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A Trinitarian Christology of the Fourth Word from the Cross

The *Commmunicatio Idiomatum*, the Modal Distinction, and the Forsakenness of Christ

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Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

2020

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Thomas Brand

Abstract

The fourth word from the cross, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' is the focus of this work. I exegete the fourth word in the context of the crucifixion narratives in the Gospels of Matthew and Mark and define ἐγκατέλιπές (forsaken) as left undefended. I describe the Christological doctrine of the communication of idioms and survey its application to the fourth word in Patristic, Scholastic, and Reformed writing, and wider literature up to the nineteenth century. I then argue for a modal distinction between person and nature in the Trinity with a focus on the theology of Thomas Aquinas. The Trinitarian and Christological explorations enable me to construct the following argument to which this thesis is a response. If Christ is forsaken by the Father, through the communication of idioms, God the Son is forsaken. The person of the Son is modally distinct from the divine nature. Therefore, the divine nature is forsaken at the fourth word. In my threefold response to the above argument I argue first that persons experience in and according to natures, and that persons, not natures, relate because divine persons are subsistent relations. Secondly, I argue that the mutual indwelling of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit in perichoresis continues unbroken at the fourth word. Thirdly, that according to the unity of the works of God *ad extra*, the Triune persons are united in will at the fourth word. My argument is chiefly built on arguments from Cyril of Alexandria, Bonaventure, and Aquinas. I defend my thesis in light of the Reformed doctrine of penal substitutionary atonement, against charges of Nestorianism, and against a counterargument from Social Trinitarianisms. My thesis aims to uphold historic orthodoxy in opposition to contemporary trends towards divine passibility.

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 acknowledged throughout.

Statement of Copyright

The copyright of this thesis rests with the author. No quotation from it should be published without the author's prior written consent and information derived from it should be acknowledged.

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Soli Deo Gloria.

For Natalie

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Introduction

Focus

Ὁ Θεός μου ὁ Θεός μου, εἰς τί ἐγκατέλιπές με;[1]

The fourth word, spoken by the dying Lord Jesus Christ from the cross in the Gospels of Matthew and Mark presents a profound mystery. The question that dominates this work is, what is meant by the fourth word in the context of Trinitarian theology and Christology?

My interpretation of the fourth word is grounded in exegesis of the crucifixion narrative in Mark's Gospel, with a focus on defining ἐγκατέλιπές in Mark 15:34. I offer an interpretation that accounts for the way that the fourth word is spoken by God the Son incarnate to God the Father: a Trinitarian interpretation. My reading understands the Trinitarian aspect of the fourth word through the lens of the communication of properties in Christology, and the distinction between person and nature in Trinitarian theology.

As the argument progresses, I draw these strands together to form an argument and question that must be answered if one is to assert an orthodox doctrine of God. I present the argument formally so that it can be seen in a simple and clear form.

(1) Christ is forsaken at the cross by the Father [Premise]

(2) Christ is God the Son incarnate [Premise]

(3) Whatever is experienced[2] by Christ's human or divine natures is predicated of the person of God the Son [Premise]

[1] 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' Mark 15:34.

[2] I use the word 'experience' minimally to denote a persons' contact with events. If p happens to X, then X experiences p.

Therefore

(4) The person of God the Son is forsaken at the cross [From (1), (2), & (3)]

(5) The distinction between divine persons and the divine nature is modal [Premise]

Therefore

(6) The divine nature is forsaken at the cross [From (4) & (5)]

The most significant implication of (6) is that divine impassibility and simplicity, two central tenets of historic orthodoxy, cannot hold. The central task of the present work is to respond to this argument by providing an orthodox Trinitarian and Christological reading of the fourth word that does justice to the seriousness of the utterance in the context of the crucifixion narrative. I aim to achieve this by building a lattice work of three interlocking elements. The first is exegesis of the fourth word; which corresponds with premise (1). The second Christological element concerns the hypostatic union and the communication of properties; which corresponds with premises (2), (3), and (4). The third Trinitarian element concerns the modal distinction between person and nature in the Trinity; which corresponds with premises (5), and (6). My interpretation aims to hold Trinitarian theology and Christology together.

I demonstrate that my interpretation has not previously been discussed, although it complements many of the diverse readings found in Patristic, Scholastic, and Reformed comment. I argue that my Trinitarian and Christological interpretation is the only one that fully takes into account that the Son incarnate addresses the Father.

My argument develops theological understanding of the Trinitarian persons in relation to one another, and in relation to the divine nature; and this has far reaching implications for theology. Although my interpretation of the fourth word does not contradict orthodox and

Reformed understanding of the cross of Christ, my interpretation, and the argument by which I reach it, are not found in theological literature on the cross of Christ.

Scope and Method

I refer to the utterance of the Lord Jesus Christ from the cross as the fourth word rather than the commonly used phrase 'the cry of dereliction,' because the latter connotes that the Lord Jesus was utterly abandoned in every sense. I argue that this is misleading, and therefore I refer to Christ's utterance as the fourth word; a label that is theologically neutral.

The main areas of theology that frame the present work and my interpretation of the fourth word are Trinitarian theology, Christology, and the doctrines of redemption. The breadth of ground covered by these mean that the implications reach to all areas of theology. The precision of the question, however, and its focus on the fourth word from the cross, directs the breadth of theology through a narrow lens; a lot of ground is covered by a very precise and specific question.

The sources and theologians that I refer to are from a broad range of traditions and historical eras. The argument is presented in the context of Patristic, Scholastic, and Reformed theology; and in opposition to current passibilist trends in contemporary theology. Although the theological range is broad, in discussing each theologian the scope of the discussion is limited to issues that pertain to the fourth word. The breadth is necessary to establish the various ways that the fourth word has been understood, and the uniqueness of my Trinitarian interpretation through the communication of properties.

I approach the question of the meaning of the fourth word from within the Reformed tradition as summarised by the Westminster Confession of Faith. My approach has

implications for the theology of the cross which forms the background of any interpretation of the fourth word; particularly my understanding of penal substitutionary atonement. My tradition also particularly shapes my understanding of the doctrines of God and the Scriptures.

Interpretations of Scripture

My proposed reading of the fourth word from the cross does not preclude other readings and interpretations of this deep vein of Scripture. The various Patristic readings bring richness to exegesis of the text; particularly the understanding of Christ's words as identifying with his people as their covenant head.

Augustine's expositions of the Psalms and in particular the fourth word at the opening of Psalm 22, demonstrates the importance of not only reading the Scriptures in their historical context, but also understanding the Scriptures in the light of the death, resurrection, and return of Christ.[3] Evidence for the presence of multiple readings of the Scriptures confirms the legitimacy of various interpretations of the fourth word, while at the same time highlighting the importance of a reading which explores the Trinitarian nature of the events of the cross of Christ.

Andrew Louth, using the notion of the tacit dimension in the sciences borrowed from Michael Polanyi, argues for the legitimacy of a rich variety of readings of scriptural texts. 'There is an awareness of the manifoldness of the truth and of our perception of it.'[4] Louth

[3] See Richard B. Hays, 'Reading Scripture in Light of the Resurrection,' in *The Art of Reading Scripture*, eds. Ellen F. Davis and Richard B. Hays (Cambridge: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2003), 232-238.

[4] Andrew Louth, *Discerning the Mystery* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), 59.

claims that the mystery of human epistemology in the sciences is applicable to theological understanding of the Scriptures, thereby allowing for various interpretations of a text.

Through exegesis of the crucifixion narratives in the Gospels, I demonstrate the presence of these manifold readings; none of which contradicts the others, but complements. None of the readings that I discuss explores the relations between the Father and the Son at the fourth word using the *communicatio idiomatum* and the modal distinction between person and nature in the Trinity.

If it is to be successful, my suggestion must be able to respond to a significant counterargument based on two observations. First, although the fourth word is the only word from the cross that is repeated in more than one of the Gospels, no comment or explanation is offered as to its meaning in either the Gospels of Matthew and Mark themselves, or in the rest of the New Testament documents. Secondly, the key authorities that I examine from the Patristic era do not read the fourth word in the way that I suggest. The counterargument to which my reading must respond is then: why do the Patristic authors not exegete the cry in terms of the *communicatio idiomatum* and the doctrine of the Trinity? It may be added that the Church Fathers simply echo the silence of the New Testament, this is not, however, the case as will be made clear in my survey in chapter 2. The Church Fathers are not reticent to comment on the fourth word, rather they refrain from comment involving the *communicatio idiomatum* and the cry. Therefore, it may be suggested that the Patristic voices regarded a reading of the fourth word involving the Triune persons as too exegetically and theologically problematic and therefore they did not pursue it.

The silence of Patristic voices on this point is partly due to the absence of polemical context in their writings for this specific theological question. Whilst Trinitarian theology was defined with increasing precision, and Christological controversies precipitated

increasing clarity in the Patristics, both subjects were developed in the context of polemical discourse. Both Cyril of Alexandria and Maximus the Confessor consider the incarnation, the hypostatic union, and the death of Christ on the cross to be mysteries beyond our ability fully to comprehend. Both Cyril and Maximus are noteworthy for their theological exactitude and precision on the incarnation and the hypostatic union; therefore, acknowledgement of theological mystery appears not to be mutually exclusive with theological accuracy in the writings of Cyril and Maximus. Cyril's theological precision lessens in his comments on the fourth word.

If the Patristic voices do not apply the *communicatio idiomatum* to the fourth word because they regarded such a reading as too problematic, one would expect this objection to be noted in the Patristic sources. To my knowledge this objection is not raised by any of the Church Fathers who comment on the fourth word.

The concern to guard the mystery of the fourth word is the most significant Patristic counterargument to the reading that I submit, and it is necessary to respond to it directly. Divine impassibility was not a frequently disputed doctrine in the early centuries after the apostles and so there was no polemical reason to state the doctrine positively in the context of the fourth word. This is not the case in contemporary theology since the last decade of the nineteenth century and the increasing trend towards positing divine passibility.[5] The influence of Jürgen Moltmann's development of the *theologia crucis* is a clear example in this trend.[6]

[5] Brandon F. Smith and James M. Renihan provide an informative survey and discussion. They assert, 'The modern era has increasingly regarded divine impassibility with disinterest and outright disdain. For the better part of the last two centuries the orthodox consensus has been slowly eroding, to the point that, as it stands today, this particular doctrine is a byword for archaic and mistaken theology in both academic and ecclesiastical circles. Brandon F. Smith and James M. Renihan, "Historical Theology Survey of the Doctrine of Divine Impassibility: The Modern Era." In *Confessing the Impassible God: The Biblical, Classical, and Confesional Doctrine of Divine Impassibility*, ed., Ronald S. Baines et al. (Palmdale, CA: RBAP, 2015), 224.

[6] For Moltmann's discussion of the central points of his *theologia crucis* see, Jürgen Moltmann, *History and the Triune God*, trans. John Bowden (St Ives: SCM, 1991), 172-174.

I explore various theological positions on the mystery of the cross in terms of the limits of precision in the application of the *communicatio idiomatum* to the death of Christ and the fourth word. My purpose in this thesis is to explore the possibility of greater precision in this area. This purpose has to contend with less specific statements from great theologians. I do not claim either that the reserve of these theologians concerning the line of mystery is misplaced, or that they lacked understanding of this mystery revealed in Scripture. Instead I submit a third option that the polemical context in which these theologians wrote did not value greater precision concerning the fourth word and the *communicatio idiomatum* and the Trinitarian dynamics, as an avenue of inquiry which would be of use in refuting contemporary heresy and error.

I argue that my reading of the fourth word does not contradict other orthodox and Reformed readings, but my survey of the literature demonstrates that my interpretation has not been articulated previously. If this is the case the question must now be asked: why has my reading not previously been articulated? The difficulty of the question is compounded by the argument that my interpretation is the only one that accounts for the Trinitarian framework of the fourth word understood as spoken by Christ, who is God the Son incarnate, to the Father. I suggest three possible answers to the question, all of which concern theological method.

First, Trinitarian theology, Christology, and redemption are three major heads of theology; the contents of these branches of theology are usually treated separately. The result of the methodological and structural separation is that exploration of the work of Christ is usually isolated in varying degrees from exploration of the person of Christ. The same is true of the doctrine of the person of Christ, which is usually treated separately from the doctrine of the Trinity. When theologians consider the Lord Jesus Christ's fourth word from the cross, it is in the immediate context of the work of redemption, and often not considered in the

wider context of the divinity of Christ and the triunity of the Godhead.[7] This first response to the question, why has my reading not previously been articulated, involves a broad claim. The argument can only be justified in light of the survey of writings on the fourth word.

Secondly, in my survey there are a number of points at which theologians could discuss the Trinitarian framework of the cross and the communication of idioms in relation to the fourth word, but stop short. In a number of cases this could be because of an unwillingness to approach the mystery of the cross at the fourth word. If this were the case, one would expect the author to state that he is not exploring the Trinitarian aspect of the fourth word out of reverence as part of his theological method, but the methodological statement is not made. Therefore, the claim that methodological reverence prevented further discussion of the fourth word is an argument from silence.

Thirdly, my survey of interpretation of the fourth word draws attention to the theological and polemical contexts. The neo-Chalcedonian writings[8] of the sixth century, around the time of the Second Council of Constantinople (553), focus polemical discussion on the suffering of Christ. The establishment of orthodoxy in this period focused on the Word incarnate and his death on the cross; the Trinitarian relations that I focus on in my reading were not so significant. In the survey I apply the same argument to the polemical contexts of theologians in other eras. The absence of polemical context in the eras I survey results in lack of theological motivation to explore the reading of the fourth word outlined in this work.

[7] One might offer the counter argument that in earlier eras, prior to the division of theology under various loci, my argument is no longer valid. In response to the counter argument I argue that sustained and focused discussion of the work of redemption only developed in the eleventh century from the influence of Anselm. At this point in the history of theology, the structure of theology was more fixed. For further discussion of the development of the doctrines of redemption see my outline below in chapter 8.

[8] John the Grammarian, Ephrem of Antioch, and Leontius of Jerusalem are among the most prominent neo-Chalcedonian authors. The main publicists were a group of Scythian monks, under the leadership of Archimandrite John Maxentius, who came to Constantinople with the Theopaschite Confession. For discussion and definition of neo-Chalcedonianism see Richard Price, *The Acts of the Council of Constantinople of 553* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2012), 71-73.

In light of the above three arguments I submit that the apparent novelty of my interpretation of the fourth word is not a methodological departure from historic orthodoxy which so respects the mystery inherent in theology.[9] Instead I argue that the present work takes the theological building blocks established in the Patristic, Scholastic, and Reformed eras, and applies them more fully to the cross of Christ, and particularly to the fourth word. The way that this application is achieved sheds further light on the theological building blocks themselves, and their relative significance.

Provenance and Context of the Study

A Trinitarian understanding of the cross is vital in order to establish a scriptural doctrine of the atonement in opposition to Richard Swinburne's comment that 'it is possible to discuss redemption without needing to analyse what is meant by the doctrine that God is three persons in one substance.'[10] John Webster argues against Swinburne that a Trinitarian understanding of the Gospel narratives and of the cross is only possible if the identity of Jesus Christ is properly understood. 'Trinitarian doctrine shows who indeed it is that bears our griefs, whose chastisement it is that makes us whole.'[11] I add to Webster's list the question: who uttered the fourth word from the cross, and to whom? Webster rightly argues that the dogmatic location of soteriology must be Trinitarian theology, specifically the works of God *ad extra*, if it is to be properly scriptural. He notes the tendency within contemporary

[9] Acknowledgement of the mystery of theology, and particularly of the doctrine of God is not foreign to Reformed theology. Herman Bavinck states: 'Mystery is the lifeblood of dogmatics. . . In truth, the knowledge that God has revealed of himself in nature and Scripture far surpasses human imagination and understanding. In that sense it is all mystery with which the science of dogmatics is concerned, for it does not deal with finite creatures, but from beginning to end looks past all creatures and focuses on the eternal and infinite One himself.' Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics, Volume 2* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker, 2008), 29.

[10] Richard Swinburne, *Responsibility and Atonement* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 152.

[11] John Webster, *God Without Measure: Working Papers in Christian Theology, Volume I: God and the Works of God* (London: T&T Clark, 2016), 155.

Reformed theology to isolate soteriology and attributes this tendency to the influence of Kantian Christology and epistemology.[12] In my central thesis I contend that a Trinitarian interpretation of the fourth word is significant because it clearly operates within a theological framework that places soteriology within Trinitarian theology.

Within the Reformed tradition particularly, and the evangelical tradition more generally, there is much confusion over the meaning of the fourth word in popular theology. In this work I argue that the confusion is due to a theological trend away from the historic doctrine of divine impassibility, since the end of the nineteenth century. In contemporary theology the post-war writings of Jürgen Moltmann are highly influential.

There are several recent contributions to the debate over the meaning of the fourth word within the Reformed Tradition[13] that I interact with throughout the present work. These include, but are not limited to, Thomas H. McCall, *Forsaken: The Trinity and the Cross, and Why it Matters*.[14] McCall reaches conclusions that are similar to the conclusions of the present work, but he does not explore either the *communicatio idiomatum* or the modal distinction, as means for reaching the conclusion and avoiding error. Secondly, in *Christ Crucified: Understanding the Atonement*;[15] Donald Macleod exegetes the seven words from the cross helpfully, although the body of the book is theologically similar to John Stott's *The*

[12] Webster, *Measure*, 161-167. Webster interacts with E. Jüngel, *Justification: The Heart of the Christian Faith* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2001). He suggests that Jüngel is a theologian who exemplifies the tendency to isolate soteriology from Trinitarian theology. In discussing the doctrine of justification, Webster states, 'What makes the claims problematic, however, is not the formal place accorded to the doctrine of justification but rather its material superordination to all other doctrines, which situates justification in a position which it is not suited to occupy and places upon it demands which it cannot be expected to meet.' Webster, *Measure*, 169. He argues that only the doctrine of the Trinity can bear the weight of the central place in dogmatics.

[13] Beyond the Reformed tradition there are also several contributions. Of particular note is Thomas Joseph White, *The Incarnate Lord: A Thomistic Study in Christology* (Washington: Catholic University of America, 2017), 308-339. White contrasts evangelical comment on the fourth word with the Catholic teaching that even at the cross Christ possessed 'the beatific vision in the heights of his soul' 309. I interact with White more in chapter 2.

[14] Thomas H. McCall, *Forsaken: The Trinity and the Cross, and Why it Matters* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2012).

[15] Donald Macleod, *Christ Crucified: Understanding the Atonement* (Nottingham: IVP, 2014).

