather than a Stoic, term for the natural relation a child has to its parent. Basil seems to use it when he is speaking of the *child's* natural affinity for the parent, and οἰκειόωσις for the parent's love for the child. If this is deliberate, then Basil or his source is aware of the fact that the Stoics tended to base social affinity in the latter relationship and used the later term, while Peripatetics…spoke about the former relationship and used the former term" (*Transformation,* 119-120n.21).

[116] In *Eun.* 2.12 (SC 305:46) Basil says, "From whatever point the Father exists (ἀφ' οὗ Πατήρ), the Son also exists, and the notion of the Son immediately enters together with the notion of the Father (τῇ τοῦ Πατρὸς ἐννοίᾳ). For it is clear that the Father is a father *of* a son. So, then, though the Father has no origin, the Son's origin is the Father (Ἀρχὴ...Πατρὸς οὐδεμία, ἀρχὴ...τοῦ Υἱοῦ ὁ Πατήρ); there is no intermediary between them."

[117] *Hom.* 24.4 (PG 31:605).

[118] *Hom.* 24.4 (PG 31:608).

[119] See ft. 114.

monarchy" (*Spir.* 18.47). Another implication of the monarchy is the Holy Spirit. Basil does not spend a lot of time explaining the precise way the Spirit proceeds from the Father. With the Son the 'relational logic' of the names does a lot of work on its own, especially as it leads to reflecting upon 'begetting'. The 'Holy Spirit' has, however, no such obvious tie to the Father as the Son does. Yet, as discussed above, Basil draws the Spirit into the kinship metaphor within *Spir.* as the one who 'completes' the Trinity. While Basil argues for the Spirit's affinity through counting him as 'one', as with the Father and Son, and not with the 'multitude' of created things, he also briefly attempts to account for the way in which the Spirit might 'come' from the Father. The Spirit, Basil says,

> comes forth from God, not begottenly (οὐ γεννητῶς) as the Son does, but as the breath of his mouth (στόματος αὐτοῦ). Now this mouth is not at all a bodily member, nor breath emitted as a blast of air, but there is a mouth in a way appropriate to God (θεοπρεπῶς) and the Spirit is a living substance (οὐσία ζῶσα), the lordly power of holiness (ἁγιασμοῦ κυρία). While the kinship (οἰκειότητος) is thus made clear, the manner of its existence (τοῦ...τρόπου τῆς ὑπάρξεως) remains unspeakable.[120]

It is obvious Basil is attempting to account for the biblical meaning of 'spirit' as breath. He associates this, then, to the 'mouth' of the Father who is the source of the breath. We see in such a metaphor a 'proceeding' which in some way parallels the begetting of the Son. Both have their origin in the one Father, and the manner in which one is begotten and the other is breathed forth is ineffable yet true.

Basil does not end there in relating the Spirit, for the language of Romans 8:9 ("Spirit of Christ") compels him also to relate the Spirit to the Son. As the Father is seen in the Son, so the Son is seen in the Spirit (John 16:14). The Spirit manifests the wisdom, power and greatness of Christ and so brings to him glory. What follows in *Spir.* 18 is an explanation 'from glory' where as the Son returns to the Father he speaks of the glory he has brought to him on earth (John 17:4). The Son then sends the Spirit who will finish the work of the Son and, thereby, bring glory to him through revealing him (the Son- John 16:14) to the world. There is a glory that, though forward in time in God's unfolding mission on earth, moves 'back' from the Spirit to the Son – the same move that went 'back' from the Son to the Father in his earthly ministry. At the same time, the Father

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[120] *Spir.* 18.46 (SC 17 bis:408). One chapter later, Basil uses 'kinship' again in relation to the Spirit when he says, "The names for the Father and the Son are common to the Spirit (κοινὰ τὰ ὀνόματα πρὸς Πατέρα καὶ Υἱὸν τῷ Πνεύματι) who has these titles (προσηγοριῶν) [i.e. Holy, Good, Righteous, Paraclete] because of his kinship in nature (φύσιν οἰκειότητος)" (19.48 [SC 17 bis:418]).

glorifies the Son (John 12:28), and the Spirit is glorified through "the communion (κοινωνίας) he has with the Father and the Son as well as through the witness of the Only-begotten (Μονογενοῦς μαρτυρίας)."[121] What can be made of these 'circles of glory' among the divine persons that move from the Spirit to the Son and from the Son to the Father, or from the Father to the Son and to the Spirit through their communion? There is a logic to kinship, for Basil, where what results from the begetting or the 'breathing forth' is an obvious communion where each of the persons receives glory. Yet, the glory received by the respective persons 'travels' along the expected lines introduced by the monarchy of the Father. That is to say, the glory travels 'back' to the Father from the Spirit through the Son; and it goes forth from the Father to the Son, even from the Son to the Spirit.[122]

5.5.2 *The Image Metaphor: Timeless Divine Order Established by the Father*

Kinship has proven to be a fruitful metaphor for Basil in drawing out the Trinitarian relations, and has given windows through which to see the character of the monarchy of the Father. Even more – perhaps 'bigger' – windows are provided through the 'image' metaphor, which I will now probe in order to see the 'Father's reach' through the persons. I begin again with *Eun.* where the image metaphor is extended to the Son from the perspective of the Father. God, Basil notes, has "co-existed from eternity with his image who has radiated light non-temporally (εἰκόνι ἀχρόνως ἀπαυγασθείσῃ)."[123] Basil is referencing here a favorite verse of his, Hebrews 1:3, where the image-Son radiates the glory of the archetype-Father. Basil introduces the metaphor at this point in *Eun.* in order to address Eunomius' notion that order between a 'first' and 'second' must always be 'deliberative' in time and, therefore, introduce superiorities based on time. But Basil does not see this applied to God. Since God and his image stand outside of time, deliberative order does not apply. There is something he calls "natural order" that does apply to God and his image. This allows Basil to say, "The Father is ranked prior (προτετάχθαι) to the Son according to the relation that causes have with what comes from them (τὴν τῶν αἰτίων πρὸς τὰ ἐξ αὐτῶν σχέσιν), but not according to difference of nature or a pre-eminence

[121] *Spir.* 18.46 (SC 17 bis:410).