Cross of Christ,[16] regarding the suffering of God in the suffering of Christ, and God's solidarity with the suffering of his creatures. Although Macleod writes from within the Reformed tradition, his theological assertions are not in line with historic orthodoxy. Thirdly, Paul Wells, 'The Cry of Dereliction: The Beloved Son Cursed and Condemned,' in *The Forgotten Christ: Exploring the Majesty and Mystery of God Incarnate*.[17] Wells' account of the seven utterances from the cross leads to a theological treatment of the fourth word that clearly asserts the continued Triune relations while attempting to deal with the intensity of the fourth word. Partly because of the short length of the article, Wells does not sufficiently address the theological issues that undergird a Trinitarian theology and Christology of the fourth word. Fourthly, Bruce D. Marshall, 'The Dereliction of Christ and the Impassibility of God,' in *Divine Impassibility and the Mystery of Human Suffering*.[18] Marshall's article provides a strong and orthodox reading of the fourth word. He states the ongoing perichoretic relations of the persons of the Trinity in love, and he argues for divine impassibility in Christ's divine nature, but he does not discuss the modal distinction between person and nature that enables a fuller Trinitarian reading of the fourth word. None of these works engages with the fourth word in a way that is sufficiently Trinitarian.

My intention in writing this work is twofold. First, I hope to offer a Trinitarian interpretation of the fourth word that is faithful to the Scriptures and historic orthodoxy. Secondly, that the work may serve as a corrective to erroneous views of the fourth word, and that such views may be seen to be incorrect because they rest on faulty foundations.

[16] John Stott, *The Cross of Christ* (London: IVP, 1995).

[17] Paul Wells, 'The Cry of Dereliction: The Beloved Son Cursed and Condemned,' in *The Forgotten Christ: Exploring the Majesty and Mystery of God Incarnate*, ed. Stephen Clark (Nottingham: Apollos, 2008).

[18] Bruce D. Marshall, 'The Dereliction of Christ and the Impassibility of God,' in *Divine Impassibility and the Mystery of Human Suffering*, ed. James F. Keating and Thomas Joseph White (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009).

Outline of the Work

As I work toward my interpretation of the fourth word, I build a lattice work of three interlocking elements. Each element is focused on a question, the answer to which forms part of my Trinitarian interpretation of the fourth word. The first element in the first chapter of Part I is exegetical, and asks what is the meaning of ἐγκατέλιπές in Mark 15:34 in the context of the crucifixion narrative of Mark's Gospel?

The second element in chapter two of Part I is Christological, and asks what is the significance of Christology for the fourth word? The question focuses on the *communicatio idiomatum*, whereby whatever is true of Christ's human or divine natures is predicated of the person of the Son. In order to answer the question, I explore the doctrines of the hypostatic union and the *communicatio idiomatum* before surveying theologians' examination of the fourth word in relation to Trinitarian theology and Christology. The survey also traces the historical development of the doctrines of the hypostatic union and the *communicatio idiomatum* and I argue for a connection between the person and nature distinction, and the communication of idioms.

The third element in chapters three to six in Part II is Trinitarian, and asks how can the fourth word be understood with reference to the *communicatio idiomatum* and the modal distinction between person and nature in the Trinity? In these chapters I argue for an orthodox understanding of perichoresis in connection with the fourth word. I then outline the historical trend towards divine passibility in philosophy and theology. This is followed by exploration of the distinctions between persons and nature in the Trinity.

At this point, the interlocking lattice work of the three theological elements has been constructed, and the building blocks needed to articulate my Trinitarian and Christological

reading of the fourth word are in place. Chapter six is focused on the central argument of this work. I respond fully to the question contained in the formal argument set out above.

Part III engages various objections to my Trinitarian and Christological interpretation of the fourth word. These objections concern Nestorianism, penal substitutionary atonement, and the concept of self in Social Trinitarianisms. The work concludes by highlighting methodological barriers to a Trinitarian Christology and a Christological and Trinitarian doctrine of the cross. I also note some implications of my central argument for contemporary theology.

I. Trinity and Incarnation: What is the Significance of Christology for the Fourth Word?

1. What is the Meaning of ἐγκατέλιπές? An Exegesis of the Fourth Word

The accounts of the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ in the four Gospels present seven sayings or 'words' uttered from the cross. The Gospels of Matthew and Mark provide only one saying, which is generally considered to be the fourth word.

Ὁ Θεός μου ὁ Θεός μου, εἰς τί ἐγκατέλιπές με;

The search for the Trinitarian meaning of the fourth word from the cross must begin with exegesis of the Scriptures, and any systematic consideration of the fourth word must be informed by a careful reading of God's word. In what follows I survey the Gospel accounts of the crucifixion and then focus on exegesis of the fourth word in Mark 15:34.[1] My aim is to clarify the way in which the Greek word ἐγκατέλιπές is used in the context of Mark 15:34. The clarification of the meaning of ἐγκατέλιπές will form the first element of the interlocking lattice work from which to develop a Trinitarian interpretation of the fourth word.

Before I exegete the text, I overview the context of the crucifixion account and make six preliminary observations on the narrative and its setting within the Scriptures. First, the relation of the fourth word to the other six words from the cross; secondly, the utterance of the fourth word in a loud voice; thirdly, the darkness and the loud voice; fourthly, the relation of the cry to Psalm 22; fifthly, the covenantal aspect of the cry; and sixthly, the absence of mention of the cry in the remainder of the New Testament. I note the aspects of each

[1] Methodologically I focus attention on the Gospel of Mark to avoid unnecessary repetition, because the text in the accounts of the death of Christ are directly parallel and almost identical, with a few small exceptions. When commentaries on Matthew and Mark differ significantly, I mention both Gospels. It is not relevant to discuss the diachronic priority of either of the Gospels.

observation that influence the interpretation of the fourth word. Following these observations, I turn to a brief study of other occurrences of ἐγκατέλιπές; this serves as a context in which to offer a definition of the word based on the way the Scriptures use it.

The Seven Words from the Cross

The fourth word is one of seven utterances from the cross in the four Gospel narratives. Although the order of these utterances is not universally agreed, I present the most common interpretation in modern commentaries represented in the work of Kurt Aland.[2] This is so I can present them as a unified whole; I attach little exegetical importance to the chronological reconstruction, besides the assertion that the seventh word is the final verbal utterance of the Lord Jesus Christ before his death.[3] It is significant that the seventh word appears last in the reconstruction based on all four Gospels because the crucifixion account ends with Christ addressing God as his Father. That must be balanced, however, by the recording of only one word from the cross in two out of four of the Gospels.

1. 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do' (Luke 23:34).
2. 'Today you will be with me in Paradise' (Luke 23:43).
3. 'Woman, behold your son . . . behold your mother' (John 19:26, 27).
4. 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' (Matthew 27:46; Mark 15:34).
5. 'I thirst' (John 19:28).
6. 'It is finished' (John 19:30).
7. 'Father, into your hands I commit my spirit' (Luke 23:46).

[2] K. Aland, *Synopsis of the Four Gospels* (Stuttgart: United Bible Societies, 1982), 316-322.

[3] Hans Urs von Balthasar asserts that the fourth word is 'relativised to the position of the "fourth word" by an arbitrary decision about ordering in a harmonisation of the gospels.' Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Mysterium Paschale*, trans. Aidan Nichols (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1990), 125.

The fourth word appears in this order as the central word from the cross. It is the only word found in more than one Gospel account. The cry appears only in the first two synoptic Gospels: Matthew and Mark. Both Gospels transliterate the fourth word into Greek and then provide a translation.[4] William Kenneally notes that the attempt to ascertain the original language of the utterance of the fourth word is ultimately 'speculative and open to dispute.'[5] Both Matthew and Mark report the fourth word as the final verbal utterance of the Lord before his death (Matthew 27:46-50; Mark 15:34-37).

After the hours of darkness in the Gospel of Luke, the only recorded words of Jesus are addressed to God as Father in a loud voice.[6] 'Father, into your hands I commit my spirit' (Luke 23:46). Christ's words are a direct quotation from Psalm 31:5, but Jesus adds the first word, which addresses the Psalm to his Father.[7] The fourth word is unique as the only word addressed to God which does not invoke God as Father.[8] The Johannine material does not record the hours of darkness. The words of Christ from the cross recorded by John address

[4] Matthew changes the Aramaic *Eloi* to the Hebrew *Eli*. Mark uses the actual word spoken by the Lord Jesus Christ followed by the Greek translation at three points in his Gospel. The first two occur at the raising of Jairus' daughter (Mark 5:41); and in the garden of Gethsemane, where Mark records Jesus' use of the Aramaic word *Abba* (Mark 14:36).

[5] Kenneally surveys the three main opinions and suggests that the most probable explanation is that the cry was originally spoken in Aramaic. See William J. Kenneally, 'Eli, Eli, Lamma Sabacthani?,' *The Catholic Biblical Association* Vol. 8, no. 2 (April 1946): 125. John Gill argues that the words are 'partly Hebrew, and partly Chaldee; the three first are Hebrew, and the last Chaldee, substituted in the room of *Azabthani*.' John Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testatments Volume 7 of 9* (Arkansas: The Baptist Standard Bearer, 2006), 363.

[6] φωνη μεγάλη

[7] The word used by Christ is Πάτερ. This is the same word that Mark uses to translate the Aramaic *Abba* with which Christ prays to his Father in Gethsemane (Mark 14:36).

[8] Donald Macleod comments, 'At the ninth hour, Abba was not there, and Jesus can only say "Eloi!" God is certainly there, but not as Abba. There is now no sense of his own divine sonship.' Macleod, *Crucified*, 48. Macleod's comment highlights something of the significance of Christ's address to God as 'My God' rather than Father. Macleod serves as a further example of the implicit theological assumption that the filial relation of the Son to the Father is compromised at the fourth word, although Macleod refers to the sense of divine sonship. Therefore, it may be suggested that Macleod is not arguing for the compromise of the filial relationship. Macleod's comments on the fourth word frequently demonstrate his underlying emphasis on the suffering of the Father in the forsaking of the Son; the separation of the Father and the Son at the cross (22; 49-52); and comments which deny divine impassibility (52; 128). Macleod's arguments are weakened by his consistent dependence on the *imago dei* to anthropomorphise God by assuming that God's suffering is comparable with human suffering.

Mary and the apostle (John 19:26-27); express thirst (John 19:28); and the final triumphant utterance 'It is finished' (John 19:30).

The Darkness and the Loud Voice

The hours of darkness from the sixth hour (12:00) to the ninth hour (15:00), recorded by the synoptic Gospels, are important for understanding the fourth word. The darkness has strong interpretative implications for a reading which focuses on the judgement of Christ by the Father at the cross. During the hours of darkness, the mockery ceases as the supernatural darkness appears to draw a veil over the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross.[9]

The three hours of darkness correspond with the three days of darkness over the land of Egypt before the Passover and the exodus from Egypt (Exodus 10:21-29). Darkness therefore displays God's judgement on sin. The darkness, in connection with the Exodus narrative, points to Christ as the sacrificial Passover lamb. Additionally, the darkness corresponds with the Old Testament prophecies concerning the judgement of God and the Day of the Lord (Jeremiah 15:9; Joel 2:2, 10, 31; Amos 8:9; Zephaniah 1:15). The judgement[10] of God during the hours of darkness falls on sin borne by Christ at the cross (cf. 1 Peter 2:24; 3:18). Hans Urs von Balthasar acknowledges this assessment. 'The Cross is the full achievement of the divine judgement on "sin" summed up, dragged into the daylight and suffered through in the Son. Moreover, the sending of the Son in "sinful flesh" took place

[9] I will not comment on the temporal duration of the forsakenness beyond saying that at the outer limit it was certainly within the hours of darkness. The notion of the Father forsaking Christ for a particular amount of time seems intrinsically limited to the human perspective. Thinking about the issue of the temporal forsaking of Christ from the perspective of eternity raises many intricate questions which are beyond the purpose of the present discussion of the fourth word.

[10] In the book of Job darkness is seen as symbolic of God's judgement and of forsakenness by God. In his initial lament, Job calls for darkness to cover the day on which he was born. This appears to be for two reasons. First, so that the day may be forgotten; secondly, so that he may be hidden from God's judgement and the suffering which it brings (Job 3:1-6).

only so as to make it possible to "condemn . . . sin in the flesh".'[11] The darkness appears to obscure this act of judgement from human view. In chapter 8 I discuss the doctrine of penal substitution in relation to the judgement of the cross.

Matthew and Mark record a lot of speech before the hours of darkness. The crucified Jesus is mocked by those passing by (Mark 15:29); and by the chief priests and the scribes (Mark 15:30; Matthew 27:41 includes the elders); and the robbers crucified with Jesus (Mark 15:32). During the three hours of darkness, Matthew and Mark do not record any speech.[12] Both Matthew and Mark report that the three hours of darkness end with Christ's utterance of the fourth word in a φωνη μεγάλη.

In his homilies on the Gospel of Matthew, Origen notes the powerful voice (*magnam vocem*) with which Christ addresses God, claiming that the power of the voice attests that in the fourth word Christ speaks as God the Son incarnate. In the context of Thomas Aquinas' approving quotation of Origen, Bruce Marshall observes, 'Even here, where the fact lies most hidden, he speaks as the Father's only-begotten Son.'[13]

Some bystanders[14] misunderstand the fourth word and one offers Jesus a drink (Mark 15:36).[15] Mark 15:37 then records that Jesus cries out again in a φωνη μεγάλη and breathes his last. Mark notes that the way in which Jesus breathed his last causes the centurion to state,

[11] Von Balthasar, *Mysterium,* 118.

[12] Luke 23:44-45 speaks of the darkness and seems to connect the darkness with the tearing of the Temple curtain. Luke does not record any speech during the three hours.

[13] Marshall, 'Dereliction,' 276. I note Marshall's comments in light of the loud voice with which the fourth word is uttered; I will later elucidate this more fully and carefully concerning the *communicatio idiomatum* and the cry.

[14] Possibly those who did not understand Hebrew or Aramaic, such as the soldiers.

[15] This event corresponds with John 19:28-29, which makes it clear that the reed used to offer Jesus a drink is a hyssop branch. The soteriological significance of hyssop is revealed in Exodus 12:22 where it is used to apply the blood of the lamb to the doorposts. King David also petitions the Lord in his penitential Psalm, 'purify me with hyssop, and I shall be clean.' Psalm 51:7. Hyssop has many other uses in the Old Testament, particularly the cleansing of leprosy in Leviticus. In Hebrews 9:18-20 the author states that hyssop was used to apply the blood of the covenant. The Hebrews passage links hyssop most closely with blood rather than ritual cleansing.

'Truly this man was the Son of God' (Mark 15:39). The lack of oxygen in Christ's blood and tissue, and the extreme difficulty in breathing caused by crucifixion, would have made crying out in a loud voice unheard of so late in Roman crucifixions.[16] It is this reason combined with the events of Christ's crucifixion that lead to the centurion's statement. The text and the order of events in Matthew and Mark imply that Christ is the first to speak after the darkness, and that the utterance of the fourth word in a loud voice coincides with the return of light. The striking imagery is picked up by Aquinas, who observes that as Christ is the first to speak after the hours of darkness, he is making it clear that he is responsible for the miracle of the darkness.[17] Klaas Schilder concurs with Aquinas. 'His utterance rent the clouds and again pushed back the sun. . . His crying aloud with a loud voice was an extreme demand on that voice. In this portentous hour the highest demands on exertion possible to human nature were given outward expression.'[18] The deity of Christ is in some sense displayed in the way the darkness ends, and it is also displayed in the beginning of the darkness. In Exodus 10:21, the Lord brings about the darkness by commanding Moses to stretch out his hand toward the sky. Correspondingly, at the cross, Christ's hands are stretched out towards the sky in crucifixion from the third hour, and at the sixth hour darkness falls over the land for three hours. That Moses and Christ both stretch out their arms at the onset of darkness is not necessarily a sign of Christ's deity in itself, but it is a notable parallel that gives further weight to other aspects of the narrative that point to Christ's deity.

[16] W. Reid Litchfield, 'The Search for the Physical Cause of Jesus Christ's Death,' *Brigham Young University Studies* 37, no. 4 (1997): 96.

[17] Thomas Aquinas, *Catena Aurea Commentary on the Four Gospels Collected out of the works of the Fathers by St. Thomas Aquinas. Vol. 1. St. Matthew* (London: Baronius Press, 2009), 957. Aquinas compares the way that the darkness in Egypt is brought about when Moses is commanded by the Lord to stretch out his hand to the sky (Exodus 10:21), to Christ's arms stretched out on the cross. Thomas Aquinas, *Catena Aurea Commentary on the Four Gospels Collected out of the works of the Fathers by St. Thomas Aquinas. Vol. 1. St. Matthew* (London: Baronius Press, 2009), 956.

[18] Klaas Schilder, *Christ Crucified, Vol. 3*, trans, Henry Zylstra (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker, 1979), 393-394.

If my exegetical comments on the hours of darkness and the fourth word are correct, and if Aquinas and Schilder's assertions are accurate, the end of the darkness shrouds the event in supernatural mystery. For this reason Schilder writes, 'we shall be able to "comprehend" nothing of what we say now. We shall not be able to "explain the content of the fourth utterance from the cross, at least, not the essence of it.'[19] My exegesis has also demonstrated that the Gospels allude to Christ's deity even when the darkness of judgement falls, and the silence veils the cross in mystery.

The Relation of the Fourth Word to Psalm 22

The fourth word is a quotation from Psalm 22:1.[20] Macleod writes of Christ's words, 'Even he himself had to appropriate the words of the psalmist, as if he could find no words of his own; and perhaps no human words could express what his 'hell' meant.'[21] An appreciation of the relationship between the first verse and the entire Psalm must inform interpretation of the cry, but extensive discussion of this relationship is beyond the scope of this thesis. It is important to note the observations of Joel Marcus on this relationship. Marcus argues that the

[19] Schilder, *Crucified*, 394.

[20] Although it is clear that Christ is quoting Psalm 22:1, because the crucifixion occurred after the composition of Psalm 22, there is a prophetic sense in which David, as a prophet, was 'quoting' Christ. Aquinas offers similar teaching when he states, 'Thus the Psalm speaks figuratively about David, nevertheless it is especially referred to Christ in a literal sense.' Thomas Aquinas, Psalm 21, a, trans. Stephen Loughlin. *The Aquinas Translation Project*, https://www.desales.edu/~philtheo/loughlin/ATP/index.html. I am grateful to John Orchard for helping me think through this aspect of the relation between Psalm 22:1 and the fourth word.

[21] Macleod, *Crucified*, 48. Macleod's comments are typical of the view that Psalm 22 primarily concerns David, and only points to Christ secondarily. Matthew W. Bates comments, 'The earliest church did not believe that this psalm was really about David's (or corporate Israel's) suffering because they believed that David's significance here was his prophetic capacity – that he was a willing and able prophet who had taken on a character, and this he had spoken in the prosopon of the future Christ.' Matthew W. Bates, *The Birth of the Trinity: Jesus, God, and Spirit in New Testament and Early Christian Interpretation of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 127. Bates refers to Justin Martyr as the principle example. St. Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho*, trans. Thomas B Falls (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press), Chapters 97–106.

linear events presented in Psalm 22[22] occur in approximately the reverse order at the cross.[23] Paul Wells writes, 'It is as though the Father were leading the Son via the events of the passion backward through the Psalm to its dramatic opening verse. . . When Jesus cried out the first verse of the Psalm, he knew he had reached the end.'[24] Von Balthasar asserts the primacy of the fourth word, and states that it should not be interpreted as the beginning of a recitation of Psalm 22 'which finishes with the glorification of the suffering individual and insists on being interpreted within its own limits.'[25] Von Balthasar offers no evidence for his claim at this point. I refer to it in order to demonstrate the varying degrees of importance attached to the interpretation of the fourth word as a recitation or quotation. Marcus' reverse parallel reconstruction of the fourth word and Psalm 22 is, however, a strong argument against von Balthasar's assertion. Therefore from this evidence, I argue that Christ's quotation of the first verse of Psalm 22 denotes his awareness of the full content of the Psalm, and its application to the events of the crucifixion.

Matthew W. Bates speaks about Christ's quotation of Psalm 22:1 in terms of what he calls a 'theodramatic performance.' From Bates' discussion of early Christian interpretation of the fourth word and Psalm 22, he suggests, 'Might it be that Jesus was *above all* consciously stepping into . . . a theodramatic vision, uttering the first lines of a well known, perhaps even a long-rehearsed script?' In light of this Bates argues, 'Jesus knew that although the Father had really abandoned him unto death, he also recognised that he had not really left him, and he trusted in the midst of his suffering, expecting rescue after the grave, rescue

[22] The division of Christ's garments (Mark 15:24/Psalm 22:18); the mockery (Mark 15:29/Psalm 22:7); the statement 'Save yourself' (Mark 15:30-31/Psalm 22:8); the reviling (Mark 15:32/Psalm 22:6); the fourth word (Mark 15:34/Psalm 22:1).

[23] Joel Marcus, *The Way of the Lord: Christological Exegesis of the Old Testament in the Gospel of Mark* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1992), 175.

[24] Paul Wells, 'The Cry of Dereliction: The Beloved Son Cursed and Condemned,' in *The Forgotten Christ: Exploring the Majesty and Mystery of God Incarnate,* ed. Stephen Clark (Nottingham: Apollos, 2008), 113.

[25] Von Balthasar, *Mysterium,* 125.

which he anticipated would culminate in praise.'[26] Bates treats Psalm 22 as the script of a play of which Christ is aware. Bates argues that Christ self-consciously plays his part in the play. Although Bates does not intend to minimise the complexity of the cross, in his suggestion that Christ is acting out the script of Psalm 22, Bates appears to divert attention from the difficult problems in the fourth word. Bates hints at many questions that are raised by the fourth word, including questions about the nature of intra-Trinitarian relations,[27] but his focus on the script of Psalm 22 prevents him from fully unpacking these questions.

In my definition of the word forsaken below I focus on the Greek word ἐγκατέλιπές used by Matthew and Mark to translate the Aramaic and Hebrew spoken by Christ as a quotation from the Hebrew of Psalm 22:1.[28] The Hebrew word used by Matthew is **עָזַבְתָּנִי,** the root of which means to leave, leave off, forsake. I focus attention on the Greek because it is the same in Matthew and Mark, but the Aramaic and Hebrew quotations in the two Gospels are slightly different. The use of the Hebrew and Greek words is almost identical, but the Old Testament usage and semantic range of the Hebrew sheds light on its occurrence in Psalm 22:1, and therefore on its translation into the Greek in the fourth word.[29]

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[26] Bates, *Trinity*, 127-134. Italics mine.

[27] Bates interestingly affirms that the fourth word teaches us 'something significant about the raw, edgy, surprisingly candid intimacy of expression that is permitted between the divine persons within the Godhead – even if within a constructive or systematic approach, when moving from a consideration of the economic Trinity to the immanent, this "conversation" must be treated as an imprecise anthropomorphic (but nonetheless God-given!) metaphor for a higher reality.' Bates, *Trinity*, 134.

[28] **אֵלִי אֵלִי, לָמָה עֲזַבְתָּנִי**

[29] The root word is used in many other places in the Old Testament. The limited semantic range clarifies the definition and understanding of the Hebrew and Greek words in my interpretation of the fourth word. Koehler and Baumgartner present a list of instances and a brief explanation of the context. Genesis 28:15 God promising not to forsake Jacob; Exodus 23:5 forbidding to abandon the ass of an enemy, when the ass is in need; Deuteronomy 12:19 not abandoning the Levite; Deuteronomy 28:20 the Lord's curse on Israel when they forsake him; Deuteronomy 29:24 the opinion of observers as to why Israel is judged , for forsaking the covenant; 1 Samuel 31:7 those who abandoned cities which were then occupied by the Philistines; 1 Kings 12:8,13 Rehoboam who abandoned the counsel of the old men; 1 Kings 18:18 Elijah charges the nation with forsaking the covenant; 1 Kings 19:10,14 Elijah's excuse for fleeing, that Israel has forsaken the covenant; 1 Kings 19:20 Elisha who left or forsook the oxen to follow Elijah; 2 Kings 2:4, 6, 8 one who left her land during a famine; 2 Kings 4:30 one who would not be parted from the man of God; 2 Chronicles 24:20 the judgement on the nation for forsaking the Lord; Psalm 38:11strength leaving the sick; Psalm 119:8 the prayer of the godly man who pleads not to be forsaken; Psalm 119:87 the Psalmist who, in spite of oppression, will not forsake God's precepts; Proverbs 2:17 the strange woman who has abandoned her guide; Proverbs 3:3 retaining mercy

The Covenantal Aspect of the Fourth Word

Cyril of Alexandria (378-444) describes a covenantal amplification of the fourth word in which he does not refer to the *communicatio idiomatum* (which I define shortly). Cyril's focus is aligned with the New Testament teaching on the cross and a significant strain of interpretative comment[30] on the fourth word.

Cyril argues that Christ utters the cry 'As one of us and on behalf of our nature.'[31] The statement appears to indicate that Christ speaks as his body the Church in the cry, but the context modifies this understanding towards one of representative headship. Cyril goes on to say that Christ acted as the second Adam. 'It was as if he were saying this: "The first man has transgressed . . . and then it was entirely right that he . . . fell under judgement. But you Lord have made me a second beginning for all on the earth, and I am called the Second Adam. In me you see the nature of man . . . made holy and pure.' [32] In the context of the representative headship of Adam and Christ, Cyril's statement that Christ died on behalf of our nature

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and truth (not forsake); Proverbs 4:2,6 the good laws not to be forsaken; Isaiah 1:4 the Israelites who had abandoned the Lord their God; Isaiah 6:12 the land no longer cultivated; Isaiah 10:14 as of an abandoned nest of eggs; Isaiah 42:16 God not forsaking those he will heal and restore; Isaiah 49:14 the people forsaking the Lord; Isaiah 54:6 a woman forsaken; Isaiah 54:7 God may abandon for a moment, but his mercies are greater; Isaiah 58:2 the nation not forsaking the ordinances; Isaiah 60:15 the land abandoned; Isaiah 62:4 with desolate, of what the nation once was, but will no longer be; Jeremiah 9:19 those who had been exiled, saying they had forsaken the land; Jeremiah 12:7 God abandoning his inheritance, Israel; Jeremiah 14:5 the hind abandons her new-born calf because there is no fodder; Jeremiah 17:13 the shame to come on those who forsake the Lord; Jeremiah 25:38 God as a lion who leaves his lair to go out and hunt; Ezekiel 8:12 the fear that God has abandoned the earth (land of Israel); Ezekiel 20:8 the people who did not abandon their Egyptian idols; Zephaniah 2:4 with desolation, of cities no longer inhabited. The word can also mean 'to leave behind' (Genesis 39:12); 'to leave over' (Leviticus 19:10); 'to let go' (Ruth 2:16). Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, trans. and ed. M. E. J. Richardson (Leiden: Brill, 2000). I am very grateful to Edward Malcolm for directing me to this resource, and for his comments on it.

[30] In the Reformed tradition John Owen writes that the fourth word, as a quotation of Psalm 22:1, signifies Christ as the federal head in a covenantal relation with the Father. Owen argues that whenever God is spoken of as the God of an individual it suggests a covenantal background. John Owen, *An Exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews, Volume 2* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980), 84.

[31] The clause 'as one of us' denotes Cyril's awareness of the *communicatio idiomatum*, which is evidenced in his writings; but the continuation does not apply the *communicatio idiomatum* directly to the fourth word.

[32] Cyril of Alexandria, *On the Unity of Christ*, trans. J. A. McGuckin (New York: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1995), 106.

denotes that Christ died as a representative head of those united to him by faith and by the work of the Holy Spirit.[33] This is subtly different from the initial suggestion that Christ simply expresses an element of the human condition under judgement. In Cyril's scripturally grounded argument, the result of Christ acting as representative head is the blessing of God on those who are united to Christ and no longer under the representative headship of Adam.

The New Testament uses the covenantal language of the headship of Adam and of Christ, the second Adam, to explain the soteriological effects of the cross of Christ, in which Christ dies as the representative head of his people. Christ's headship is contrasted with the headship of Adam, particularly in the epistles of Paul the apostle to the Romans and the Corinthians (cf. Romans 5:12-19; 1 Corinthians 15:45-49).[34]

This aspect of the interpretation of the fourth word is highly significant in the Reformed understanding of the cross of Christ, beginning in the writings of Johannes Cocceius (1603-1669) and Herman Witsius (1636-1708) and finding confessional expression in the Westminster Confession of Faith.[35] Writing from within the Reformed tradition I suggest that a covenantal reading of the fourth word is vitally important as the historical redemptive context of the doctrine of justification by faith. I therefore do not suggest that my interpretation based on the *communicatio idiomatum* is incompatible or mutually exclusive with the covenantal reading. Instead I argue that readings of the fourth word that do not involve the *communicatio idiomatum* have not fully explored the intra-Trinitarian dynamics of the fourth word; although Cyril's interpretation is clearly Trinitarian.

[33] Cf. John 14:15-21.

[34] Von Balthasar cites both of these New Testament texts as stating that Christ is the second Adam in the context of Christ's death on the cross. Von Balthasar, *Mysterium*, 138.

[35] For a brief survey of the development of Covenant Theology in the Reformed tradition see Peter Golding, *Covenant Theology: The Key of Theology in Reformed Thought and Tradition* (Scotland: Christian Focus Publications, 2004). Golding identifies an inchoate covenant theology in the Church Fathers, particularly Irenaeus and Augustine.

The covenantal aspect of the cross implies that it is not the person of the Son that is forsaken without reference to the incarnation, instead the Son incarnate, as representative head, comes under the covenant curse of God (Galatians 3:10-13). Wells initially argues in agreement with Calvin,[36] 'In the covenant, Christ acts officially as representative and Mediator for others.' Wells continues 'When he is abandoned on the cross, it is not the person that is abandoned, as if the anger of God were against him as Son. Christ in his function is the object of desertion, because of the role he assumes for others.'[37] In a covenantal reading of the fourth word the forsakenness may be understood functionally rather than ontologically, however, Wells' statements may veer towards Nestorianism because he seems to differentiate between the person of the Word and Christ. The claim that the forsakenness of Christ is merely functional makes sense within the framework of a covenantal reading, but it does not work beyond the covenantal reading, instead it leads to Nestorianism. On the other hand, the tendency towards Nestorianism may be minimised if Wells' distinction is taken to be between the Son and Christ as sin-bearer.[38]

As Wells' comments go beyond the covenantal aspect to speak about the relation between Christ and the Father, Wells does not mention the *communicatio idiomatum*, and therefore his comments are potentially self-contradictory in places. If the covenantal aspect of the cross is used to understand that it is the human nature of Christ that suffers the judgement of God, it must not be forgotten that whatever is experienced by either of Christ's two natures is predicated of the person who is God the Son. Without the caveat of the communication of idioms, Wells' statements may tend towards Nestorianism. Therefore, it is the Son incarnate who is the head spoken of by Cyril in his amplification of the fourth word. I do not argue that

[36] John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Trans. Henry Beveridge (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1983), II. XVI. 11-12.

[37] Wells, *Dereliction*, 122.

[38] The context of Wells' comments is his desire to defend the morality and justice of penal substitutionary atonement.

Cyril is incorrect in his amplification of the cry, merely that more may be said about the Trinitarian relations implicit in the fourth word which is addressed to God. That is not to say that interpretations not based on the *communicatio idiomatum* do not accord with Trinitarian orthodoxy, but that concerning the fourth word, such a reading is incomplete.

The Fourth Word is not Mentioned in the Remainder of the New Testament

The fourth word is not quoted or alluded to in the rest of the New Testament.[39] The first martyr Stephen appears to echo the words of Christ from the cross at his own death,[40] but the fourth word itself is not employed in the rest of the New Testament to aid the early church in its understanding of the death of Christ. I infer from this observation that the fourth word is not used in the Scriptures as a primary interpretative tool for understanding the death of Christ, and therefore it should not be used by the church as the primary lens through which to understand the death of Christ. The variety in the Gospel witnesses means that one cannot impose one account as the theological lens through which to interpret the others. Therefore interpretation of the fourth word, which is the only utterance from the cross to be mentioned in two Gospels, must be balanced by an appreciation of its absence in half of the crucifixion accounts, and lack of mention of it in the other New Testament documents.

The assertion that the fourth word ought not to be the primary lens through which the crucifixion is understood, assumes that the Gospels accurately and reliably document the passion events. This assumption is not held by Moltmann, who devotes considerable time in *The Crucified God* to portraying the historical Jesus. Bruce Marshall argues that Moltmann assumes that 'we can only get a fix on the identity of Jesus through historical criticism of the

[39] Thomas Manton suggests that Hebrews 5:7 may include the fourth word in its scope. Thomas Manton, *The Works of Thomas Manton, Volume 2*, (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1993), 265.

[40] Cf. Luke 23:34, 46 and Acts 7:59-60.

Gospels, rather than through a synoptic reading of the canonical scriptures as a whole.' Marshall continues by arguing that this method leads Moltmann to 'suppose that Mark's passion narrative, and in particular the cry of God-forsakenness in Mark 15:34, must be as close as we can get to "the historical reality" of Jesus' crucifixion, and thus to the most decisive aspect of his human identity.'[41] I suggest that an assessment of the crucifixion narratives based on a coherent analysis of the four Gospel voices provides the best insights into the historical event. It is beyond the remit of this work to discuss the historical criticism of the New Testament documents.

What is the Meaning of ἐγκατέλιπές?

The fourth word from the cross is given by Mark in a Greek transliteration of the Aramaic, and then translated into Greek.

> Ὁ Θεός μου ὁ Θεός μου, εἰς τί ἐγκατέλιπές με;

The word forsaken, ἐγκατέλιπές, is a finite, second person singular verb. The tense is aorist, the voice is active, and the mood is indicative. The English translation 'forsaken' is widely agreed upon and the translation is not contested. The meaning of the word is straightforward; however, applying it to the Trinitarian context is immensely complex.

I offer a definition of ἐγκατέλιπές in Mark 15:34 that will clarify further discussion of the fourth word. The definition will not take into account the communication of idioms or what the fourth word entails in its Christological and Trinitarian contexts; it will simply specify what is meant by the word ἐγκατέλιπές in Mark's crucifixion narrative. Therefore, in

[41] Marshall, 'Dereliction,' 248.

order to simplify the definition and focus it linguistically, within this definition I will refer to the object of the verb as the Lord Jesus Christ, and the subject of the verb as God.

The word καταλείπω and its cognates appear many times in the New Testament in ways that shed light on the meaning of the word in the fourth word from the cross.[42] Occurrences in Hebrews 13:5 and Acts 2:31 are of particular help. A cognate of 'ἐγκατέλιπές' occurs in Hebrews 13:5 as ἐγκαταλίπω in a quotation from Deuteronomy 31:6. ἐγκαταλίπω is a first-person singular verb. It is aorist active and subjunctive. Hebrews 13 contains various concluding remarks and exhortations concerning hospitality, marriage, contentment, and church leadership among other things. Verses 5 and 6 address the importance of contentment in the Christian life. The caring and providing presence of God in the life of the believer is negatively summarised in the Deuteronomy quotation that the Lord will not leave or forsake his people.

The third person singular of ἐγκατέλιπές also occurs in Acts 2:31 in the Apostle Peter's sermon at Pentecost in a way that is more illuminating than the Hebrews passage. As in the fourth word ἐγκατείφθη occurs as an aorist passive indicative verb although the person is different. Speaking of King David's reference to the resurrection of the Christ in Psalm 16 Peter states, 'He looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that he was neither abandoned to Hades nor did his flesh suffer decay' (Acts 2:31).[43]

[42] καταλείπω and its cognates appear numerous times with the meaning of leaving something or someone or a location in Matthew 4:13; 16:4; 19:5; 21:17; Mark 10:7; 12:19, 21; 14:52; Luke 5:28; 10:40; 15:4; 20:31; John 8:9 (left alone); 1 Thessalonians 3:1 (left behind); Hebrews 11:27. In Acts 6:2 the word means neglect of something; and in 2 Peter 2:15 the word means forsaking a right way.

[43] The mention of Hades raises questions that are not relevant to discussion of the use of εγκατελειφθη and I will assume that Hades is a reference to the grave of the tomb of Christ in his death and burial. The assumption is warranted in the context of Acts 2:31 by the parallel statement that Christ's body did not undergo decay or corruption.

Acts 2:31 provides a vital sense in which Christ was not forsaken or abandoned in his death,[44] and this vital sense specifically includes the word used by Christ in the fourth word. Commentaries on Acts 2:31 do not note the parallel use of εγκατελειφθη in Acts and the fourth word. Instead they tend to focus on the context of the passage which is David's prophecy that the Christ would not remain dead but would be raised to life.[45] In Acts 2:31 εγκατελειφθη means leave without help in the grave. Understanding the fourth word in this way does justice to the passion narrative in that Christ is not protected from the mocking and crucifixion, Christ is not helped by God on the cross.

The occurrences of καταλείπω and its cognates in the New Testament shed significant light on the definition of ἐγκατέλιπές in Mark 15:34. With this linguistic analysis in mind, and also considering the broader context of the crucifixion narrative in the Gospels of Matthew and Mark outlined in the above exegetical prolegomena, I offer the following definition of ἐγκατέλιπές. Christ being forsaken by God consists in being left undefended by God at the moment of the utterance of the fourth word during the hours of darkness. Christ was undefended against the mocking insults,[46] he was not rescued from the physical pain, nor

[44] It is difficult to know what the sovereign prevention of the decay of Christ's body in the grave involved, but it is important that it is not taken to mute the awfulness of the death of Christ in a potentially docetic way.