[122] *Spir.* 18.46. Basil references Matthew 12:31 ("Every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven you, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven.") to support this last claim. Perhaps he sees the Son glorifying the Spirit by upholding his dignity in the face of blasphemy.

[123] *Eun.* 1.20 (SC 299:242-244).

based on time. Otherwise, we will deny even the very reality that God is the Father since difference according to substance (οὐσίαν ἀλλοτριότητος) precludes their natural connection (φυσικὴν συνάφειαν).[124] In this section Basil admits there is 'order' in God, that God is 'first' in relation to his image, but no notion of time or superiority can be introduced because God and his image stand outside of time.[125]

Hebrews 1:3 appears again in book two of *Eun.,* this time to express how the Son entirely reveals the Father. He couples this text with Colossians 1:15 in order to submit it is the image who is the radiance, who the Father is manifest in as in a seal. The archetype 'brings into existence' the image, but that image, though having a cause from another, is co-existent with the archetype-Father.[126] Since the image is that through which the Father reveals himself, what, according to Basil, is revealed by the Father through the Son? To this question I now turn.

Having followed the 'image' metaphor to establish the co-eternality of the

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[124] *Eun.* 1.20 (SC 299:246). See also *Eun.* 2.17 (SC 305:66) where Basil says, "The Son does not have unbegotten being (οὐκ ἀγέννητον ἔχων τὸ εἶναι), but he always is and co-exists with the Father (ὢν δὲ ἀεὶ καὶ συνὼν τῷ Πατρί), from whom he has the cause of his existence (τὴν αἰτίαν τῆς ὑπάρξεως ἔχει). So, then, when was he brought into being by the Father (εἰς τὸ εἶναι παρὰ τοῦ Πατρὸς παρήχθη)? From whatever point the Father exists (Ἀφ' οὗ ἐστιν ὁ Πατήρ). But [Eunomius] says that the Father is from eternity (ἐξ ἀϊδίου). So the Son is also from eternity (ἐξ ἀϊδίου), being connected in a begotten way to the unbegottenness of the Father (γεννυτῶς τῇ ἀγεννυσίᾳ τοῦ Πατρὸς συναπτόμενς)."
Here Basil is walking a line which distinguishes him from the operating presumptions of his day, that is, that a cause is always greater than its effect. In philosophical accounts, such as found in Aristotle or Plotinus, "this was construed in terms of the cause pre-eminently possessing a property which it transmits in diminished extent to another" (Radde-Gallwitz, *Transformation*, 171). Eunomius held that causality meant the Son was later than the Father. Basil here is upholding a 'purified' notion of causality that produces a *taxis* among the divine persons. Such notions as time, material, and passion are stripped away – and with them many of the associations of causality in his day – but some notion of causality remains: "The order here is logical and involves no interval (διάστημα). It comes about not by physical placement, but as a consequence of their nature. Thus, in causal relationship the Father comes before the Son in order—not by difference of nature or in time" (Milton V. Anastos, "Basil's Κατά Εὐνομίου: A Critical Analysis," in *Basil of Caesarea, Christian Humanist, Ascetic: A Sixteen-Hundredth Anniversary Symposium,* ed. Paul Fedwick [Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1981], 88).
Sesboüé also acknowledges the resulting *taxis* yet with the presumption of the unquestioned divinity of the Son: "Cette conclusion situe la supériorité d'lorigine qui fond l'ordre des personnes en Dieu. Cet argument très rationalisé est un exemple typique de l'effort de Basile pour dégager la cohéherence du ci n'est prégnante que dans l'hypothèse de l'égalité du Fils fermement établie par ailleurs" (*Saint Basile et La Trinité,* 156).

[125] In *Eun.* 3.1 Basil extends 'rank' to the Spirit. The Son is 'second' because from the Father and one who grants access to him. The Spirit is 'third', presumably because he is the 'Spirit of Christ'. Like with the Son in *Eun.* 1.20, he is careful to say that this rank does not entail a different nature. Drecoll notes Basil's distinction between two types of *taxis*: τάξις φυσικὴ and τάξις τεχνική. Among the divine persons he affirms the former: "Eine τάξις τεχνική beinhaltet also eine menschliche Setzung (θέσις; AE I,20/24), die Zeit voraussetzt (vgl. AE I,20/5f). Demgegenüber kann die τάξις φυσικὴ auch ohne Zeit gedacht werden, und dies wendet Basilius auf das Verhältnis von Vater und Sohn an: Gott-Vater existiert gleichzeitig (συνεῖναι) mit dem Sohn, der als seine εἰκών zeitlos hervorstrahlt (AE I,20/6-8) (*Trinitätslehre,* 99).

[126] *Eun.* 2.17.

archetype and image, an order is observed according to eternity where 'cause and effect' are not understood in light of time and associated superiorities in Basil. The archetype has always had its image, or the Father his Son, and has purposed to reveal through him. That purpose is revealed in the divine will that has its origin in the "primal cause as from a kind of spring (οἷον πηγῆς τινος τῆς πρώτης αἰτίας)" and "proceeds to activity through his own image (οἰκείας εἰκόνος), God the Word."[127] In chapter eight of *Spir.* Basil picks up this theme of the activity, that is, what the Father accomplishes through the Son, his image. According to the Father's goodness, he brings to humanity, through the Son, and according to his will, a variety of gifts fit to human need. Since there is no difference in the Son's power, he can perfectly fulfill the will of the Father in bringing these gifts.[128] As he does so, he 'images' the Father in that the Father is seen in him. John 14:9 is the operative text here for Basil. There is an identical purpose and will extending from the Father through the Son, where the Son reveals what is the Father's. Yet, it is fully shared by the Son, who as an "efficient cause (ποιητικοῦ αἰτίου)" fully accomplishes the "initial cause (προκαταρκτικῆς αἰτίας)" of the Father.[129] The Spirit, too, brings about the will of the Father through his divine power. Like the image-Son, the Spirit "pre-existed, and co-existed (προῆν, καὶ συμπαρῆν) with the Father and the Son before all ages (πρὸ τῶν αἰώνων)."[130] He can bring about the Father's purpose and shows this by making holy (1 Corinthians 6:11), bringing about adoption (Galatians 4:6), and resurrection (Psalm 103:30). Recalling his argument for separating the Son from creation, and thus placing him on the 'Creator' side of reality, Basil argues for the Spirit's placement on the 'divine side' of the Creator/created reality. If created, he is a "slave" like everything else. But if above the creation, and on the 'side' of the Creator, "he is a sharer of the kingship (τῆς βασιλείας ἐστὶ κοινωνόν)."[131] In the context of *Spir,* this evocative phrase links the Spirit to the monarchy in two senses. In the first, the Spirit shares the same dignity of the Father (and Son). What is more, though, the Spirit's work demonstrates his accomplishment of

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[127] *Eun.* 2.21 (SC 305:86).