[45] From Patristic comment, neither Bede the Venerable (c.673-735), nor Theodoret of Cyrus (c.393-458) comment on the parallel use of the word. Theodoret's writings against Cyril of Alexandria were condemned at the Second Council of Constantinople in the Three Chapters controversy, however, he did condemn Nestorius at the Council of Chalcedon. From the broad sample below, those who directly comment on this verse do not refer to the fourth word from the cross. Cf. *Acts: Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture*, Francis Martin and Evan Smith, eds. (Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP, 2006), 33. Calvin does not single out Acts 2:31 for direct comment although he does comment on the passage as a whole. John Calvin, *Commentary upon the Acts of the Apostles, Volume 1*, trans. Christopher Fetherstone, ed. Henry Beveridge (Edinburgh: Calvin Translation Society, 1844), 107-108. The same absence of reference to the fourth word is seen in contemporary commentaries on Acts 2:31. Cf. C. K. Barrett, *The International Critical Commentary: Acts, Volume 1* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994), 148. Jaroslav Pelikan, *Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible: Acts* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2005), 54-57. Simon J. Kistemaker, *Exposition of the Acts of the Apostles* (Michigan: Baker Book House, 1995), 99-100. I. Howard Marsahll, *Acts: An Introduction and Commentary* (Nottingham: IVP Academic, 2008), 82. John Stott, *The Message of Acts* (Leicester: IVP, 1991), 76. F. F. Bruce, *The Book of Acts* (Michigan: Eerdmans, 1989), 66. The reference to Paslm 16 is repeated in Acts 13:34.

[46] Matthew 27:39-44; Mark 15:29-37; Luke 23:35-39. John's Gospel does not mention the verbal abuse that Christ received on the cross.

was he rescued from the spiritual torment:[47] Christ bore the full weight of God's wrath at sin.[48] Matthew Bates suggests a similar definition of forsakenness based on his reading of early Christian writing. 'The earliest Christians did understand that Jesus was abandoned unto death (allowed to die), but they did not view this "forsakenness" as a genuine separation of Jesus and the Father.' Bates asserts that when it is suggested that the fourth word implies a separation between Jesus and the Father, it is 'an improbable scholarly construct with no substantive root in the earliest writings.'[49]

I have defined ἐγκατέλιπές in Mark 15:34 in terms of Christ being left undefended by God. The time frame for this event is limited to Christ's passion and crucifixion most broadly, and the hours of darkness and the utterance of the fourth word most narrowly. The limit of Christ remaining undefended by God is Christ's death.[50] Psalm 16 and Acts 2:31 make it clear that Christ's body was not forsaken, but was actively maintained against the corruption of the flesh.

My definition of forsaken as left undefended, accords with much Patristic, Scholastic and Reformed commentary, particularly in Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274). Aquinas affirms that the Father delivered up Christ, 'By not shielding him from the passion, but abandoning him to his persecutors.'[51]

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[47] The Scriptures reveal that the spiritual torment of Christ on the cross also includes the torment from spiritual and demonic forces, from which Christ was not defended. Luke 22:53; Ephesians 3:10; Colossians 2:15.

[48] Isaiah 53:4-5; Hebrews 9:28; 1 Peter 2:24. The concept of penal substitutionary atonement is distinctive of Reformed soteriology. Within the evangelical tradition the doctrine has been questioned by numerous authors. For a brief summary of the theological opposition to penal substitutionary atonement see, Steve Jefferey, Mike Ovey, and Andrew Sach, *Pierced for our Transgressions: Rediscovering the Glory of Penal Substitution* (Nottingham: IVP, 2007), 21-26.

[49] Bates, *Trinity*, 134.

[50] Cf. Luke 23:46; John 19:30 for the final utterances of Christ from the cross as recorded by Luke and John.

[51] Thomas Aquinas, *The Summa Theologiae of Saint Thomas Aquinas, Latin-English Edition, Volume VIII, Tertia Pars, Questions 1-59, Treatise on the Incarnation*, trans. the Fathers of the English Dominican Province (NovAntiqua, 2016), q. 47, a. 3. Earlier in Article 3 Aquinas quotes Isaiah 53:6, 10 'By his eternal will he preordained Christ's passion for the deliverance of the human race, according to the words of Isaias: "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquities of us all;" and again "The Lord was pleased to bruise him in infirmity."'

2. *Communicatio Idiomatum* and Historical Interpretation of the Fourth Word

In the rest of Part I the doctrine of the communication of idioms is examined in connection with the hypostatic union. The introduction of these doctrines will initially complicate the exegetical definition given in chapter 1. As I introduce more Trinitarian and Christological complexities, the argument will work towards an increasingly coherent conception of the fourth word from the cross in a Trinitarian framework. In what follows I explore the communication of idioms in connection with the hypostatic union in a number of theologians, and examine their understanding of the fourth word through the lens of these doctrines. This section of my study forms the second element of the interlocking lattice work from which to offer my Trinitarian and Christological interpretation of the fourth word.

I explore and compare several theologians from the Patristic and Scholastic eras, and the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries. The comparisons will lead to greater clarity in describing the *communicatio idiomatum.*

Throughout the exploration of historical interpretations of the *communicatio idiomatum* I will ask two questions. First, how has the particular theologian described and defined the doctrine? Secondly, have they used it as a lens through which to read the fourth word from the cross? In some cases, I will speculate concerning the application of the theology discussed to the fourth word. The degree of speculation varies because of the absence of clear application of the *communicatio idiomatum* to the suffering and death of Christ, and to the fourth word in any significant depth. In some cases speculation is not attempted because it would result in a distortion of the theology under discussion. There is a directly proportional relationship between the position of the line of mystery concerning the death of Christ and the degree of precision with which the *communicatio idiomatum* can be extended to the death of Christ. The more a theologian is keen to emphasise the mystery of

the death of Christ, the less willing he is is to state precisely the effect of the *communicatio idiomatum* on Christ's crucifixion and the fourth word.

I will also trace some of the development of the distinction between the Reformed *communicatio idiomatum* and the Lutheran *communicatio naturarum*. In some cases I will tentatively explore the possibility of this distinction in the Patristic era, but often this will be anachronistic and unhelpful. I will argue that the Reformed articulation is closer to the Patristic use of the communication of idioms. The distinction between the two has serious implications for interpretations of the fourth word.

Hypostatic Union

The hypostatic union is the union of the two natures, human and divine, in the one person of Christ. The union is described in the Creed of the Council of Chalcedon (451). 'The same Christ, Son, Lord, Only begotten, [is] to be acknowledged in two natures, unconfusedly (ἀσυγχυτως), unchangeably (ἀτρεπρως), indivisibly (ἀδιαιρετως), inseparably (ἀχωριστως).'[1] The union is hypostatic because it takes place in the person of the Son. In his *Treatise on the Incarnation* in the *Tertia Pars* of the *Summa Theologiae*, Thomas Aquinas argues from the Chalcedonian adverbs that the hypostatic union took place in the person or hypostasis[2] of the Word.[3] He also argues, following John of Damascus, that Christ is composed of two natures

[1] Norman P. Tanner, *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils, Volume 1, Council of Chalcedon – 451* (Washington: Georgetown University Press, 1989), 88-89. I discuss the historical background of the adverbs further in relation to Cyril of Alexandria.

[2] There are some technical distinctions between the use of person, hypostasis, and suppositum; but in this work I will mainly use the words synonymously, unless otherwise stated. The synonymous use finds precedent in contemporary discussion. See Richard Cross, *Communicatio Idiomatum: Reformation Christological Debates* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 19. Cross notes the irrelevance of the focus on the rational or intellectual in the term person to his argument; an aspect that is significant in my argument, because I argue for a link between personhood and the modal distinction between person and nature in the Trinity.

[3] *ST* III, q. 2, a. 1 and 2.

after the incarnation.[4] Aquinas further teaches that although Christ is composed of two natures, there exists only one subject and person in Christ.[5] In this way he is not opposed to the Cyrilline formula[6] so misunderstood at the Council of Ephesus (431) and after Cyril of Alexander's death: 'μία φύσις τού λόγου σεσαρκωμένη,'[7] Aquinas' acceptance of Cyril's statement would perhaps have been based on the history of its use in neo-Chalcedonian theology and at the Second Council of Constantinople (553), rather than Aquinas' own theological approval. Muller affirms in accordance with Cyril of Alexandria, John of Damascus, and Thomas Aquinas among many others, that Christ is *una persona geminae substantiae sive naturae*.[8]

The witness of Scripture and tradition is clear that there is one person in Christ the God-man.[9] The individual instance of the genus humanity of Christ's human nature exists only in the hypostatic union and has no independent existence prior to the incarnation. The human nature of Christ is therefore anhypostatic, and the Word is therefore enhypostatic in the incarnation.[10] Carlo Dell'Osso presents the case that the concepts and (adjectival) terminology are found in Patristic writings.[11] Muller defines the former term anhypostatic as 'non-self-subsistence.' The term is applied to the human nature of Christ 'insofar as it has no

[4] *ST* III, q. 2, a. 4. Again, I explore composite Christology in relation to Cyril of Alexandria below.

[5] Thomas Aquinas, *Compendium of Theology*, trans. Richard J. Regan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 211.

[6] Aquinas interprets Cyril's phrase by referring to the Acts of the Second Council of Constantinople (553). Aquinas' Neo-Chalcedonian interpretation focuses on the definition of the word nature. *ST* III, q. 2, a. 1.

[7] 'One nature of the word incarnate.'

[8] One person of two substances or natures. R. A. Muller, *Dictionary of Latin and Greek Theological Terms (Baker:Grand Rapids, Michigan , 1985), Unio Personalis*.

[9] Cf. John 1:14.

[10] For discussion of the Patristic background to the terms enhypostasis and anhypostasis see Uwe Lang, 'Anhypostatos-Enhypostatos: church fathers, Protestant orthodoxy and karl Barth,' *Journal of Theological Studies* 49 (1998): 630-657. See also, Dirk Krausmuller, 'Enhypostaton: being "in another" or being "with another"? How Chalcedonian Theologians of the Sixth Century Defined the Ontological Status of Christ's Human Nature,' *Vigiliae Christianae* 71 (2017): 433-448.

[11] 'From a strictly terminological point of view the terms *anhypostasia* and *enhypostasia* are not present in Patristic sources, nevertheless the presence of the adjective forms *anhypostatos* and *enhypostatos* is sufficient in order to justify the belonging of the doctrine of enhypostasia to the Patristic period.' Carlo Dell'Osso, 'Still on the Concept of Enhypostaton,' *Augustinianum* 43 (2003): 80.

subsistence or person in and of itself but rather subsists in the person of the Word for the sake of the incarnation.'[12] Muller defines the latter term enhypostatic, literally in-personality, as 'having one's subsistence in the subsistence of another.' Muller states that the term is applied to the human nature of Christ 'with reference to the identification of the "person" or subsistence of Christ as the eternal person of the Word which has, in time, assumed a non-self-subsistent, or anhypostatic, human nature.'[13]

Because the enhypostatic Word exists independently of the hypostatic union, whereas the anhypostatic human subsistence does not; the distinction between the divine subsistence and the humanity is substantiated. The humanity of Christ is the humanity assumed by the subsistence of the Word, and the personhood of Christ is the personhood of the God-man.[14]

Communicatio Idiomatum

The full union of the divine and human natures in Christ as described in Cyril's theology and Chalcedon results in a deeper understanding of the *communicatio idiomatum* and its basis in the hypostatic union. The Reformed theologian Hermann Bavinck defines the *communicatio*

[12] Muller, *Dictionary, Anhypostasis.*

[13] Muller, *Dictionary, Enhypostasis.*

[14] If Christ's human nature were not anhypostatic, Nestorianism would obtain, because there would be two subjects or persons in Christ. The distinction between the use of the term subsistence (person) for universal and individual natures is drawn by John Owen who argues that the relationship of the divine nature to the human nature of Christ is immediate in the Son because the Word is the subject of the God-man. 'The divine nature, as in that person, is its suppositum.' Owen, *Works, Vol. 1*, 233. Francis Turretin argues that 'subsistence marks a mode of subsisting or personality,' and that subsistence is understood as 'the very existence of the substance.' Turretin notes that Christ's humanity is a subsistence of human nature because it is constituted in the being of the substance of humanity. Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology, Volume 1* (Phillipsburg: P & R Publishing, 1992), Third Topic, Q. XXIII, V. See Muller, *Dictionary, Suppositum*. Muller defines *suppositum intelligens* as 'a thinking, self-subsistent being; i.e., a person.' Turretin argues that the singular substance, which is incommunicable, is not part of another, and that if it is intellectual, it is called a person. He states that the intellectual mode of the existence of the singular substance is called entitative and completes and provides incommunicability to the substantial nature. Turretin argues that Christ's humanity does not have the kind of substistence which constitutes a suppositum since it is not a human suppositum because it is united with the Word to constitute the God-man in the hypostatic union. Turretin, *Elenctic,* Third Topic, Q. XXIII, V.

idiomatum and grounds it in the hypostatic union because both doctrines explain the same scriptural pattern.

> Every moment in Scripture, divine as well as human predicates are attributed to the same personal subject: divine and human existence, omnipresence and limitation, eternity and time, creative omnipotence and creaturely weakness. What else is this but the church's doctrine of the two natures united in one person?[15]

Bavinck links the two doctrines and indirectly states that the *communicatio idiomatum* results from the hypostatic union. He follows in the tradition set in the early church, particularly the councils of Ephesus (431), Chalcedon (451), and the Second Council of Constantinople (553). By stating the link between the hypostatic union and the communication of idioms Bavinck highlights the unidirectional nature of the relationship between the two doctrines. By this I mean that although the *communicatio idiomatum* informs the doctrine of the hypostatic union, the former is grounded upon the latter and not vice versa.

The *communicatio idiomatum*, or the communication of proper qualities, is the Christological doctrine used to describe the way that properties (*idiomata*) of the human nature and divine nature of Christ can be spoken of in the unity of the person[16] of Christ, the Son of God. Whatever[17] happens to either Christ's human or divine natures in the hypostatic union is appropriately predicated of the single subject God the word incarnate. The divine nature is the Son's essentially, whereas the anhypostatic human nature is assumed by the Son

[15] Hermann Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics: Volume 3* (Baker: Grand Rapids, Michigan, 2006), 298-299. Bavinck refers to H. J. Holtzmann and O. Pfleiderer as opponents of this understanding of the hypostatic union, who replace the doctrine with a 'two-sidedness' or a 'duality of perspectives' respectively. Bavinck traces this to the influence of Kant, Hegel, and Darwin.

[16] The definition of person is significant for understanding the communication of idioms and the distinction between person and nature in the Trinity and the hypostatic union. I describe the doctrine in Part II of this work.

[17] In Scholastic terminology, such predicates are often divided into trivial and non-trivial. The former picks out an ontological relation between a person and its nature and properties in general. Non-trivial predicates include 'healed the sick,' 'raised the dead,' was crucified.' It is the non-trivial predicate 'was forsaken' that is the focus of this work.

in the incarnation. Therefore, the *communicatio idiomatum* links the two natures of Christ in the hypostatic union asymmetrically to the Son.

Oliver D. Crisp offers the following definition of the *communicatio idiomatum* that examines the way in which attributes are and are not predicated.

> The attribution of the properties of each of the natures of Christ to the person of Christ, such that the theanthropic person of Christ is treated as having divine and human attributes at one and the same time, yet without predicating attributes of one nature that properly belong to the other nature in the hypostatic union, without transference of properties between the natures and without confusing or commingling the two natures of Christ or the generation of a *tertium quid*.[18]

Crisp's qualifications of the attribution of properties in the *communicatio idiomatum* follow the Chalcedonian adverbs. Crisp clearly asserts the Reformed view of the communication of properties, rather than the Lutheran view, the *communicatio naturarem* that allows for the communication of properties between the two natures of Christ. Crisp's definition is, however, influenced by his analytic theology, the language of which does not align with Chalcedonian language. This divergence from Patristic language is seen most clearly in Crisp's words 'The theanthropic person of Christ is treated as having divine and human attributes at one and the same time.'[19] The wording suggests that the theologian must discuss the hypostatic union in a certain way in theory, while acknowledging that it is not the case in reality. To a certain extent the disparity between theological language and divine reality is

[18] Oliver D. Crisp, *Divinity and Humanity: The Incarnation Reconsidered* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 7-8. Crisp repeats this definition in, Oliver D. Crisp, *The Word Enfleshed: Exploring the Person and Work of Christ* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2016), 115. He correctly argues that, 'This version of the communication of attributes blocks the inference from "S is N according to his F nature" to "S is N." The human nature of Christ weeps. God the Son does not – indeed, cannot – if he is essentially impassible. Yet God the Son is said to be the person who weeps, according to his human nature.' Crisp's analytic theology must be cautiously considered because the Chalcedonian adverbs, following Cyril, insist that the hypostatic union is one union. The phrase *tertium quid* (third thing) is a reference to Eutychianism which in this context denotes the union of the human and divine nature in Christ to form a third nature which is neither human nor divine.

[19] My discussion of Ruth M. Siddals' analysis of Cyril of Alexandria in this chapter and in chapter 6 will address this point.

constantly present, but the problem is exacerbated by the failure of analytic theology rightly to acknowledge the mystery of how the *communicatio idiomatum* is seen in the Patristic tradition.

The doctrine of the communication of idioms is seen constantly in the Gospels as they recount many of the Lord's activities that are appropriate for his divine nature (raising the dead, Luke 7:15; walking on water, Mark 6:48) and also for his human nature (reclining, Matthew 26:20; eating, Matthew 26:26). These activities are completed by the one incarnate person, the one subject who is the eternal Son and Word of God, in personal union with his human nature. Each nature does what is fitting for it and is the nature of the person who is the eternal Son of God. In this way, using the *communicatio idiomatum*, scriptural statements concerning the Lord Jesus can be understood of the person of Christ with reference to either of his natures depending on the context.[20] This also further safeguards and is built upon the hypostatic union.

Thomas G. Weinandy summarises the reasoning behind the *communicatio idiomatum* and its implications, based on the Christological arguments of Thomas Aquinas. '1. It is truly God the Son who is man. Here, the emphasis is focused upon the full divinity of the Son. 2. It is truly man that the Son of God is. Here the emphasis is focused upon the full and complete humanity. 3. The Son of God truly is man. Here the emphasis is focused upon the ontological union between the person of the Son and his humanity,'[21] Weinandy's Thomistic statement highlights the authenticity of Christ's human and divine natures, which are the natures of the person of the Son. Therefore both divine and human attributes are to be predicated of one and

[20] Some more complex examples of texts in which the *communicatio idiomatum* enables clearer interpretation of the Scriptures include: Acts 20:28; Romans 8:32; 1 Corinthians 2:8; Galatians 2:20; Hebrews 6:6.

[21] Thomas G. Weinandy, O.F.M., Cap., *Does God Suffer?* (Notre Dame: Notre Dame Press, 2000), 174. Weinandy refers to Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* III. 16. 1.

the same person who is God the Son. This definition of the *communicatio idiomatum* will be clarified and qualified, but not modified as I explore the understanding of the doctrine in various theologians in the following sections.