[128] *Spir.* 8.20 (SC 17 bis:316), where Basil says, "We should think of a sharing of will that reaches timelessly (ἀχρόνως) from the Father to the Son in a way suitable for God (διάδοσιν), as, for instance, some figure appears in a mirror (μορφῆς ἔμφασιν ἐν κατόπτρῳ). 'For the Father loves the Son and shows all things to him' (Jn 5.20). Consequently, whatever the Father has is the Son's (Ὥστε πάντα ὅσα ἔχει ὁ Πατήρ, τοῦ Υἱοῦ ἐστιν)."

[129] *Spir.* 8.21 (SC 17 bis:320).

[130] *Spir.* 19.49 (SC 17 bis:418).

[131] *Spir.* 20.51 (SC 17 bis:430). Cf., *Eun.* 3.2.

the divine will and his sharing in the "natural goodness and holiness according to nature and the royal dignity [that reaches] from the Father, through the Only-begotten, to the Spirit."[132]

At this point in this section of the 'Father's reach' two questions arise: Have the human entailments of Basil's 'spiritual vision' been left behind, and does his strong articulation of order among the divine persons run in only one direction? First I take note of the apparent distance travelled from the 'worshipful knowledge' that so characterizes Basil's spiritual vision, which progresses through the divine persons 'up' to the Father. The distance is accounted for by the reversal of course where this section has followed the persons from the Father 'down'. In so doing, a firmer grip on the Father's relationships with the Son and Spirit has been gained, especially as his unique position of monarchy constitutes the Trinity through generation and procession. Even with the reversal of course, the metaphors of image and kinship continue to be central to Basil's thought and illumine the particularities of Trinitarian relations. And though the attention has been more focused upon the divine order of persons and not a corresponding spiritual vision involving human beings, Basil's 'Trinitarian spirituality' has not been left behind. I have entitled this section the 'Father's reach' not only because of his role in constituting the Trinity, but also because of the divine grace which reaches from the Father, through the other persons, to believers: the Father 'reaches' to draw worshippers to himself through the grace he orders within the divine persons – a grace that travels along the lines introduced by the monarchy. Indeed, the grace reaches down from those who have been timelessly ordered in such a way that they can perfectly reveal the purpose of the Father. For the human being, the purpose was established in the beginning, created 'according to the image' and 'according to the likeness'. In redemption, this purpose is reawakened and the Father reaches through the Son and by the Spirit to draw worshippers to a contemplative vision where they find themselves increasingly 'according to the likeness' of God.

The second question is raised within Basil's conception of divine order, where there is a necessity of affinity for the Son to reveal the Father, and of comparability for an image to reveal the archetype. It is not a question directly engaged by Basil, for he is focused on the order that runs from Father to Son, or from archetype to image, yet it is

[132] See ft. 2.

something implied by his articulation of necessity. That is to say, if the revelation of the Father necessitates a Son who has affinity with him, who shares likeness, then is there in some sense not only a dependence of the Son upon the Father (for the source of his being, for example) but also a dependence of the Father on the Son? For the Father is not known *but through the Son.* Likewise, if the order obtaining between the persons is known through the image as well as the kinship metaphor, the glory of the archetype – the Father – is only known through the comparability of the image. By the image's perfect reflection, the Father is known. Only *this* son, *this* image, can reveal the Father. The Father, then, depends on *this* son, *this* image to be known and, therefore, to be glorified in worship. Such thoughts await further investigation and reflection (see conclusion), yet Basil has provided enough already to consider a certain 'reversal' of dependence within his integration of Trinitarian theology and spirituality.

5.5.3 *Making Sense of Basil's 'Two Ways': The Unity of the Substance and the Distinguishing Marks of the Persons*

In order to begin to wrap up this larger section on the 'Father's Reach', I return to two texts with which I began the investigation of the 'Question and Parameters of Divine Knowledge' (*Hom.* 15 and *Ep.* 236). Found within them, along with the passages examined already in this section, is the continued strong presence of the 'image' metaphor for making sense of the Trinitarian relations and thus a summarization of this investigation of the Father's relation to the Son and Spirit. They will also transition this chapter to consider the relationship between Basil's 'two ways' of speaking of God, through the unity of the substance or distinguishing marks of the persons. They have the advantage of most likely being late writings and, therefore, representative of Basil's mature theology. Certainly what is found within them draws together many of the threads found throughout his corpus.

In *Hom.* 15, after outlining his caveats in approaching the knowledge of God, and encouraging his listeners to ascend beyond all in contemplation until they reach God, Basil lists several characteristics of the divine nature to contemplate:

> permanent, immutable, inalterable, impassible, simple, incomposite, indivisible, unapproachable light [1 Tim 6:16], ineffable power, uncircumscribed greatness, supereminent glory, desirable goodness, extraordinary beauty that ravishes the soul pierced by it but that cannot be

worthily expressed in speech (λόγῳ...δηλωθῆναι πρὸς ἀξίαν ἀδύνατον).[133]

These are 'general' characteristics in that they do not distinguish a particular divine person; rather, they, as Basil explicitly says, are contemplated in the divine nature. "There," Basil says, "we find Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the uncreated nature (ἄκτιστος φύσις), the lordly dignity (δεσποτικὸν ἀξίωμα), the natural goodness (φυσικὴ ἀγαθότης)."[134] 'There' is obviously the divine nature, *where* the Trinitarian persons are found. What follows in the homily is an explanation of the Father and Son very much in accord with the 'Father's reach' that I have been exploring in this section:

> The Father is the principle of all, the cause of being for whatever exists (Πατήρ ἡ πάντων ἀρχὴ, ἡ αἰτία τοῦ εἶναι τοῖς οὖσιν), the root of the living. From him proceeded the source (πηγὴ) of life; the wisdom, the power [1 Corinthians 1:24], and the indistinguishable image of the invisible God [Colossians 1:15]; the Son who was begotten from the Father (ἐκ τοῦ Πατρὸς γεννηθεὶς); the living Word; he who is both God and with God [John 1:1]; not an addition; he who exists before the ages, not a late acquisition; he who is Son, not something possessed; he who is Maker, not something made; he who is Creator, not creature; who is everything that the Father is (παντα ὢν ὅσα ἐστὶν ὁ Πατήρ). "Son," I have said, "and Father. Please keep in mind these distinctive features (ἰδιότητας)[135]

While Basil clearly speaks to the Father as "principle" and "cause," and the Son as "begotten" and "image," he intertwines discussion of the common substance and the distinguishing marks. As he emphasizes, he wants his listeners to keep in mind the "distinctive features," while rooting the characteristics of the common substance shared by each of the persons – such as life, wisdom, and power – in the *Father*. Even though these are shared by each person on account of their "community in nature (φύσιν κοινωνίας)," they are 'from the Father' and not simply referred to the generic substance.[136] This passage is one of the clearest in Basil where he associates the 'divine nature' with the Father. Now, of course, in keeping with his theology the Son is "everything that the Father is" (Basil references John 16:15.), yet, still in accord with the 'Father's reach', the Father is principle and cause and source.

Basil continues in *Hom.* 15.2 to use archetype-image language as a 'proof' that the Son is everything the Father is, because "whatsoever is present in the archetype

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[133] *Hom.* 15.1 (PG 31:465).
[134] *Hom.* 15.2 (PG 31:465).
[135] *Hom.* 15.2 (PG 31:465-468).
[136] *Hom.* 15.2 (PG 31:468).

(πρωτοτύπῳ) belongs to the image (τῆς εἰκόνος) of that archetype."[137] He quickly returns to the names, Father and Son, however, and how, being 'naturally' begotten, the Son receives and contains all that is the Father's. He even through his "very designation 'Son' teaches us that he shares in the nature [of the Father] (τῆς φύσεώς ἐστι κοινωνος)…having continuously shown forth from the Father's substance (ἐκ τῆς οὐσίας ἐκλάμψας ἀδιαστάτως)."[138] In *Hom.* 15.3 Basil continues on in these thoughts and applies them to the Spirit. The extended space he gives to the acts and authority of the Spirit perhaps reveal the underlying polemical concerns over the status of the Spirit that were swirling around the time he wrote *Spir.* Whatever might be the case, though he has everything according to the nature and acts on his own authority, like the Son, the Spirit is *sent;* and the nature that shines forth, out of which he acts in divine ways, is 'from' the Father.

What is striking about *Hom.* 15's account of the Trinity is an apparent attempt to relate the 'two levels' of 'according to the substance' and 'according to the persons'.[139] With regard to the Father, it is 'his nature' which shines forth in the Son. Now it does in such a way that they – Son and Spirit – are all that the Father is, according to the substance. Still, when articulation shifts from the person to the nature and back again, it is the Father who stands in position of monarchy. A turn next to *Ep.* 236 shows a continuation and expansion of these themes.

What has been already learned from *Ep.* 236 is that Basil teaches an 'order of knowing' among the Trinitarian persons that moves from the Father to the Son, where "the cause of the Son's knowing issues from the Father."[140] Human knowledge moves 'up' the divine persons by grace. Divine knowledge is given from the Father according to nature. In accounting for the knowledge that flows from the Father to the Son, Basil calls the Father the "first cause (πρώτην αἰτίαν)" and says, accordingly, that the Son's nature "exists with the Father first (πρώτῳ τῷ Πατρὶ ὑπάρχειν)."[141] In this vein of the order

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[137] Ibid.

[138] Ibid.

[139] Similar connections are found in a section of *Hom.* 24.4 (PG 31:605-608) where Basil connects what is understood through the 'image' metaphor with regard to the persons and commonality of substance: "Wherever there is one principle (ἀρχὴ) and one thing from it, and one archetype (αρχέτυπον) and one image (εἰκὼν), the formula of unity (νότητος λόγος) is not destroyed. Therefore, the Son exists from the Father in a begotten way (γεννητῶς ὑπάρχων ἐκ τοῦ Πατρὸς) and he naturally expresses the Father in himself (φυσικῶς ἐκτυπῶν ἐν ἑαυτῷ τὸν Πατέρα): as image he has indistinguishability, as something begotten he preserves sameness in substance (τὸ ὁμοούσιον διασώζει)."

[140] See ft. 28.

[141] (Courtonne 3:48).

between Father and Son, Basil invokes 'image' and states that the image is "of the very Godhead (αὐτῆς τῆς θεότητος)" and "of the glories attributed to the substance of God (τῇ οὐσίᾳ τοῦ Θεοῦ) – an image of power, an image of wisdom, as Christ is called 'the power of God and the wisdom of God."[142] Though not entirely clear, given the context of the 'order of knowing' between Father and Son, Basil seems to be arguing here for the Son imaging those 'general characteristics' of the substance, yet attributing them as from the *Father*. The Son has a nature that exists with the 'Father first'. He images the Father, and what he images is what is shared among the divine persons according to the divinity (i.e. power and wisdom). It is appropriate to draw out again a relevant quote from above (sourced in ft. 29): "This is most and befitting divinity to say of the Son, that from him [the Father] with whom he is of one substance he has both his wisdom and power of knowing and, in his divinity, his being beheld in all wisdom and glory." Note that the Son's wisdom and power are not derived from the generic substance, but from the Father. This order, from the Father to the Son, is "befitting divinity." I suggest that this is "befitting" for Basil because, whether he is speaking 'according to the substance' or 'according to the characteristics', he sees the monarchy of the Father as crucial to upholding both the order and equality of the persons which are central to his Trinitarian theology.