What is the Historical and Theological Connection between the Hypostatic Union and the *Communicatio Idiomatum*?

I have defined the hypostatic union as the union of the divine and human natures in the one person of Christ. The basic definition is adhered to by both Lutheran and Reformed theologians; bifurcation arises over the definition in terms of the communication of idioms. The union of the two natures in Christ is described by the four Chalcedonian adverbs.

The precise nature of the union of Christ's divinity and humanity was an important area of debate in the Ecumenical Councils influenced by the Christology of Cyril of Alexandria and the subsequent miaphysite controversy. Cyril's formula, 'μία φύσις τού λόγου σεσαρκωμένη,'[22] was the subject of great misunderstanding in the Christological controversy at Ephesus (431) and in subsequent years. McGuckin notes that Cyril used the adjective 'enfleshed [σεσαρκωμένη] to qualify the word nature [φύσις], not the personal pronoun Logos [λόγου].' He argues that this technicality 'made a world of difference,' because for Cyril, 'the phrase was ideally suited to signify the reality of the union.'[23] Misunderstanding of Cyril's formula was common during his lifetime and even more so after his death in 444. McGuckin succinctly summarises the issue.

> When Cyril proclaimed "One enfleshed nature of the Word" he thus meant that there is only the one subject concretely presented to us here who is God the Word . . . His

[22] One nature of the word incarnate.

[23] John McGuckin, *Cyril of Alexandria and the Christological Controversy* (New York: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2004), 208. Cyril uses a number of variations on the theme of the fomula and McGuckin's point is relevant to the thrust of Cyril's intention.

> opponents, however, heard him in a different way, to be saying: "The incarnation merges God and man into a single reality of a new divino-human nature," which was evidently apollinarism revisited.[24]

McGuckin repeats Crisp's denial of the formation of a third thing in the union of Christ's natures. Cyril's emphases on the unity of the hypostatic union and the single subject of God the Son incarnate bring important clarification and precision to the doctrine of the hypostatic union, which is encoded in the four Chalcedonian adverbs. The first three adverbs were supplied in the writings of Cyril, and the fourth 'inseparably' (ἀχωριστως) was added at Chalcedon and concisely summarises Cyril's intention in the μία φύσις formula.

The full union of the human and divine natures in the one subject person of Christ is clearly described at Chalcedon using the theological insights of Cyril of Alexandria. Thomas Aquinas' development of the Patristic doctrine of the hypostatic union adopts Scholastic technical terminology to describe the union in more precise detail. In particular, Aquinas' distinction between the efficient cause of the assumption of the human nature, and the terminus of the assumption, powerfully draws together Christological insights with orthodox Trinitarian thought. Aquinas emphasised that the hypostatic union was the greatest possible union that a creature could enter into with the personal *esse* of the divine person of the Son; that is, 'according to subsistence and being.'[25] When combined with Cyril's formula, 'μία φύσις τού λόγου σεσαρκωμένη,' the hypostatic union is, as Legge affirms, the 'surpassingly greater union.'[26]

[24] McGuckin, *Controversy*, 209-210. It was not until after the Council of Ephesus that Cyril realised the potential for misinterpretation inherent in his formula and begins to clarify his meaning in his first two letters to Succensus. The decline of Cyril's use of the formula was a compromise reluctantly made in order to ensure the wider acceptance of the single subjectivity of Christ. As McGuckin notes, the reluctance of Cyril's followers to leave the formula eventually developed into the monophysite resistance of the Council of Chalcedon.

[25] Dominic Legge, *The Trinitarian Christology of St Thomas Aquinas (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018)*, 106.

[26] Legge, *Christology*, 106.

Francis Turretin summarises his articulation of the *communicatio idiomatum*. 'The communication of attributes is an effect of the union by which the properties of both natures become common to the person.'[27] Whatever happens to either Christ's human or divine natures in the hypostatic union is appropriately predicated of the single subject God the word incarnate. This must not be understood to conceal an implicit Nestorianism in the hypostatic union, because of the clarification offered above of Cyril's μία φύσις formula. The single subject of God the Son incarnate and the full union as one of the two natures of the composite Christ ensures that orthodoxy is able to uphold the connection between the hypostatic union and the *communicatio idiomatum* in such a way that avoids Nestorianism.

The theological language necessary to describe the relation between Christ's two natures and his person developed through the ante and post Nicene Fathers. The communication of idioms was first mentioned by Origen of Alexandria in his commentary on the book of Romans.[28] Origen's platonic dualism is seen in his Christology as he tends to treat the two natures of Christ as two subjects, but it would perhaps be anachronistic to impose later Cyriline precision on Origen.[29]

Cyril of Alexandria composed twelve anathemas against Nestorius,[30] which were formalised in the Pact of Reunion, signed by Cyril and John of Jerusalem in 433 following the Council of Ephesus (431). At the Council of Ephesus, the doctrine is affirmed in the anathemas of Cyril against Nestorius, which were accepted by the council. Thomas Joseph

[27] Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology, Volume 2* (Phillipsburg: P & R Publishing, 1994), Thirteenth Topic, Q. VIII.

[28] Origen of Alexandria, *Commentary on Romans*, Ed. Caroline P. Hammond Bammel, trans. Thomas Scheck (Catholic University of America: Washington D.C., 2001).

[29] Christopher A. Beeley, *The Unity of Christ: Continuity and Conflict in Patristic Tradition* (London: Yale University Press, 2012), 37. Beeley notes two things that are relevant. First, Origen's insistence that the predication of human attributes to the divinity and vice versa is not real. Secondly, Origen's denial of the death of the Son who is the way, the truth, and the life.

[30] Cyril of Alexandria, *Against Nestorius* in *A Library of the Fathers of the Holy Catholic Church* (Oxford: James Parker, n.d.), 10.

White defines the *communicatio idiomatum* in terms of the Council. 'The Council of Ephesus affirmed that all attributes of Jesus are to be ascribed to the unique suppositum of the Word, whether those attributes be human or divine.' White continues by showing the consequences of the doctrine in Cyril's theology and in the text of Scripture. 'It is the Lord who is born of the Virgin Mary and suffers death on the cross, and it is the Lord who heals the blind and raises the dead.[31] The teaching of the Council of Ephesus is reaffirmed in the Creed of the Council of Chalcedon (451). The Creed principally deals with the hypostatic union, and so at this point the doctrine of the *communication idiomatum* is in inchoate form.

Prior to the formulation of the Definition of Chalcedon, Pope Leo I wrote a letter to the Council of Chalcedon which sets out the Christological position of the Papacy, it is known as Leo's Tome. Leo precisely codifies the theology of the ancient Church on the *communicatio idiomatum*. Concerning the distinction between the two natures of Christ, and their differing attributes, Leo writes, 'Each form accomplishes in concert with the other what is appropriate to it, the Word performing what belongs to the Word, and the flesh carrying out what belongs to the flesh.'[32] This letter influenced the thinking of the Council of Chalcedon, and particularly the Chalcedonian adverbs. The four Chalcedonian adverbs primarily defend against the heresies of Eutyches[33] and Nestorius.[34] The *communicatio idiomatum* was critical

[31] White, *Incarnate,* 79.

[32] The Tome of St. Leo, Chapter 4, Heinrich Denzinger, *Compendium of Creeds, Definitions, and Declarations on Matters of Faith and Morals, Forty-Third Edition* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2012),106. Leo's comment must be understood in the framework of the one subject of Neo-Chalcedonian theology.

[33] Eutyches advocated that prior to the incarnation there were two natures, but after the incarnation there was only one nature of Christ, which exists as a mixture of the two natures. In response to Eutychus and his followers, the Chalcedonian Fathers declared the inseparability and indivisibility of the hypostatic union because of the perpetuity of the incarnation. Eutyches strongly opposed Nestorianism, and in 448, was accused by Eusebius of Dorylaeum of the opposite heresy. Additionally, Eutyches' doctrine was opposed by Pope Leo in his epistle of 449 to Flavian, Patriarch of Constantinople, who had excommunicated Eutychus the previous year at a Synod at Constantinople.

[34] Nestorius rejected the application of the term *Theotokos* (God bearer) to Mary and advocated the doctrine that there are two separate persons in the incarnate Christ. In response to Nestorius and his followers, the Chalcedonian Fathers declared that the two natures of Christ were united in his person in such a way that they could not be converted into one another, nor could they be confused so that a third, hybrid nature should emerge. Instead, they affirmed that Christ's two natures remain unconfused and unchanged with their respective attributes.

in debunking these heresies because it addresses so precisely the scriptural and theological interaction of Christ's two natures. Weinandy writes that the *communicatio idiomatum* was ultimately the 'undoing of every Christological heresy.'[35] Weinandy makes this claim with reference to his threefold summary. He also notes that historically it was the correct articulation of the *communicatio idiomatum* that gave rise to the conciliar and orthodox position on the incarnation, not vice versa.

The Chalcedonian Creed continues by articulating its position on the union of the two natures of Christ. 'The distinction of natures being by no means taken away by the union, but rather the property of each nature being preserved, and concurring in one person and one subsistence, not parted or divided into two persons, but one and the same Son, and Only begotten, God the Word, the Lord Jesus Christ.'[36] Chalcedon asserts that the human nature of Christ, being consubstantial with our nature, is fully human and is limited precisely as we are. Likewise, the divine nature of Christ, being consubstantial with the Father and the Holy Spirit, is unlimited precisely as the Father and the Holy Spirit are. Further, the distinction between the natures does not remove their union.

From the sixteenth century the doctrine of the *communicatio idiomatum* was developed in significantly different ways in the Lutheran and Reformed traditions. It is anachronistic to impose a Reformation polemical context on the Patristic theologians, but it is helpful to outline the distinctions between the Reformed and Lutheran definitions of the communication of idioms. I argue at the end of this chapter that the Reformed position is the inheritor of the Patristic teaching. The distinctions between the Reformed and Lutheran articulations of the *communicatio idiomatum* can be seen in that the Reformed position holds that the *communicatio idiomatum* is characterised as *in concreto*, that is, that the interchange

[35] Weinandy, *Suffer*, 175.
[36] Tanner, *Decrees, Vol. 1.*, 88-89.

of properties is considered to occur at the level of the concretion of the person. The Lutheran position holds that the *communicatio idiomatum* is characterised as *in abstracto*, that is, that the relation of the two natures of Christ is abstracted from their relation to the person. The result is that the Lutheran *communicatio naturarum* predicates attributes of either nature to the other nature.

Theologians in the Reformed tradition maintained the historic catholic teaching that the properties of each nature are predicated of the person of Christ immediately. In the Lutheran tradition, however, it was argued following Luther, that the properties of each nature are predicated directly of the other nature.

The *communicatio naturarem* teaching originated in Luther's exegesis of Christ's words of institution at the Last Supper, 'This is my body.' Luther argued that in order for Christ's body to be literally present in the Lord's Supper celebrated from that time onwards across the world, the risen body of Christ must be ubiquitous. The theological mechanism which allowed this was the modification of the *communicatio idiomatum* whereby properties predicated of the divine nature of Christ are directly predicated also of the human nature of Christ. This allows for statements such as 'the human nature of Christ is almighty,' and 'God died.' The Lutheran theologian Martin Chemnitz developed Luther's doctrine of the *communicatio idiomatum* in a more subtle manner. He argued that Christ's human nature is always localised because the Lutheran *communicatio idiomatum* was not a permanent extension of divine properties to the human nature, but that it was instead a divine use of the human nature in a way that exceeds normal human limits. Greater doctrinal unity concerning the *communicatio idiomatum* was reached as a result of the Formula of Concord (1577). Article VIII specifically addresses the *communicatio idiomatum*.

A Survey of Interpretations of the Fourth Word with Reference to Trinitarian Theology and the *Communicatio Idiomatum*

The survey runs from the Patristic, Scholastic, and Reformed eras, and up to the nineteenth century. I focus on the writings where they employ Trinitarian theology and the *communicatio idiomatum* in discussion of the cross, the fourth word, and the death of Christ. In my analysis of Luther and Dorner I instead focus on their Trinitarian theology and understanding of the *communicatio naturarem*, because I argue that their consequent understanding of the fourth word is different from the Patristic and Reformed position. While Trinitarian theology is usually apparent when it is mentioned, the application of the communication of idioms can be employed either explicitly or implicitly without being specified. Discussion of Christ's two natures or of the person of the Son would suggest the employment of the *communicatio idiomatum* in an interpretation of the fourth word, without its explicit mention. It is possible, however, that such a reading may still not involve a Trinitarian framework. The survey demonstrates the rarity of interpreting the fourth word in this way.

From the Patristic era I survey Hilary of Poitiers (c. 310-c. 367), Gregory Nazianzus (329-390), Ambrose of Milan (340-397), Augustine of Hippo (354-430), Cyril of Alexandria (378-444), Maximus the Confessor (580-662), John of Damascus (676-749).[37] From the Scholastic era I only discuss Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) at length, although I refer to others. From the Reformation era into the nineteenth century I survey Martin Luther (1483-

[37] Many other Patristic authors discuss the death of Christ in Trinitarian terms, but do not exegete the fourth word in the same way. For Example, Athanasius of Alexandria teaches what Khaled Anatolios calls an *apologia crucis*, that the one who died on the cross is God incarnate, but this theological language is not applied by Athanasius to the fourth word. Cf. Khaled Anatolios, *Athanasius* (London: Routledge, 2004), 74. The same is true of the other eras covered by the survey. A clear example in the eighteenth-century is John Gill in his comments on the fourth word. He affirms that the hypostatic union was not broken but only implicitely mentions the communication of idioms and the relations between the Father and the Son incarnate. Gill's comments are concise but brief. John Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testatments Volume 7 of 9* (Arkansas: The Baptist Standard Bearer, 2006), 363, 490. Gill does not refer to the fourth word in his theological works.

1546), John Calvin (1509-1564), Richard Sibbes (1577-1633), Thomas Manton (1620-1677), John Flavel (1627-1691), Francis Turretin (1623-1687), and I. A. Dorner (1809-1884). I examine the theologians with varying degrees of length and depth depending on the relevance of their theological comment on the fourth word.

The historical sequence shows the development of Trinitarian theology and the communication of idioms. The sequence also draws out the development of the debate over the communication of idioms between Reformed and Lutheran theologians, and how each view relates to earlier sources.

Hilary of Poitiers

Hilary makes statements about the death of Christ that are comparable with the teaching of Cyril of Alexandria. In *De Trinitate*, Hilary's major theological work, he writes, 'Scripture had foretold that he who is God should die; that the victory and triumph of them that trust in him lay in the fact that he, who is immortal and cannot be overcome by death, was to die that mortals might gain eternity.' Hilary continues, 'the immortal died . . . the eternal was buried.'[38] Hilary does not directly discuss the *communicatio idiomatum* as the doctrinal method by which he makes such statements at this point in *De Trinitate*. It is clear, however, that the doctrine is employed because elsewhere Hilary writes, 'heretics deceive certain of the unlearned into ascribing to infirmity in the divinity, what Christ said and did through his assumed nature, and attributing to the form of God what is appropriate only to the form of the servant.'[39] Hilary's statement of the *communicatio idiomatum* is simple but clearly in line with later Patristic developments. He clearly articulates the application of the *communicatio*

[38] Hilary of Poitiers, *De Trinitate* (USA: Beloved Publishing, 2014), 1.13. cf. 3.25; 6.52.
[39] Hilary, *Trinitate*, 9.15.

idiomatum when he asserts, 'The only begotten God, then, suffered in his person the attacks of all the infirmities to which we are subject.[40] Hilary goes on to emphasise that Christ's divine nature supported his human nature in the sufferings of the passion and the cross. The emphasis here is stronger than in other Patristic writings, but this does not contradict his orthodox understanding of the communication of idioms.[41]

In Hilary's opposition to Arianism he also clearly states the doctrine of the hypostatic union[42] which is integral to a correct understanding of the *communicatio idiomatum*. He asserts the profound mystery of the death of Christ and argues that created human intelligence is incapable of fully understanding how it is the immortal God should be crucified.

Hilary refers to the fourth word a number of times in *De Trinitate,*[43] and he addresses what he considers to be heretical interpretations in Book 10. Much of Hilary's opposition to a number of supposedly heretical interpretations of the words of Christ arise because of Hilary's view of the relation between Christ's natures at the passion.

> There is still, the heretics say, another serious and far reaching confession of weakness, all the more so because it is in the mouth of the Lord himself, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? They [the heretics] construe this into the expression of a bitter complaint, that he was deserted and given over to weakness.

Hilary summarises the position of certain heretics as claiming that the fourth word, among other statements and actions of the Lord Jesus Christ, displays his weakness. Hilary opposes these views on the basis of his understanding of the supporting role of the divine nature of Christ in strengthening Christ's humanity within the hypostatic union. Hilary affirms 'He hastened to the death, which was to glorify him, and after which he was to sit on the right

[40] Hilary, *Trinitate*, 10.47.

[41] Hilary's emphasis that the divine nature of Christ supports his human nature is developed most fully in Book 10 of *De Trinitate*.

[42] Hilary, *Trinitate*, 9.14.

[43] Direct references to the fourth word occur at *De Trinitate* 1.32; 10.9, 49, 60, 62, 71.

hand of power; with all those blessed expectations could he fear death and therefore complain that his God had betrayed him to its necessity, when it was the entrance into eternal blessedness?'[44]

From 10.50 to 10.51 Hilary outlines what he considers to be the heretical motivations behind the claim that Christ displayed weakness and complains bitterly in the fourth word. These heretical motivations focus on the relationship between the Word of God who is the Son and the humanity of Christ. Hilary argues that the view of his opponents concerning the fourth word is faulty because in it the Word of God is absorbed into the humanity of Christ in such a way that the power of the Word is no longer active. Hilary dismisses these views as heretical and affirms that 'To grasp this divine mystery we must see the God in him without ignoring the man; and the man without ignoring the God. We must not divide Jesus Christ, for the Word was made flesh.'[45] Hilary's principle that the hypostatic union must not be divided is upheld throughout historic orthodox Christology;[46] but Hilary does not provide a positive statement of his interpretation of the fourth word beyond his negative comments and arguments against heresy.