In these two texts Basil seems to be genuinely grappling with 'connecting' the Father and his monarchy with the more general notions of the substance. What results is something that might be called a 'derived unity', where the unity of the persons is found in the divine nature but the nature ultimately derives from the Father. This appears in tension with other accounts of the persons and the common nature, accounts spanning from *Eun.* up until late in his career. Starting with *Eun.* Basil is attempting to put together a 'full picture' of God by 'combining' what is common in the nature with what is unique in the persons. In an important passage in 2.28 he writes:

> The distinctive features (ἰδιότητες), which are like certain characters (χαρακτῆρές) and forms (μορφαὶ) observed in the substance (τῇ οὐσίᾳ), differentiate what is common (τὸ κοινὸν) by means of the distinguishing characters (ἰδιάζουσι χαρακτῆρσι) and do not split the substance's sameness in nature (ὁμοφυὲς τῆς οὐσίας οὐ διακόπτουσιν). For example, the divinity is common (κοινὸν), whereas fatherhood and sonship are distinguishing marks

[142] Ibid.

(ἰδιώματα): from the combination of both, that is, of the common and unique (κοινοῦ καὶ ἰδίου), we arrive at comprehension of the truth.[143]

Basil continues to speak like this later in his career. In the very *Ep.* 236 engaged above, he takes up a number of miscellaneous issues towards the end of the letter which were apparently prompted by Amphilochius' inquiries. In the midst of these he expresses something very similar to what was found in *Eun.* 2.28:

> But substance (οὐσία) and person (ὑπόστασις) have the distinction that the common (κοινὸν) has with reference to the particular; for example, just as "a living creature" has with reference to "a particular man." For this reason we confess one substance for the divinity (οὐσίαν...μίαν ἐπὶ τῆς θεότητος ὁμολογοῦμεν), so as not to hand down differently the formula of being (τὸν τοῦ εἶναι λόγον), but we confess a distinct person (ὑπόστασιν...ἰδιάζουσαν), in order that our conception (ἔννοια) of Father and Son and Holy Spirit may be for us unconfused and plain. For unless we think of characteristics (χαρακτῆρας) that are definitive in the case of each, as for example paternity and sonship and holiness, but from the common notion of being (κοινῆς ἐννοίας τοῦ εἶναι) confess God, it is impossible to hand down a sound formula of the faith. Therefore, we must add the distinct to the common (τῷ κοινῷ τὸ ἰδιάζον) and thus confess the faith; the divinity (θεότης) is something common, the paternity (πατρότης) something distinct, and combining these we should say: "I believe in God the Father." And again in the confession of the Son we should do the same—combine the distinct with the common (τῷ κοινῷ συνάπτειν τὸ ἴδιον), and say: "I believe in God the Son." Similarly too in the case of the Holy Spirit, we should frame our utterance of the reference to him according to the same idea and say: "I believe also in the divine Holy Spirit," so that throughout the whole, both unity (ἑνότητα) is preserved in the confession of the one divinity, and that which is distinctive of the persons (προσώπων ἰδιάζον) is confessed in the distinction made in the characteristics attributed to each.[144]

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[143] (SC 305:118-120).

[144] (Courtonne 3:52-53). This letter and *Eun.* 2.28, as well as other relevant passages in Basil that address the distinction between οὐσία and ἰδιώματα (or ἰδιότητες), represent "a complex agreement with and adaptation of a range of philosophical and theological sources. Basil's philosophical borrowings occur in the context of particular late antique transformations of ancient philosophy: the mutual engagement between various ancient 'traditions' occurring in the previous three centuries; a revival in the study of Aristotle; the emergence of thinkers who built on both Stoic and Platonic traditions…; the eventual emergence of that style of Platonism modern scholars call 'Neoplatonism'. Even if we are aware of this context Basil's borrowings are complex and he seems uninterested in terminological precision" (Ayres, *Nicaea,* 199). Ayres goes on to give a very helpful overview of the various philosophical ideas influencing Basil's articulation of the relationship between the common substance and the distinctive persons (see 198-204; see also Ayres and Radde-Gallwitz, "Basil of Caesarea," 465-468). For more extensive summaries, see Sesboüé's introduction in SC 299:65-95 and David G. Robertson, "Stoic and Aristotelian Notions of Substance in Basil of Caesarea," *VC* 52 (1988): 393-417.
Cf. Basil's famous late (c. 375) letter, *Ep.* 214, often quoted to uphold a distinction between substance and hypostasis, in which Basil uses very similar language to *Ep.* 236 minus the notions about 'combining'. What is of note is though he uses ὑπόστασις Basil explains it in reference to ἰδιώματα (e.g., ὑπόστασις ἐν τῷ

One is tempted to say that Basil develops a way of articulating the Trinitarian persons in *Eun.* that emphasizes these 'two ways' as a specific response to the errors he sees in Eunomius and his followers. With the wedge driven between begotten and unbegotten, that is, the Son and the Father, the commonality of substance is ballast when theologies are tempted to subordinate one person to another. What is more, emphasis on what is 'unknown' in the substance must receive due attention when polemics are against those who claim comprehensive knowledge of the substance. Once he moves on to other concerns, and thinks along more fully Trinitarian lines in *Spir.* – where order of knowing patterns the order of persons – these 'two ways' are left behind and the plurality and order of the persons confessed in the 'simple faith' of the baptismal formula are given emphasis. This would be wrong, for these 'two ways' are repeated throughout his career, at times with no apparent attempt to link the general plane of the commonality of substance with the distinguishing marks of the persons. Thus, there is a consistency to Basil's Trinitarian vision starting with *Eun.* Indeed, the 'two levels' never go away, because they each serve a purpose in upholding Trinitarian orthodoxy where the Father, Son and Spirit are confessed both as three distinct persons and sharing one nature.

At the same time, when Basil is thinking through the metaphors of kinship and image and how they help discern the order of persons, he is continually led back to the

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ἰδιώματι τῆς πατρότητος):

> But if it is necessary also to say briefly what we think, we will speak as follows: what the common formula is to the distinct (λόγον τὸ κοινὸν πρὸς τὸ ἴδιον), this the substance is to the person (οὐσία πρὸς τὴν ὑπόστασιν). For each one of us both participates in "being" in the common formula of "substance," and So-and-so "exists" in respect to his own distinctive traits (ἰδιώμασιν), and so does So-and-so. So even here the formula of substance is common (τῆς οὐσίας λόγος κοινός), like goodness, divinity, or any other abstract concept; but the person is perceived in the distinctiveness of fatherhood (ὑπόστασις ἐν τῷ ἰδιώματι τῆς πατρότητος), or sonship, or of holy power. If then they say that the persons are not subsistent (ἀνυπόστατα), the teaching is itself absurd; but if they concede, as they do admit, that they subsist in a true person (ἐν ὑποστάσει εἶναι αὐτὰ ἀληθινῇ συγχωροῦσιν), let them also enumerate them, in order that both the idea of consubstantiality (ὁμοουσίου) may be preserved in the oneness of the divinity (ἑνότητι τῆς θεότητος), and that the recognition of the holiness (εὐσεβείας) of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, in the complete and perfect personhood (ἀπηρτισμένη καὶ ὁλοτελεῖ...ὑποστάσει) of each of those named, may be proclaimed (Courtonne 2:205-206).

Lucian Turcescu helpfully follows Basil's evolving usage of terms that highlight what is particular in the Trinity. He demonstrates Basil's growing unease with πρόσωπον and his development in the use of ὑπόστασις. See "Prosōpon and Hypostasis in Basil of Caesarea's 'Against Eunomius' and the Epistles," *VC* 51 (1997): 374-395. Regarding ὑπόστασις, however, Ayres' caution is necessary: "Even though *hypostasis* has grown in importance, we should not assume this indicates Basil now has a dense understanding of divine person in the abstract" (*Nicaea,* 210).

'position' of the Father – his monarchy. And Basil's understanding of the monarchy cannot be simply left to the level of the distinguishing marks and the interrelationships of the persons. There is a sense where the communion of the persons is rooted in the Father's monarchy, where his position as 'source' entails the nature that eternally shines forth from him. The metaphors used to explain how the general characteristics are shared by the other persons actually serve at the same time to reaffirm the monarchy of the Father. It would seem the force of these articulations brings Basil around to connecting his 'two ways' and doing so in such a way that the Father's monarchy never can recede from view. Why does he continue to speak in the mode of the two ways, restating what is 'according to the common substance' and what is 'according to the persons', when such an articulation perhaps does not give a clear account of fatherhood? It could be that the 'two ways' function as a kind of 'formula' that in its simplicity and brevity can be repeated and easily ward off misunderstanding, whether of the Sabellian or Anomoian variety. Perhaps this is why it appears late in *Ep.* 236 as a response to a question, whereas when given fuller explication to the Trinitarian persons earlier in the letter he makes an attempt to connect the 'two ways' through explanations reminiscent of the monarchy.

Whatever may be the case, Basil's overall vision pushes in the direction of the 'ordered persons'. Within his writings the commonality of substance is always present to hold up the shared divinity of the persons – one cannot question status or ontologically subordinate the persons. Yet the overall vision of Basil's Trinitarian theology presses the status of the persons so that they serve his spiritual vision, which moves from the Spirit, through the Son, to the Father. That is to say, a questioning of status or subordination of the persons would not only rob the persons of the dignity and worship which is due them; it would also jeopardize the contemplative vision where worshippers progress within the divine persons according to their ordered relationships. The unity of the persons is present but is a derivational unity from the Father, whose monarchy ensures the shared divinity so that a contemplative vision holds fully within the divine. If you take away the status of the persons, you take away human progress in likeness of God. Divine matters move in the direction of the ordered persons, however, because they provide the 'map' of relations through which human beings return to the Father in their redemption.

5.6 Conclusion

While Basil was zealous to uphold and substantiate the status of the Son and Spirit as fully divine as the Father is, the primary spiritual 'space' where he developed his Trinitarian theology was the place of worship. The worship of the church reveals the 'simple' confession of the baptismal formula, which savingly sets apart believers in the Trinitarian names. These divine names reveal a course for the believer to travel in order to become more like God. While Basil is talking about the Trinity he is also often talking about how one progresses in his or her spiritual life, and thereby integrates spirituality with his Trinitarian theology. This begins, as we have seen, with his theological anthropology.

The Trinitarian shape of the creation of the human being is the same shape of the redemption of the human being. The nature of the creation of the human being, according to the 'image' and 'likeness' of God, introduces into theological discussion the two metaphors which not only become fundamental to understanding humanity's purpose in its vision of God, but also for observing the patterns and intricacies of Trinitarian relations. 'Image' presents a way of understanding humanity's status as in relation to the Father in a way unlike the rest of creation. The Son is image *par excellence*, reflecting perfectly the glory of the Father, yet humanity in some way imitates the Son's imaging, even more when connected with and cleansed by the Holy Spirit. The Son is also in the likeness of the Father by his very nature. The human being was created 'according to the likeness' yet with spiritual remainder in order that humans might progress in likeness through contemplative worship and, in light of redemption, 'putting on Christ' throughout Christian living.

As the Christian lives out an adoptive 'sonship', sealed by the Spirit, where there is dynamic growth in likeness to the Father, there is a 'return' to the purpose of creation. That is to say, the seed was in the beginning that germinates and shoots forth in a human destiny that is progressively mapped through the Trinitarian relations. The progress is only possible within a worshipful vision where the glory of the Lord draws the worshipper into deeper reflection.

The monarchy of the Father gives distinctive shape to understanding this integration of Trinitarian relations and spiritual progression. Worship of God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – orients the believer to the particular divine persons. Worship is 'one' for each person is divine; yet as worship can only take place once indwelled by the

Spirit and drawn 'inside', the Father through his monarchy quickly emerges as the *terminus ad quem:* "By worshipping God from God, we confess what is distinctive of the persons (ἰδιάζον τῶν ὑποστάσεων) and remain within the monarchy (ἐπὶ τῆς μοναρχίας)."[145] Thus, according to Basil, the way to know God and the way to be like God is to be 'in' God by the Spirit and, through the Son, 'return' to the Father.