Gregory of Nazianzus

Gregory of Nazianzus' non-systematic and rhetorical writing style in his theological works makes it difficult to specify his understanding of the cross of Christ, without referring to a large cross-section of his literary corpus. Christopher A. Beeley observes that, 'Gregory's

[44] Hilary, *Trinitate*, 10.49. Cf. 10.62.
[45] Hilary, *Trinitate*, 10.60.
[46] Concerning comments on the fourth word in Hilary's *In Matthaeum*, Mark Weedman argues that 'Hilary is vague about the relationship between Christ's humanity and divinity, perhaps to the point of separating the divinity from the humanity.' Mark Weedman, *The Trinitarian Theology of Hilary of Poitiers* (London: Brill, 2007), 172. My exploration of Hilary's theology is only as part of the survey of Patristic exegesis of the fourth word; further examination of this issue is worth noting but is beyond the scope of this work.

famous Theological Orations are essentially a point-by-point response to objections that have been raised to his doctrine, and they are presented in a highly rhetorical fashion rather than as a detached, positive exposition.'[47] Gregory's *Theological Orations* contain the most specific statements on the fourth word. He states that Christ, in subjecting himself to the Father, 'Presents to God that which he has subjected, making our condition His own.' Gregory argues that the fourth word functions in a similar way.

> It was not He who was forsaken either by the Father, or by His own Godhead, as some have thought, as if It were afraid of the Passion, and therefore withdrew Itself from Him in His sufferings . . . But as I said, He was in His own person representing us. For we were the forsaken and despised before, but now by the sufferings of Him who could not suffer, we were taken up and saved.[48]

Gregory Nazianzus clearly asserts that the Father did not abandon or forsake the Son during the hours of darkness at the cross. Instead he argues in a similar vein to Cyril of Alexandria that Christ speaks functionally as representative. In Oration 30, 5 Gregory Nazianzus also speaks of Christ as the second Adam and representative head of those united to him. Gregory's use of the hypostatic union in his interpretation of the fourth word, as with the other Church Fathers that I have cited, does not employ the *communicatio idiomatum* to interpret the fourth word. Gregory Nazianzus is distinct in that his understanding of the interaction of the divine and human in Christ is deliberately not as precise as Diodore of Tarsus and the Antiochene[49] theologians who used the *communicatio idiomatum* to cross-predicate Christ's human and divine attributes. Beeley argues, 'Rather than seeking to define

[47] Christopher A. Beeley, Gregory of Nazianzus on the Trinity and the Knowledge of God (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 3.

[48] Gregory of Nazianzus, *On God and Christ: The Five Theological Orations and Two Letters to Cledonius,* trans. Lionel Wickham and Frederick Williams (New York: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2002), *Oration* 30. 5.

[49] Antiochene theology consists of the writings of Diodore of Tarsus, and Theodore of Mopsuestia and their followers in the fifth century: Nestorius, Ibas of Edessa, and Theodoret of Cyrrhus. It is often associated with Aristotelian philosophy. The writings of Theodore of Mopsuestia (whose disciple was Nestorius), Theodoret of Cyrrhus, and Ibas of Edessa were condemned at the Second Council of Constantinople in 553. In contrast, Alexandrian theology is associated with Platonic thought. The Pact of Reunion of 433 was designed to reconcile the two theological schools. See, Price, *Constantinople*, 61-66.

Christ's identity in a static or abstract sense, Gregory understands it to be governed by the economy of salvation viewed as a whole.' Beeley suggests that this is most prevalent in the *Theological Orations*, the Epiphany sermons and the late Christological epistles.[50] In several of the *Orations*, however, Gregory does describe the united person of Christ in ways that clearly distinguish his two natures and their interaction at the cross.[51] Beeley draws a distinction in Gregory's writings between his description of Christ as a single subject and in a dualist construction. 'Single subject constructions outweigh dualist passages, in both frequency and importance, in the major and minor orations alike, as well as the dogmatic poems.'[52] Rather than offering a full explanation of Gregory's Christology I mention these pertinent aspects to demonstrate his use of the *communicatio idiomatum* and its possible extension to the cross.

Gregory's soteriological understanding of the cross of Christ has the further consequence that the fourth word is not explored in terms of the relation of the divine persons, indeed he claims that the Father did not forsake Christ. Because of Gregory Nazianzus' soteriological methodology, and his caution concerning the *communicatio idiomatum* in the face of his Antiochene opponents, he does not explore the Trinitarian relations at the cross of Christ.

Ambrose of Milan

Ambrose of Milan's arguments are also comparable to Cyril of Alexandria's. Concerning the fourth word he writes.

[50] Beeley, *Gregory*, 122.
[51] Cf. Gregory of Nazianzus, *Orations* 29.18, 30.1, 8, 9.
[52] Beeley, *Gregory*, 141.

> Neither his power nor his Godhead is amazed, but his soul. He is amazed by consequence of having taken human infirmity upon him. Finally, he cried: "My God, my God why have you forsaken me?" As being man, therefore, he speaks, bearing with him my terrors, for when we are in the midst of dangers we think ourselves abandoned by God.[53]

Ambrose of Milan directly quotes Christ's fourth word and focuses exclusively on Christ's humanity. He specifically claims that the cry is not representative of Christ's power and divine nature, but that instead it is Christ's human soul which feels the intensity expressed in the cry. Unlike Cyril, Ambrose does not suggest that Christ's word is spoken as a representative. He does, however, clearly employ the hypostatic union to explain the fourth word by distinguishing between Christ's impassable divine nature and his passible human nature. As with Cyril, Ambrose of Milan does not place sufficient emphasis on the *communicatio idiomatum* according to which the crucified one is God the Son incarnate.

Augustine of Hippo

Augustine of Hippo wrote extensively and systematically on the Trinity, but he wrote on Christology only occasionally and not systematically. Much of Augustine's Christology emerged in his anti-Pelagian writings on human freedom and original sin. Dominic Keech introduces his work on Augustinian Christology.

> The first problem facing any student of Augustine in search of his Christology is finding it. . . A very few of Augustine's works are specifically Christological in character, but they still fall outside the precedent set in the Patristic corpus by Athanasius' *De Incarnatione*, Ambrose's *De Incarnationis Dominicae Sacramento*, and the *Theological Orations* of Gregory of Nazianzus, to name but three examples.[54]

[53] Ambrose of Milan, *On the Christian Faith*, 2.7.56, www.newadvent.org/fathers/34042

[54] Dominic Keech, *The Anti-Pelagian Christology of Augustine of Hippo, 396-430* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 7.

Keech continues by stating what is absent in Augustine's writings. 'None of his works gives detailed and equal consideration to the divinity and humanity of Christ, hypostatised in one person.' Keech finds the root of this absence of specific and extended Christological writing in the lack of polemical context, which is ultimately attributable to the circumstances of Augustine's life both historically and geographically.[55] He contrasts Augustine's writings in this sense with the debates of the fourth and fifth century Christological controversies.[56] Keech's analysis of Augustinian Christology does not, as is often the case, view it stereoscopically[57] with Augustine's Trinitarian theology, particularly at the cross and the fourth word.

Within the Augustinian corpus there are two main places where Augustine treats the fourth word. First in his letter dating from 411 or 412 to Honoratus, a catechumen in Carthage; and secondly, in his *Exposition* (1 and 2) *of Psalm 21* from which the fourth word in Matthew 27:46 and Mark 15:34 is a quotation.[58]

Augustine's explanations of the fourth word are similar in both instances with some subtle variations. The following examination of Augustine also serves to illustrate the complementary nature of the Trinitarian reading of the cry put forward in this study in relation to the Patristic readings. The commentary on the Psalms and the letter to Honoratus are not homiletic works in the Augustinian corpus. Therefore Augustine is free explicitly to

[55] Keech's comments corroborate my argument in the introduction that a Trinitarian Christology of the fourth word was not developed in the early church because of a lack of polemical context.

[56] Keech, *Christology*, 7.

[57] I have borrowed the use of this term from T. F. Torrance who uses it to describe the way in which three elements of baptism need to be viewed in order properly to understand baptism. T. F. Torrance, *Theology in Reconciliation* (Oregon: Wipf and Stock, 1996), 89.

[58] In Augustine's exposition of the Psalms, Psalm 21 refers to Psalm 22 in modern arrangements of the Old Testament Scriptures. References to the Psalms in this section will follow the modern arrangement unless it is incorporated in a quotation from Augustine. Augustine began work on his commentary on the Psalms shortly after his ordination in 391. The commentary was not originally composed according to the sequence of the book of Psalms, and the composition of the commentary spanned three decades of Augustine's life. Consequently, precise dating of individual Psalm commentaries problematic, particularly when there is not internal dating evidence. Therefore, it is not possible to say definitively which of the two sources discussed here was composed first.

express the dogmatic principles in his writings, as he is not constrained by a congregational context in terms of the depth of theological content.

In his letter to Honoratus which Augustine entitles *A Book on the Grace of the New Testament for Honoratus*, there is evidence of clear affection for Honoratus whom Augustine calls 'My most dear brother.'[59] Honoratus has previously posed five questions which Augustine in response, seeks to order by means of a sixth question concerning the grace of the New Testament. Augustine relates the first question; you asked 'that I should explain and disclose to you what that statement of the Lord meant, My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?'[60] Augustine offers five complementary interpretations of the fourth word all of which assume it to be a deliberate quotation from Psalm 22:1 which demonstrates that the prophecy of the Psalm pertains to the Lord Jesus Christ.[61]

In the letter, Augustine first begins to articulate his fivefold response to Honoratus' question in terms of the hypostatic union. 'Christ the man and the same Christ God, by whose most merciful humanity and in whose form of a servant we ought to learn what we should scorn in this life and what we should hope for in the next.'[62] He immediately states that the fourth word teaches believers what should be scorned in this life and hoped for in the next.[63] Augustine shifts from theological interpretation to pastoral application in the initial articulation of his interpretation of the fourth word, and then weaves together several texts from the New Testament in which believers feel their weakness which is shared by Christ on the cross.[64]

[59] Augustine of Hippo, Letter 140 to Honoratus, Paragraph 1.
[60] Augustine, Letter 140 to Honoratus, Paragraph 2.
[61] Augustine, Letter 140 to Honoratus, Paragraphs 14 and 15.
[62] Augustine, Letter 140 to Honoratus, Paragraph 14.
[63] Augustine, Letter 140 to Honoratus, Paragraph 14.
[64] Most notably Paul the Apostle in 2 Corinthians 12:9.

It is important to note that at the beginning of paragraph 14 in his statement of the hypostatic union, Augustine is clear that it is the Son incarnate who is crucified. From this brief introductory clause it may be inferred that it is in Christ's 'most merciful humanity' in the form of a servant that Christ who is God the Son is crucified and utters the fourth word.

In paragraph 17 Augustine exegetes Psalm 22:1 by arguing that abandonment by God is the consequence of the sin mentioned in the final clause of the verse. Augustine suggests that the phrase 'words of my sins' means 'these words that I spoke are words of sins because they are the words of carnal desires,' that is, desires misaligned with the grace of the New Testament.[65] This interpretation integrates with Augustine's unifying theme of the grace of the New Testament in his letter to Honoratus

Next, Augustine emphasises another facet of his understanding of the fourth word. 'Christ speaks these words in the person of his body, which is the Church; he speaks these words in the person of the weakness of sinful flesh, which he applied to that flesh which he assumed from the Virgin, the likeness of sinful flesh . . . the bridegroom speaks these words in the person of his bride because he unified her to himself in a certain way.'[66] Twice in this quotation Augustine asserts that Christ utters the fourth word as his body the church, his bride. Again, Augustine continues to support this claim with reference to a number of scriptural texts. This theme is repeated briefly in paragraph 29.

In the remainder of the letter to Honoratus Augustine raises two more significant questions. In paragraph 28 he notes that the fourth word is not a statement but a question. In response Augustine again draws attention to the correct understanding and pursuit of God's grace in the New Testament.[67] The final question which concludes Augustine's response to

[65] Augustine, Letter 140 to Honoratus, Paragraph 17.
[66] Augustine, Letter 140 to Honoratus, Paragraph 18.
[67] Augustine, Letter 140 to Honoratus, Paragraph 28.

Honoratus' query regarding the fourth word again emphasises, by implication and directly, the grace of the New Testament as revealed in the inclusion of Psalm 22:1 in the canon of the word of God.

Augustine's letter to Honoratus emphasises the centrality of Psalm 22 in understanding the fourth word, and the importance of a correct understanding of the hypostatic union which guards divine impassibility and ensures Christ's identity with his church by virtue of his incarnation. Augustine asserts that Christ is forsaken by God in the sense that his cry is not answered which demonstrates Christ's human weakness.

The second Augustinian source in which he offers detailed comment on the fourth word is his Exposition (1 and 2) of Psalm 21, which contains his comments on the Psalm from which the fourth word is a direct quotation. It is clear from the letter to Honoratus that Augustine considered the Psalm to be central to a scripturally faithful understanding of the cry. Augustine makes three related comments on the fourth word in the Psalm which deal with four themes echoed from his teaching in the letter to Honoratus:[68] rightly understanding New Testament grace, the sinful nature, the impassibility of the divine nature, and Christ's self identity with the church his body.

Augustine argues that the words spoken by the crucified one are spoken 'in the character of our old self, whose mortality he bore and which was nailed to the cross with him.'[69] Therefore, according to Augustine, Christ is speaking in the place of sinners for whom he was crucified. More precisely, Christ speaks as the old self, or the old man, of those for whom he was crucified. Augustine repeats this concept in the following paragraph: 'Our old self, nailed to the cross with Christ, is speaking here, ignorant even of the reason why

[68] As noted above, precise comparative dating of Augustine's composition of his comments on the Psalms and his letter to Honoratus which was written in 411 or 412 is largely hypothetical.

[69] Augustine of Hippo, *Exposition 1 of Psalm 21*, 1.

God has abandoned it.'[70] This notion echoes Augustine's statements in his letter to Honoratus; however, in the commentary, Augustine offers greater clarity and precision.

Augustine claims that the fourth word highlights the importance of a correct view of New Testament grace.[71] His last comments on the fourth word in the Psalm appear in the second part of Augustine's exposition. Augustine reiterates the transliteration and translation of the Psalm quotation in the fourth word in the Gospel of Matthew and asserts that the cry cannot mean or imply that God had abandoned the Lord Jesus Christ.[72] The evidence Augustine cites to substantiate this claim is from the Johannine prologue; which Augustine interprets as teaching the full divinity of God the Son, and his incarnation (John 1:1, 14). Augustine's insistence that 'God did not abandon him' refers to the one who 'is himself God,' that is the Lord who is the Christ.[73] The constituent elements of the doctrine of the hypostatic union are present in this section of Augustine's comments, but the doctrine is not in direct view in the immediate context of his statement that the Lord Christ Jesus was not abandoned by God. Augustine does not refer to the *communicatio idiomatum* in either his letter to Honoratus or his commentary on Psalm 21, however, he does formulate a clearly and self-confessedly orthodox position on the doctrine in his work on the Trinity.[74] From his statement of the incarnation Augustine returns to the Psalm and writes that the cry draws attention to Christ's self identification with the Psalm which leads to the soteriological understanding of the cross that 'he himself intercedes for our sins, and has made our sins his own, in order to make his righteousness ours.'[75]

[70] Augustine, *Exposition 1 of Psalm 21*, 2.
[71] Augustine, *Exposition 1 of Psalm 21*, 3.
[72] Augustine of Hippo, *Exposition 2 of Psalm 21*, 3.
[73] Augustine, *Exposition 2 of Psalm 21, 3.*
[74] Augustine of Hippo, *De Trinitate* (U.S.A.: Fig, 2012), Book II Chapters 1 and 2.
[75] Augustine, *Exposition 2 of Psalm 21, 3.*

As with the other Church Fathers discussed in this section, Augustine does not explore the *communicatio idiomatum* with reference to Christ's fourth word from the cross. His writings in the comments on the Psalms and the letter to Honoratus, however, develop the Patristic foundation for a Trinitarian reading of the fourth word through the lens of the *communicatio idiomatum*. Augustine's use of the hypostatic union in these portions of his writing, his tacit insistence on divine impassibility, and the impossibility that God abandoned the Lord Christ who is God is an important but inchoate Patristic prolegomenon for the reading of the cry offered in this work.

Cyril of Alexandria

Cyril of Alexandria's theological disputes focused on critiquing and denouncing the theology of Nestorius. John A. McGuckin summarises the relevant dispute.

> What Nestorius regarded as the worst theological excess – the indiscriminate ascription of both divine and human attributes and characteristics to the one person – Cyril regarded as the quintessential truth revealed by the mystery of incarnation, and the very principle whereby the human race was redeemed.[76]

McGuckin treats the hypostatic union and the concomitant doctrine of the *communicatio idiomatum* as central in the Christological dispute between Cyril and Nestorius. In opposing Nestorianism and his separation of the natures of Christ, Cyril sought also to avoid other heresies which overly conflated the two natures of Christ. Although Cyril directly refers to Nestorius,[77] other heresies are frequently elided,[78] such as Arianism with Nestorianism, and Adoptionism with Docetism.

In places, the dialogical structure of *On the Unity of Christ* makes it difficult to determine Cyril's theology, but this difficulty vanishes when Cyril affirms the central

[76] Cyril, *Unity*, 20.
[77] Cyril, *Unity*, 52.
[78] Cyril, *Unity*, 54-55.

doctrine of the *communicatio idiomatum*. I will overview Cyril's main statements of the *communicatio idiomatum*, primarily in *On the Unity of Christ*, and then summarise the findings with reference to the death of Christ.

The history of the interpretation of Cyril's Christology in the post Chalcedonian Church Fathers is intricate. Where it is relevant, I will discuss Chalcedonian and anti-Chalcedonian interpretations of Cyril's theology[79] of the incarnation, particularly in Emperor Justinian. Although the varied interpretations of Cyril's theology of the incarnation are important, I will limit discussion of them to that which furthers the central aims of my thesis.

Three aspects of Cyril's explanation of the *communicatio idiomatum* are clarified in his work *On the Unity of Christ*; first, the suffering and death of Christ is the suffering and death of his humanity; secondly, the divine activities of Christ are assigned to his divine nature; and thirdly, what is true of either nature is predicated of the person of the Son of God, the Word of the Father. Cyril's statement that attributes and actions of either of Christ's two natures are to be predicated of the person who is God the Son, is followed in the Reformed tradition's use of the *communicatio idiomatum*. Cyril clearly avoids the later Lutheran *communicatio naturarum*. The Reformed distinction, however, in opposition to the Lutheran distinction makes sense in the context of the Reformed era. The distinctions are not discussed in the same way in the Patristic tradition which tends towards discussion in the context of the Theopaschite controversy of the suffering of the impassible Word incarnate. Therefore, although Cyril's position may be understood as the precursor to the Reformed understanding of the communication of idioms, the Reformed understanding must not be read back into the Patristic tradition anachronistically.

[79] Beeley argues, claiming the support of several scholars, that post-Chalcedonian Christology from the fifth century to the eighth century 'consists largely in the reinterpretation of Chalcedon in light of Cyril's mature thought.' Beeley, *Unity,* 257.

In addition to the three aspects of Cyril's doctrine of the *communicatio idiomatum*, he argues for two additional elements which must be taken into account if we are correctly to describe the implications of the *communicatio idiomatum*. First, Cyril argues that only the human nature of Christ is capable of suffering and death, the divine nature is impassible. Secondly, Cyril asserts that the *communicatio idiomatum* is ultimately mysterious.