As I submitted in my introduction, Basil offers an integrative account of fatherhood because it touches and pulls together everything from anthropology, to epistemology, to spirituality, to Trinitarian relations. But its integrative power reaches beyond just the scope of theological loci it pulls together: Divine fatherhood in Basil provides sharpness to mature pro-Nicene categories that are emerging within his era. The 'return to the Father' highlights one such theme—a prominent theme in the last two chapters that tracks with the overall progression of pro-Nicene thought. That is, a growing pneumatology translates into a penetrating vision of God. With Basil we have seen the Spirit "as the sanctifying intelligible light" who *in himself* and his unmediated presence brings worshippers into the 'contours' of the Trinity.[146] This move of 'spirituality' had 'theological' consequence because in its articulation Trinitarian dynamics were opened for greater depth of understanding. As the Spirit's work was highlighted in redemption (and creation) attention was brought to the reality of a divine action that was inseparable among the Trinity. While the Spirit himself is a divine person sanctifying human beings, looking at his work inevitably drew theological attention to the 'course' of his redemption leading from the Father, through the Son, in himself, and, in turn, in himself, through the Son, to the Father. At the same time that it reveals a distinct shape, this course entails a co-presence of the persons leading from and to the Father. Ayres observed that the rise of pro-Nicene pneumatology "coincided with the wide-spread appearance of clear pro-Nicene accounts presenting the logic of divine existence as three irreducible agents as sharing or constituting one indivisible divine nature and power."[147]

This observation is important for it highlights that a Spirit-enabled activity (i.e., sanctifying vision) drew attention to the Spirit as a divine person which, in turn, drew attention to his relations. Through the latter, theological logic inevitably led to the Father's

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[145] *Spir.* 18.45 (SC 17 bis:404-406).

[146] Lewis Ayres, "Innovation and *Ressourcement* in Pro-Nicene Pneumatology," *Augustinian Studies* 39 (2008): 198.

[147] Ibid., 190.

'place' within Triune life. Yet, that same logic supplied an account of the co-presence of the persons even in the midst of a divine *taxis*. Consequently, it appears a denser pneumatology translated into a denser account of fatherhood. This is the case for holding together the Father's *monarchia* with the co-presence of the three divine persons requires entering into the tension of the Father's priority and his eternal gifting. Through the metaphors of image and kinship, this chapter has demonstrated Basil's robust account of generation and procession from the Father resulting in a Son and Spirit who are distinct yet equal with him. On the one hand, the Father timelessly orders relations through the 'gifts' of generation and procession. On the other hand, these gifts result in a shared nature which enables co-presence in undivided activity. Lastly, fatherhood in Basil provides clarity on the distinction between person and nature through relating his 'two ways' of or 'two levels' for speaking of the Godhead. I have argued that attention to the Father makes sense of relating what is common and what is distinctive within Basil's thought. Thus, one finds in Basil an account of fatherhood that draws from and expands on pro-Nicene principles in a particularly creative and fruitful way within Trinitarian theology as it nears the close of the fourth century.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

Whether reciting the Apostles' or Nicene Creed, the Christian confession of faith begins with a statement of belief in "God, the Father almighty." And the Christian's prayer, insofar as it imitates the Lord's Prayer, begins with "Our Father." It might seem strange, then, that that which heads creeds and commences prayers should receive so little theological attention throughout the centuries. Works written on 'Paterology' pale in comparison to the many tomes on Christology or Pneumatology.[1] Why might this be the case?

Thomas Aquinas noted that there are less articles of faith on the Father than on the Son and the Holy Spirit because the Father is not sent.[2] Certainly, unlike the Son and the Spirit, the Father has no 'face' or representation, making a theology of divine fatherhood particularly challenging. In addition to this point about the economy, the historical observation could be made that, again unlike the Son and Spirit, his divinity has been taken for granted. Consequently, there has been no need for a theological defense of his status.

While the controversies of the fourth century did not directly concern the Father, they did radically shape how the Father is conceived in relation to the Son and Spirit – that is, *how* he is Father – as well as frame what he is capable of. And while the historical script advances the status of the Son and Holy Spirit, it does so in the environment of a long shadow cast by the Father. One might say that rather than being a central protagonist in the narrative of fourth-century Trinitarian theology, the Father is a 'supporting' character; but not a supporting character if that means less important. He is

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[1] Of course, in this thesis' Introduction the case was made that the Father has been under recent scrutiny. However, that scrutiny has often been motivated by reasons other than those properly theological. Theologically, one will not find much written on God the Father in English (or German); French authors have dominated the field. Excluding journal aritcles and chapters in books, French monographs within the last fifty years include: Jean Galot, *Découvrir le Père* (Louvain: Editions Sintal, 1985) (translated as *Abba, Father—We Long to See Your Face: Theological Insights into the First Person of the Trinity*, trans. M Angeline Bouchard [New York: Alba House, 1992]); Francois-Xavier Durrwell, *Le Père, Dieu et son mystère* (Paris: Cerf, 1988); Emmanuel Durand, *Le Père, Alpha et Oméga de la vie trinitaire* (Paris: Cerf, 2008). In English, there have been recent important dissertations that have developed into books: Margaret Turek, *Toward a Theology of God the Father: Hans Urs von Balthasar's Theodramatic Approach* (New York: Peter Lang, 2001); John Baptist Ku, *God the Father in the Theology of St. Thomas Aquinas,* American Unviersity Studies (New York: Peter Lang, 2013; Widdicombe, *The Fatherhood of God.* As I discussed in the Introduction, Widdicombe's book is closest to this thesis in seeking to uncover the foundational theology of the fourth century for Christian understandings of the Fatherhood of God.

[2] *Summa Theologiae,* 1.8.4.

a character who is not central in terms of presence, yet nonetheless dominates indirectly through his specific background and relations with the 'main' characters.[3] The story is not about his character per se, but the story cannot be told without him and the intricate web of relations his character upholds. He looms over everything.

The fourth-century theologians considered in this thesis were alert to the reality that the Father reveals himself *in via*. That is to say, the incomprehensible Father does not present himself immediately within the economy of creation and revelation as a dominant protagonist. Therefore, while there is always an element of mystery to understanding each of the divine persons, it is especially the case, as we have seen, with the Father. Knowledge of him arises from the economy of his relations and acts manifest in the Son and Spirit, even while that knowledge will always stall in probing the exhaustive nature of those relations. It is 'up from' or 'behind' the Son and Spirit that one is led to a relative knowledge of the mysterious Father.

With the Father there is an issue of 'access'. When giving theological attention to the fatherhood of God, then, there is a search for what Emmanuel Durand calls "entry ways (les voies de accès)."[4] According to the pro-Nicene theologians investigated in this thesis, these entry ways must be accessed within the distinct relations shared by the Son, Spirit, and Father, and from these relations they 'build up' a theology of the Father. They discerned these relations to have a distinct shape or *taxis* established by the Father. In exploring the shape *and* tensions of those relations within their respective Trinitarian theologies, this thesis has sought 'tools' for understanding the fatherhood of God.

In Chapter 2, those tools were provided by Athanasius. While it was my conclusion that his focus on the Father-Son correlative (as well as aspects of his use of ἴδιος and παραδείγματα) caused more problems than it solved in relating the unity and the diversity in the Godhead, other elements of his Trinitarianism were more promising. When Athanasius turned to the divine movements of grace extending from the Trinity, he provided light on the order of this grace and how it flows from the order of divine life. Specifically, through his account we glimpsed the Father's gift of himself to the Son in order to establish an eternal relationality, a gift glimpsed through the light provided by the

[3] One thinks of Gandalf in the story of the Lord of the Rings, or Ben Kenobi in Star Wars. Both are characters who are often known through how others respond to them and how they affect key trajectories in the narrative.

[4] *Le Père, Alpha et Oméga*, 16.

Father's relationality gifted in redemption. Furthermore, through his pneumatology Athanasius sowed seeds within pro-Nicene thought that will dynamically relate to the Father and provide insight on his fatherhood. That said, Athanasius' thought does not provide much in the way of what is experienced in the relationality between the Father and the other divine persons, and his persistent recourse to the correlative curtails progress in coherently relating the Father to the unity and diversity of the Godhead.

With Hilary in chapter 3 we saw one tool that provided significant clarity and density to an account of fatherhood. His Trinitarian theology took shape based on the Father's relation to divine birth or generation, leading to the important concepts of the Father's capacity to give of himself and the inseparability of the divine works. Through the relational structure provided by his stress on the *nativitas,* Hilary opens 'space' for highlighting the personal, 'loving gift' of the Father which constitutes him as Father. At the same time, his thought introduces the tensions inherent in speaking of a Father whose 'ordered' gift produces elements of mutuality.

Chapters 4 and 5 bring this study to the highly developed tools provided by the thought of Cappadocian friends, Nazianzen and Basil. Both theologians highlight the importance of the Holy Spirit leading to a redemptive θεωρία that draws out further the Father's identity and place within the Trinity along with the communion he establishes. Nazianzen's consideration of what I have called the 'dynamic Father' pictures his self-giving quality caught within the timeless rhythms of Trinitarian life. As much as this provided understanding of the Father's fundamental shaping influence, the fluidity of Nazianzen's vision struggles to communicate significant content concerning divine fatherhood. I argue that Basil's highly integrative conceptual frameworks provide sturdier ways of accounting for the fatherhood of God, ways that cohere across theological anthropology, epistemology, spirituality, and Trinitarian theology. It is especially as Basil integrates spirituality with Trinitarian theology that his thought thickens the overall pro-Nicene account of fatherhood. Basil elegantly depicts the Father as the *terminus a quo* and *terminus ad quem* of a movement of grace that reaches inside worshippers by the Spirit. The Spirit then brings worshippers 'inside' the Trinity, who are then led 'up' in a return to the Father. This movement of grace mirrors the natural movements of the Spirit and Son as they return to their source, the Father.

With Basil, I argued his theology of fatherhood provided sharpness to mature pro-Nicene principles that are materializing within the fully Trinitarian theology of the latter-

half of the fourth century. Indeed, he draws upon and expands on these principles within his remarkably fresh and integrative account. What is learned is that to speak of the Father is to gesture toward the mysteries of God. These mysteries are manifest in the Father's capacity for a complete 'loving gift' seen 'first' in the generation of the Son. Yet, in the procession of the Spirit the gift is also discerned in such a way that returns to the Father. To see this gift as 'loving' is to draw from Hilary especially. It would press beyond the text found in Nazianen and Basil to say the same for them. However, it can be interpreted as there by way of implication if one understands the conceptual overlap of Christian love as a gift that goes forth and returns.[5] Indeed, a gift that 'returns' in the divine life through the Spirit, as it does in Basil's theology, appears to be ripe for further study within Trinitarian theology.

Another avenue for further research suggested by the conclusions of this thesis flows out the the fecundity of the Father seen in generation and procession. Because this fecundity does not draw attention to itself, but, as it were, pours itself into others, there is a mysterious element as we press into a deeper knowledge of his person where we are always led to that which recedes beyond our grasp. Lewis Ayres commented that the Father's person is "revealed as mystery, and in a manner that necessarily generates fruitful tensions in human speech."[6] Tension in speech is felt as we seek to describe the Father's primacy along with his enabling of unity, inseparability, and even co-inherence. This tension is furthered by a suggestion of pro-Nicene Trinitarian thought: that the Father is in some way reliant upon the Son and Spirit. This seems to be the natural conclusion of a Father who finds his perfection or completeness in others. That is, through the Father's 'loving gift' he reveals himself as Father, yet in doing so demonstrates his 'reliance' upon the other persons to decisively be who he is. Along with a more robust pneumatology thickening an account of fatherhood, this appears to be a fruitful implication of pro-Nicene thought awaiting further study.

The telling the story of the fatherhood of God in the fourth-century is indeed done *in via*—by way of understanding the Son and Spirit's respective relationships with him. The result is a primacy of the Father within the Godhead without the subordination of the Son or Spirit, a clear order without any 'ontological degradation' among the

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[5] See p. 133.

[6] "Into the Cloud of Witnesses," in *Rethinking Trinitarian Theology: Disputed Questions and Contemporary Issues in Trinitarian Theology,* ed. by Robert Woźniak and Guilio Maspero (London: T&T Clark, 2012), 22.

persons. The subjects of this study reveal unique strategies leading to an understanding of a Father who ensures the equality of the persons of the Godhead. As the Son and Spirit come from the Father, the Father communicates himself—he is completed, the Father is somehow perfected. So not only do the Son and Spirit find their eternal existence from the Father, the Father himself communicates who he is as one superabundant and fruitful.

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