Cyril articulates the mystery of the *communicatio idiomatum* in several places in *On the Unity of Christ*, he most clearly states the mystery in terms of divine omnipotence and human cognitive limitation. Cyril describes the Exodus account of the burning bush as a type of the mystery of the incarnation. 'This event [the burning bush] was a type of a mystery, of how the divine nature of the Word supported the limitations of the manhood; because he chose to. Absolutely nothing is impossible to him.'[80] As I quote further from Cyril, I will explore the way in which Cyril's articulation of the mystery limits his understanding of the precision of the *communicatio idiomatum*.

Cyril is adamant, that the divine nature is impassible, that the divine nature cannot experience suffering. 'In his own nature he certainly suffers nothing, for as God he is bodiless and lies entirely outside suffering.'[81] Cyril appears to claim that suffering is only possible for physically embodied persons, although this does not necessarily limit suffering to physical phenomena. The incorporeal existence of God's nature removes the possibility of divine suffering. Cyril describes divine impassibility in terms of the *communicatio idiomatum* at two key points in *On the Unity of Christ* which will lead to more specific discussion of Cyril's doctrine of the *communicatio idiomatum*. 'Are we then, to attribute the suffering to him and to no other, insofar as he appeared as a man, even if he remained impassible insofar as he is understood as God? That is exactly what I am saying.'[82] Cyril's interlocutor enables his more

[80] Cyril, *Unity*, 79.
[81] Cyril, *Unity*, 121.
[82] Cyril, *Unity*, 126.

emphatic expression of the *communicatio idiomatum* in relation to divine impassibility. Cyril argues that the suffering of the humanity of Christ is attributable only to the person of God the Son incarnate, and not to his divine nature, which remains impassible. He confirms divine impassibility in this sense. 'To say that he suffered does no disgrace to him, for he did not suffer in the nature of the godhead, but in his own flesh.'[83] These statements mark Cyril as a key theological antecedent to the Reformed understanding of the *communicatio idiomatum* which does not allow attributes of one nature to be predicated of the other nature, but only of the person of the Son, who has both natures.

Cyril's influence on the language of the Definition of Chalcedon is seen in his description of the hypostatic union. 'Godhead is one thing, and manhood is another thing, considered in the perspective of their respective and intrinsic beings, but in the case of Christ they came together in a mysterious and incomprehensible union without confusion or change.' [84] Cyril uses what are now known as two of the four Chalcedonian adverbs in describing the union of Christ's natures as without confusion and without change to either nature. He expresses the hypostatic union as a notion which is not able to be understood fully by human cognition, although it is in no way illogical or self-contradictory. For Cyril, the hypostatic union is essentially mysterious: 'We see in Christ the strange and rare paradox of Lordship in servant's form and divine glory in human abasement.'[85]

Emperor Justinian (482-565) offers extensive comment and interpretation of Cyril's theology and particularly the formula, 'μία φύσις τού λόγου σεσαρκωμένη,'[86] I discuss

[83] Cyril, *Unity*, 107.
[84] Cyril, *Unity*, 77.
[85] Cyril, *Unity*, 101.
[86] 'One nature of the word incarnate.' Aloys Grillmeier notes that the controversy over the Cyrilline formula is frequently the source of misunderstanding in anti-Chalcedon debate. Most notably in discussion between Severus of Antioch and Julian Bishop of Halicarnassus; and the dispute between Severus and Sergius the Grammarian. Aloys Grillmeier with Theresia Hainthaler, *Christ in Christian Tradition, Volume 2, Part 2: The Church of Constantinople in the Sixth Century*, trans. Pauline Allen and John Cawte (London: Mowbray, 1995), 26-26.

Justinian at this point in the survey because, as a key neo-Chalcedonian[87] interpreter of Cyril's theology, his theology shows the direction that interpretation of Cyril's theology took in the sixth century.

Justinian asserts that the formula is misunderstood by heretics as affirming that a third compound nature is produced from the union of the divine nature and the human nature in the incarnation.[88] Instead, Justinian argues that in using this formula Cyril frequently employs the terms 'Son' or 'Logos' which denote the hypostasis of God the Son rather than a nature. Justinian concludes 'When the hypostasis of the Logos was incarnate there was produced not one nature, but one composite Christ, the same God and man.'[89] The translator of *The Edict on the True Faith*, Kenneth P. Wesche, notes that the phrase 'composite Christ' refers to the divine Logos, the hypostasis of God the Son, rather than the divine nature.[90]

Justinian's interpretation of Cyril's μία φύσις formula defends Cyril as theologically aligned with Chalcedon, but this is achieved by arguing that Cyril's use of the word φύσις is better understood as *hypostasis* or *persona*. Initially such an interpretation is problematic when one assumes that Cyril uses *hypostasis* and *persona* to denote person; and that he does not use φύσις or μία φύσις to denote person, but nature. This problem is removed when the historical development of these technical terms is taken into account. Aloys Grillmeier writes, 'If the old-Nicenes employed the concepts *hypostasis* and *physis* (*ousia*) synonymously, the neo-Nicenes distinguished both words, so that they could speak of three *hypostasis* and one *physis* (*ousia*) in the Trinity. In particular this was the work of Basil and Gregory Nazianzen.

[87] The historical background of neo-Chalcedonian theology in the run up to the Second Council of Constantinople (553) is outlined in Price, *Constantinople.*

[88] This Miaphysite position is the logical consequence of understanding the union of body and soul into one human as directly analogous with the hypostatic union in the incarnation, rather than seeing it as a model, illustration, or example. Justinian's arguments effectively counteracts the Monophysite, Nestorian, and Antiochene positions on this point. On the body-soul illustration in Cyril and Severus Patriarch of Antioch see Grillmeier, *Tradition*, 34-39.

[89] Emperor Justinian, *On the Person of Christ*, trans. Kenneth P. Wesche (New York: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1991), 169.

[90] Justinian, *Person*, 169, footnote 6.

The latter took over this distinction of concepts from the doctrine of the Trinity (*theologia*) into the doctrine of the incarnation as well, the *oikonomia*. While Cyril of Alexandria followed this linguistic convention for the *theologia*, for the *oikonomia* he held fast to the old-Alexandrian tradition.'[91] In light of this historical distinction, Cyril's μία φύσις formula denotes the one Christ as one entity composed of the divine nature and the human nature.[92] Such an interpretation does justice both to Cyril's use of φύσις in the formula, and his use of this term in the rest of his Christological writings.[93] It also places him firmly within Chalcedonian Christology.

In *Against the Monophysites*, Justinian offers further clarification of the term composite. 'We understand that he exists in those natures of which he is composed. In this way, then, we affirm the difference of his divinity and flesh, denying the confusion of essence taught by the Eutychians; and at the same time we confess his one hypostasis, despising the division of Nestorius. For this is what St Cyril teaches in his third letter to Nestorius.'[94] Justinian explores the phrase 'composite Christ' as a reference to Christ's hypostasis rather than either nature because the Miaphysites used the terms nature and hypostasis synonymously.

[91] Grillmeier, *Tradition*, 430, 446. Cyril of Alexandria's synonymous use of *physis* and *hypostasis* was deliberately dropped at the Second Council of Constantinople (553), most notably in Canon I in which the divine Trinity is confessed.

[92] Metaphysical explanation of the one composite nature of Christ is beyond the scope of this study. Recent literature on compositional Christology is helpfully summarised from the perspective of analytic Theology in, Crisp, *Enfleshed*, 97-118. Crisp defends what he calls the three-part compositional model of the hypostatic union against five theological and metaphysical attacks which argue that the model is tantamount to variations of Nestorianism. I suggest that at times Crisp's discussion of Christ's human nature as a 'Concrete particular' leads to loss of focus on the fact that it was the subsistence of the Son, rather than the divine nature *in abstracto*, that assumed human nature, Crisp, *Enfleshed*, 108. Crisp asserts that this compositional model was taught by a number of unidentified Patristic theologians, and by Aquinas, in his garment analogy for the incarnation (Aquinas, ST. III. 3. 7.). Crisp also argues convincingly that compositional Christology aligns with the Council of Chalcedon and the Second Council of Constantinople, Crisp, *Enfleshed*, 107, 118.

[93] I assert that Justinian's interpretation of the μία φύσις formula is inconsistent with Cyril's use of φύσις, but that the motive for such an interpretation is true to the Chalcedonian spirit of Cyril's works on this issue. For further discussion of the μία φύσις and its interpretation as 'one entity' see Weinandy, *Suffer*, 192-196.

[94] Justinian, *Person*, 31.

Justinian's pro-Chalcedon interpretation of Cyril avoids heretical Christological deviation. In Justinian's works, *Against the Monophysites, A Letter on the Three Chapters,* and *The Edict on the True Faith*, he argues for a Cyrilline neo-Chalcedonian Christology which he consistently prefaces with an orthodox statement on the doctrine of the Trinity. Justinian also affirms Cyril's understanding of the *communicatio idiomatum* as scriptural and in accordance with other Patristic theologians. Justinian argues that the divine nature is impassible and the human nature is passible, and that both attributes are predicated of the hypostasis of the Son, the eternal Logos.[95] Justinian substantiates his statements on the *communicatio idiomatum* with evidence from other Church Fathers, particularly Cyril of Alexandria, Athanasius, Ambrose of Milan, and Gregory of Nyssa.

This exploration of the hypostatic union and divine impassibility promotes a clear understanding of the *communicatio idiomatum* in a Trinitarian context, which prepares the ground for Cyril's formulation of the *communicatio idiomatum*.

Cyril defines the *communicatio idiomatum* very simply. 'Both the recent characteristics of humanity, and the eternal characteristics of the deity apply to him.' The personal pronoun 'him' refers to the person of God the Son. Cyril adds that on the mount of transfiguration Peter the apostle saw the Logos, 'not nakedly or without flesh, but as he was revealed in flesh and blood.'[96] Cyril asserts that both the humanity[97] and divinity of Christ are the natures of the person who is God the Son. He claims that therefore, both human and divine attributes are predicated of the person of the Son in the Scriptures. 'The Word of God became an example for us in the days of his flesh, but not nakedly or outside the limits of the self-emptying. This was why he was quite properly able to employ the limitations of the manhood. This was why he extended his prayer, and shed a tear, at times even seemed to

[95] Justinian, *Person*, 167.
[96] Cyril, *Unity*, 94.
[97] Cyril, *Unity*, 61.

need a saviour himself, and learned obedience, while all the while he was the Son.'[98] Here Cyril moves closer to his most precise articulation of the *communicatio idiomatum* at the death of Christ.

In the *Scholia on the Incarnation of the Only-Begotten*[99] Cyril expresses the *communicatio idiomatum* more forcefully than in *On the Unity of Christ*. Section 36 concerns the *communicatio idiomatum* and the passion of Christ. Cyril's main question is, 'In what manner can we attribute passion to him and still hold him impassible as God?'[100] Cyril employs several Old Testament cases to illustrate the hypostatic union and the suffering of the Son of God in the flesh. He also illustrates the suffering of Christ who is the Word-become-flesh by physical suffering in the body in connection with the soul. 'The soul itself of a man, if its body suffers somewhat, remains external to the suffering as far as belongs to its own nature, yet is it not conceived of as external to suffering, in that the body which suffers is its very own: and albeit it be impalpable and simple, yet is that which suffers not foreign to it.'[101] In this illustration Cyril assumes an Aristotelian conception of the soul and its relation to the body; he also assumes that the soul is incapable of suffering. Regardless of the veracity of these assumptions, the illustration is helpful.

Cyril argues, 'We must therefore confess that the Word has imparted the glory of the divine operation to his own flesh, while at the same time taking to himself what belongs to the flesh.'[102] Cyril's model of the hypostatic union at this point seems so closely to unite the divine and human natures of Christ that each of the natures participates in some way in the properties of the other. Such a statement appears to move away from the later Reformed

[98] Cyril, *Unity*, 103.

[99] Grillmeier notes that in the *Scholia*, Cyril defines the distinctions between the two natures of Christ in the hypostatic union in such a way that Severus of Antioch appears not to assent to fully in his *Philalethes.* Grillmeier, *Tradition*, 35, 46.

[100] Cyril of Alexandria, *Scholia on the Incarnation of the Only Begotten*, Section 36, in McGuckin, *Controversy*.

[101] Cyril, Scholia, 36.

[102] Cyril, *Scholia*, 36.

understanding of the *communicatio idiomatum* towards the Lutheran *communicatio naturarum*. Cyril in the *Scholia* and elsewhere, limits this principle by stating more clearly that the Son only suffers in the flesh, and not in his divine nature. Cyril explains the union of the human and divine natures in Christ with the illustration of the Ark of the Covenant. The wood of the Ark is covered on the outside and the inside with gold. He argues that this represents the hypostatic union. 'For God the Word was united to the holy Flesh, and . . . the ark was overlaid without. But that he made his own the reasonable soul also that was within the body, will this shew . . . that . . . it should be overlaid within also. And that the natures or hypostases have remained unconfused. For the gold that was spread upon the wood, remained what it was, and the wood was rich in the glory of the gold; yet it ceased not from being wood.'[103] Cyril's explanation of this illustration demonstrates that Cyril is not a Patristic endorsement of the later Lutheran understanding of the *communicatio naturarem*. Instead he argues that the attributes of the human and divine natures of Christ are predicated of the person of the Son, but that through this personal predication the two natures have an indirect influence on each other in the hypostatic union. I suggest that Cyril's illustration of the Ark for the hypostatic union is the controlling model in Cyril's arguments. Anachronistic reading of the Reformed understanding of the communication of idioms into Cyril's writings must be tentative. Cyril's comments have significant implications for nature and persons but he does not use the language of nature and persons in this context.

Cyril makes similar comments about the language of composition in Christ in his treatise against the Synousiasts[104] which is quoted by Justinian in *Against the Monophysites*. Justinian argues from this text that 'We have clearly established that the two natures which came together did not produce one composite nature, but one composite Christ since the same

[103] Cyril, *Scholia*, 11.

[104] Cyril of Alexandria, *Five Tomes against Nestorius, Scholia on the Incarnation, Christ is One, and Fragments against Diodore of Tarsus, Theodore of Mopsuestia, the Synousiasts*, ed. P. E. Pusey (Oxford: James Parker, 1881), 175.

one is confessed to be God by nature and man by nature.'[105] The interpretation of Cyril in Justinian's writings offers a consistently pro-Chalcedon understanding of the *communicatio idiomatum* with reference to Trinitarian theology.

Cyril argues that all the experiences of Christ's humanity were the experiences of Christ, who is God the Son in human flesh. Therefore human and divine predicates apply to the one grammatical subject. Cyril's exegetical method excludes the Antiochene understanding that in Jesus Christ there are two grammatical subjects: the man and the Word. Ruth M. Siddals helpfully summarises Cyril's teaching here. 'The ontological subject of the Word-become-flesh who displays within himself both divine inherent features as properties and acquired human inherent features, is also the grammatical subject whose story of divine and human events unfolds in the New Testament.'[106] Siddals comments that because of the ancient terminology he uses, Cyril moves more readily between the linguistic and metaphysical concerns than contemporary scholars. Therefore, the linguistic subject, the Word-become-flesh, is the Son of God in personal union with his humanity. Whatever happens to the human nature of Christ, happens to the person of the Son of God.

The difficulty of applying the *communicatio idiomatum* to the death of Christ is exacerbated by the problem of showing how divine and human predications can be true of one subject. Scripture states that the one subject Jesus Christ both suffers and does not suffer; that he worships and that he receives worship; that he is first-born and that he is eternal. Both sets of predicates are true, but, as Siddals argues, it is impossible for both to be true in the same way. Cyril criticises the Arians for failing to analyse correctly the *communicatio idiomatum* as stating that the scriptural statements concerning Christ's divine nature are not true of the one subject in the same way as the scriptural statements concerning Christ's

[105] Justinian, *Person*, 52.

[106] Ruth M. Siddals, 'Logic and Christology in Cyril of Alexandria,' *The Journal of Theological Studes*, Vol 38, 1987, 341-367.

human nature.[107] Siddals synthesises the various elements of Cyril's arguments and asserts, 'Cyril is distinguishing here between what can be predicated of the Word with reference to what the Word is by nature and substance, and what can be predicated of him as regards what he has become.'[108] I develop my analysis of Siddals' treatment of Cyril's argument further in Part II. The discussion to this point is sufficient to explain Cyril's doctrine of the communication of idioms.

Cyril offers a theological expansion of the fourth word, but does not at this point apply his use of the *communicatio idiomatum*. It is worth quoting because it demonstrates Cyril's caution in approaching the mystery of the cross.

> Understand that in becoming man, the Only Begotten spoke these words as one of us and on behalf of our nature. It was as if he were saying this: "The first man has transgressed. He slipped into disobedience, and then it was entirely right that he became subject to corruption and fell under judgement. But you Lord have made me a second beginning for all on the earth, and I am called the Second Adam. In me you see the nature of man . . . made holy and pure. Now give me the good things of your kindness, undo the abandonment, rebuke the corruption and set a limit on your anger. I have conquered Satan himself who ruled of old, for he found in me absolutely nothing of what was his." In my opinion this is the sense of the Saviour's words.[109]

Cyril's expansion of the fourth word does not directly address the theological questions pertinent to this thesis. He does not extend his discussion of the *communicatio idiomatum* to the fourth word. Nor does he develop the concept of the intra-Trinitarian relations in the way I am proposing. Instead he chooses to focus on the soteriological component of the nature of the cross of Christ. In this way Cyril depicts Christ as addressing the Father in such soteriological terms rather than focusing on the notes of terror that later theologians would seek to draw out of the fourth word. Cyril argues that Christ's fourth word is spoken as the representative of humanity. In the Reformed tradition John Owen provides further biblical

[107] Cyril of Alexandria, *Thesaurus de Sancta et Consubstantiali Trinitate, Patrologia Cursus Completus Graeca*. Edited by J. P. Migne. Paris, 1857-1856. PG 75 29B.

[108] Siddals, 'Logic', 360.

[109] Cyril, *Unity*, 106.

evidence for Cyril's interpretation based on the covenantal use of the words 'My God.' Owen argues that whenever God is addressed as 'my God' or declares himself to be the God of an individual or group, a covenant is suggested.[110] The range of Scriptures that Owen brings as evidence builds a compelling argument for his case. Therefore, when Owen's and Cyril's arguments are brought together a clear covenantal framework for the fourth word becomes apparent.

Although in his exegesis of the fourth word Cyril is less precise, he offers the helpful category of 'οικείωσιν οίχονομιχην'[111] in which to understand the weakness of Christ. 'Just as we say that the flesh became his very own, in the same way the weakness of that flesh became his very own in an economic appropriation.'[112] This is specifically extended to the suffering and death of Christ. 'We say that the Word of God the Father himself suffered in the flesh for our sake.'[113] Here Cyril expressly states that because of the suffering of the humanity of Christ, we may say with the Scriptures that the person of the Son suffered, although that suffering was limited to suffering in his humanity, not his deity.[114]

Cyril offers a more concise statement of his theological position on the *communicatio idiomatum* in his twelfth anathema in dialogue with Theodoret. 'If any do not confess that the Word of God suffered in the flesh, was crucified in the flesh, tasted death in the flesh, and became the firstborn from the dead, because as God he is both life and life-giver, let them be anathema.'[115] The repetition of the clause 'in the flesh' maintains Cyril's insistence that the

[110] 'For this expression of being a God unto any one is declarative of a covenant.' Owen, *Hebrews, Vol. II*, 84. Among many other examples, Owen initially points to Jeremiah 31:33; 32:38; Hosea 2:23 as evidence for his claim. The context is Owen's argument for the covenant of redemption between the Father and the Son. An examination of the covenant of redemption is beyond the scope of this work; but if it is a correct understanding of Scripture, the theodicy that I am constructing on the basis of the fourth word would gain additional traction.

[111] PG 75:1327. McGuckin translates this as 'economic appropriation,' Cyril, *Unity*, 107.

[112] Cyril, *Unity*, 107.

[113] Cyril, *Unity*, 115. Cf. Cyril's 12th Anathema (third letter Ep. 17).

[114] Cf. also 1 Peter 4:1.

[115] St Cyril of Alexandria, *Three Christological Treatises*, Translated by Daniel King (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 2014), 128.

divine nature is impassible, whilst at the same time asserting that it is the one subject God the Son who suffered in the flesh.

In his defence of the twelfth anathema against Theodoret's critique, Cyril reiterates his agreement that the divine nature of the Son[116] is impassible. But adds that, 'He made the passible body his very own, the result of which is that one can say that he suffered by means of something naturally passible, even while he himself remains impassible in respect of his own nature.'[117] Following this basic point, Cyril quotes from a number of the New Testament letters which predicate suffering and death of Christ, of him (that is the Son of God), and of the Lord of glory (1 Corinthians 2:8).[118] Cyril argues, 'How is it that the one through whom and in whom everything exists . . . is appointed by God the Father as head of the body, the church. Surely it was because he took personal ownership of the sufferings that pertained to his own flesh. . . The single Christ is to be identified with the crucified Lord. . . Therefore, let them predicate all these things of him and confess that God the Word is the saviour who remains impassible in his divine nature while also suffering in the flesh.'[119]

Furthermore, in his defence of the twelfth anathema against the bishops of the diocese of Oriens Cyril writes, 'Who would be so stupid as to describe as passible the most superior substance of all, or dare to pull what is above all becoming and is without material body down into the instability that characterises created things? . . So when we say that he suffered in the flesh, he is not reckoned to be suffering in his very own nature, insofar as he is God. Rather, he made the suffering his very own.'[120] Cyril is consistently emphatic that the divine

[116] In a sense speaking of the divine nature of the Son suggests tritheism. The potential inference is incorrect; instead, I use the phrase to clarify the argument that I construct concerning the *communicatio idiomatum*, the modal distinction, and the fourth word, to which the present work is a response.

[117] Cyril, *Treatises*, 129.

[118] The Second Council of Constantinople (553), in Canon X, pronounced the following anathema: 'If anyone does not confess that our Lord Jesus Christ, who was crucified in the flesh, is true God and Lord of glory and one of the holy Trinity, let him be anathema.'

[119] Cyril, *Treatises*, 130.

[120] Cyril, *Treatises*, 179.

nature of God the Son is impassible but that it was truly the Son who suffered in his human nature.

This articulation of the *communicatio idiomatum* provides a useful Patristic site on which to construct a more precise statement of the Trinitarian implications of Christ's fourth word from the cross. The above discussion of Cyril's employment of the *communicatio idiomatum* demonstrates Cyril's concern with the person of Christ. He states this in opposition to the Nestorian claim that there are two persons in Christ, the human and the divine.

Cyril of Alexandria deliberately aligns his doctrine of the *communicatio idiomatum* with scriptural teaching while also using the technical vocabulary available to him. He applies the doctrine to the suffering and death of Christ in many places; most precisely in his *Scholia on the Incarnation of the Only Begotten* and his *A Defence of the Twelve Anathemas Against Theodoret*. Cyril specifies that the person of the Son truly suffers in the flesh and yet he consistently asserts that the divine nature remains impassible. Cyril's precision concerning the death of Christ and the *communicatio idiomatum* diminishes in his application of the *communicatio idiomatum* to Christ's fourth word. Cyril's expansion of the cry in *On the Unity of Christ* does not offer theological insight into the Trinitarian relations of the cry. Additionally, his comments on Matthew 27 do not cover the fourth word.[121] In part Cyril's reticence here can be accounted for by his understanding of the hypostatic union as essentially a mystery beyond human comprehension. Although Cyril is clear on human inability to fully grasp the mystery, he does articulate the *communicatio idiomatum* with a high degree of precision. Therefore, I suggest that Cyril understands the mystery of the cross as above our comprehension in terms of the hypostatic union and the Trinitarian dynamics and the *communicatio idiomatum*.

[121] PG 72: 366-472. 470.

Maximus the Confessor

Maximus'[122] emphasis on dyotheletism will frame the discussion in terms of the two natures of Christ, rather than the person of Christ as was the case in discussion of Cyril of Alexandria. The writings of Maximus the Confessor were less directly influential on conciliar documents, but they have shaped Eastern Orthodoxy, and Christian theology in general. This is particularly significant in relation to dyothelitism which was vindicated at the Third Council of Constantinople in 681. The official documents of the council do not acknowledge Maximus' writings, but his influence is clear. Citing Jean-Claude Larchet and Andrew Louth, the authors Paul M. Blowers and Robert Louis Wilken assert that, 'Recognition of St Maximus the Confessor's decisive work in the shaping of Eastern Orthodoxy, and of his mediatorial role as one of the few genuinely ecumenical theologians of the Patristic era, was assured.'[123]

Paul Blowers writes, 'Maximus' theological reasoning at times comes to expression in an exacting logic and use of syllogisms; and he is often meticulously precise in the nuances of his theological language.'[124] Maximus' emphasis on deification, and the cosmic aspect of salvation in Christ focuses on the hypostatic union. The Christological emphasis in combination with Maximus' theological precision means that his writings are of great significance in exploring Patristic thought on the *communicatio idiomatum*.

[122] Rowan Williams suggests that Maximus the 'most important theologian of the seventh century, possibly the most important of all Byzantine theologians.' Rowan Williams, *Christ the Heart of Creation* (London: Bloomsbury Continuum, 2018), 99.

[123] Maximus the Confessor, *On the Cosmic Mystery of Jesus Christ*, Trans. Paul M. Blowers and Robert Louis Wilken (St Vladimir Theological Seminary: New York, 2003), 16.

[124] Maximus, *Cosmic*, 16.

The occasional, as opposed to systematic, nature of the writings of Maximus, in his *scholia*, *epistulae*, *opuscula*, *kephalaia*, and *mystagogia*, might suggest that his discussion of the *communicatio idiomatum* is insufficiently extended. This does not mean, however, that Maximus' carefully worked out insights in dialogue with his contemporaries are less incisive concerning the present subject. Maximus, like Cyril, insists that the human mind is incapable of fully comprehending the divine mystery revealed in the incarnation.

Maximus locates the incarnation in a Trinitarian framework.[125] 'For the triad is truly monad, because thus it is, and the monad is truly triad, because thus it subsists. Thus, there is one Godhead that is as monad, and subsists as triad.'[126] Here the Confessor employs technical language including terminology from the Second Council of Constantinople to distinguish between the nature and the subsistences of the Triune God. Maximus also asserts that the uncreated divine nature is impassible. 'It belongs to God alone to be the end and the completion and the impassible. God is unmoved and complete and impassible. It belongs to creatures to be moved toward that end that is without end. . . For whatever comes into being and is created is certainly not absolute.'[127] Maximus associates passibility with the created status of all that God has made in distinction to his own impassible nature.[128] His argument that God's nature exists as *actus purus*, that is, being in pure actuality without potentiality, further underscores his doctrine of divine impassibility, and creaturely passibility. The distinction between what is by nature impassible, and what is by nature passible is vital for correctly understanding the *communicatio idiomatum* because according to Maximus, the divine nature of Christ is impassible and the human nature of Christ is passible.

[125] Maximus, *Cosmic*, 66.
[126] Maximus the Confessor, *Opusculum* 1:1036C.
[127] Maximus, *Cosmic*, 50.
[128] Maximus, *Cosmic*, 50.

Maximus' understanding of unity and distinction in Christ is made possible by his clear articulation of person and nature. Demetrios Bathrellos argues that 'Severus' [of Antioch] fatal mistake consists precisely in his refusal to distinguish between them, because, without this distinction, it is not possible to denote unity and distinction in Christ in a satisfactory way.' Bathrellos further argues that Severus confuses nature and person by ignoring the distinction between them.[129] The interpretation of the fourth word that I argue for in this work depends on an orthodox understanding of the distinction between person and nature in Christ. Highlighting historical errors in this area, and their consequences, provides further clarification of the issue. I also argue at the end of the survey that the developing understanding of the distinction between person and nature means that the Reformed *communicatio idiomatum* is the historical inheritor of the Patristic doctrine.

Maximus describes the hypostatic union similarly to Cyril of Alexandria. Maximus writes, 'For he united our nature to himself in a single hypostasis, without division and without confusion, and joined us to himself . . . This holy flesh with its intellectual and rational soul came from us and is ours. He deemed us worthy to be one and the same with himself according to his humanity.'[130] Like Cyril, Maximus employs the technical vocabulary used in the Definition of Chalcedon. Maximus also emphasises the full humanity of Christ. This is more nuanced, however, in Maximus than in Cyril because of Maximus' focus on the natures of Christ and their respective wills. The full humanity of Christ is stated to be that of a creature which is inherently passible.[131] Therefore according to the *communicatio idiomatum*, 'is passible' may be predicated of the person of the Son according to the flesh.

[129] Demetrios Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ: Person, Nature, and Will in the Christology of Saint Maximus the Confessor* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 101. See Bathrellos' work on Maximus for further discussion on Maximus' definitions and distinction.

[130] Maximus, *Cosmic*, 70.

[131] Maximus, Cosmic, 80. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to examine Maximus' distinction between the sinlessness and incorruptibility of Christ's human nature.

The relationship between the two natures of Christ is expressed by Maximus with great precision, and he likens the hypostatic union to the union of body and soul.[132] 'What could be more amazing than the fact that, being God by nature, and seeing fit to become man by nature, he did not defy the limits of either one of the natures in relation to the other, but instead remained wholly God while becoming wholly human. Being God did not diminish his divinity. He remained wholly one amid both, since he preserved both natures, and was truly existent in both natures at once.'[133] Maximus explicitly opposes Nestorianism by stating that the union of Christ's natures is a personal union, and that this person of God the Son is the sole person of the Christ.[134]

Maximus' argues that the hypostatic union is a composite union, and this reinforces the Chalcedonian insistence that the two natures of Christ are not confused.[135]

> The natures remain undiminished, and the quantity of each of the united natures is preserved, even after the union. For whereas by the union no change or alteration at all was suffered by either of the united natures, the essential principle of each of the united natures endured without being compromised. . . Neither of the natures was denied anything at all because of the union. . . For naturally we must not consider any change at all in God.[136]

For Maximus, the two natures of Christ are related in strictly Chalcedonian terms. He emphasises the impassibility of the divine nature, and the passibility of the human nature.[137] Again, it is beyond the scope of the present work to examine Maximus' understanding of how the divine nature remains unchanged in its hypostatic union with the human nature of Christ.[138] Maximus repeatedly frames his discussion of the hypostatic union in Trinitarian

[132] Maximus, Cosmic, 83.
[133] Maximus, Cosmic, 84.
[134] Maximus, Cosmic, 84.
[135] Maximus, Cosmic, 123.
[136] Maximus, Cosmic, 124.
[137] Maximus, Cosmic, 134.
[138] Maximus, Cosmic, 169. 'He himself transcends every essence and nature, he consented to enter our human essence without undergoing change, and, while retaining his transcendence, to become a man and willingly to interact as one among men.'

theology, in relation to both the knowledge of the divine subsistences[139] and the unity of the Trinitarian operations in redemption. He also frames much of his Christological discussion in terms of the dyothelite controversy. This is particularly the case in his writings from 640[140] onwards in which he remains hesitant to join in public controversy, but displays great clarity in his understanding of the composite Christ in the incarnation.

Maximus does not directly apply his understanding of the *communicatio idiomatum* to the death of Christ. Cyril did apply the doctrine to the death of Christ, and the fourth word, but he did so with great caution, and always with reference to the mystery of the incarnation. Maximus does not provide the same reason for not applying the *communicatio idiomatum* to the cross, although he does highlight the mystery of the incarnation. Therefore, discussion of Maximus' application of the *communicatio idiomatum* to the death of Christ is speculative, but he does provide a clear structure in which such speculation may be put forward.

Maximus affirms the Chalcedonian distinctions between Christ's passible human nature and impassible divine nature. He also affirms the *communicatio idiomatum* within the bounds of orthodoxy and in a way that is very similar to Cyril of Alexandria. Therefore, it is reasonable to suggest that Maximus would argue that at the cross, the divine nature of Christ remained impassible, while his passible human nature suffered crucifixion and death. The result of this is that both passible and impassible attributes are predicated of the one person of the Son.

For both Cyril and Maximus, the material implication of their understanding of the *communicatio idiomatum* is that the person who is the eternal Son suffers and dies at the cross, and is buried. Neither Cyril nor Maximus address the Trinitarian implications of this

[139] Maximus, Cosmic, 127.

[140] Andrew Louth draws attention to Maximus' *Opuscula* 3 and 7 and argues that Maximus' dyothelite Christology is consistently 'Overshadowed by the decision of the Council of Chalcedon in 451.' Andrew Louth, *Maximus the Confessor* (London: Routledge, 1996), 49.

aspect of the *communicatio idiomatum,* especially concerning the fourth word. I suggest that particularly in Maximus' theology, speculation in this vein would be trespassing upon what he considered to be the bounds of mystery in the incarnation, and that it would therefore be a distortion of his theological system.

John of Damascus

John of Damascus' doctrine of the *communicatio idiomatum* is significant for later Scholastic and Reformed positions on the doctrine. He directly opposes the Lutheran *communicatio naturarem*. 'When we speak of the divinity, we do not attribute the properties of the humanity to it. Thus, we never speak of a passible or created divinity. Neither do we predicate the divine properties of the flesh, for we never speak of uncreated flesh or humanity.' The Damascene instead upholds what later became the Reformed conception. 'In the case of the person, however, whether we name it from both of the parts or from one of them, we attribute the properties of both the natures to it. And thus, Christ – which name covers both together – is called both God and man, created and uncreated, passible and impassible.'[141]

The Damascene argues that according to the *communicatio idiomatum*, it is the person of the Son incarnate that was crucified, suffered, and died. He states clearly, however, that these experiences are predicated of the human nature and not the divine nature which remained impassible.[142]

[141] John of Damascus, *De Fide Orthodoxa,* 3, 4. *In Saint John of Damascus Writings*, trans. Frederic H. Chase, Jr. (USA: Ex Fontibus, 2015).

[142] John of Damascus, *De Fide,* 4, 7.

John of Damascus does not extend the *communicatio idiomatum* to the fourth word in his comments on Mark 15:34 in *De Fide Orthodoxa*. He writes that Christ uttered the fourth word, 'Because he appropriated our appearance and prayed these things.'[143] John of Damascus depends heavily on the hypostatic union for his understanding of the death of Christ.

> Therefore, Christ, while being two natures, suffered in His passible nature and in it was crucified, for it was in the flesh that He hung on the cross, and not in the divinity. . . The Divine Word was incarnate and begotten in the flesh, and He was crucified in the flesh . . . while His divinity remained unaffected.[144]

He uses the analogy of sunlight on a tree remaining unaffected when the tree is cut down with an axe to explain how the divine nature is unaffected by the suffering and death of the human nature in the hypostatic union.[145] John of Damascus' specific employment of the hypostatic union to state that Christ's human nature suffers while his divine nature remains impassible is not extended to his interpretation of the fourth word, neither does he directly discuss the *communicatio idiomatum* in connection with the cry. His theology of the hypostatic union and the *communicatio idiomatum* are important foundations, however, for the Scholastic and Reformed developments that contribute to my Trinitarian interpretation of the fourth word.

Thomas Aquinas

The Christology of Thomas Aquinas in the *Summa Theologiae* is profoundly Trinitarian, and he develops a comprehensive Christology in the *Tertia Pars* of the *Summa*. Aquinas sets out a series of questions concerning the *consequentia unionis* (Questions 16-26), the logically

[143] John of Damascus, *De Fide*, 3, 20.
[144] John of Damascus, *De Fide*, 4, 20.
[145] John of Damascus, *De Fide*, 3, 26.

necessary consequences of the assumption of human nature by the Word. The first consequence listed by Aquinas is the *communicatio idiomatum*, which demonstrates the great significance that Aquinas attaches to the doctrine as a means of correctly understanding the teaching of Scripture and the precise wording of the Niceno-Constantinopolitan creed. Based on the structure of the *Summa*, Paul Gondreau writes:

> These latter treatments of Christ's unity of will and of his prayer are not to be seen as simple additions to a list of consequences of the incarnation beginning with the communication of idioms. Rather, in the organic, cohesive study of Christ to which most of the *Tertia Pars* is devoted, q. 16 sets the stage for qq. 18 and 21. . . Christ's agony in the garden is to be examined *in light* of the communication of idioms.[146]

Gondreau's assessment of the significance of the cyclical structure of the *Summa* leads to the conclusion that the communication of idioms is listed first by Aquinas because of its foundational role in understanding the incarnation.

Aquinas asks 'Whether what belongs to the human nature can be predicated of God? He responds with reference in the context to the Damascene and the twelve anathemas of Cyril of Alexandria.

> Cyril says: 'If anyone ascribes to two persons or substances,' i.e., hypostases, 'such words as are in the evangelical and apostolic Scriptures, or have been said of Christ by the Saints, or by Himself of Himself, and believes that some are to be applied to the Word alone – let him be anathema.' And the reason of this is that, since there is one hypostasis of both natures, the same hypostasis is signified by the name of either nature. Thus when we say 'man' or 'God,' the hypostasis of Divine and human nature is signified. And hence, of the Man may be said what belongs to the Divine Nature, as of a hypostasis of the Divine Nature; and of God may be said what belongs to the human nature, as of a hypostasis of human nature.[147]

[146] Paul Gondreau, 'Aquinas, the Communication of Idioms, and the Suffering of Christ,' in *Divine Impasibility and the Mystery of Human Suffering*, ed. James F. Keating and Thomas Joseph White, O. P. (Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans, 2009), 221.

[147] *ST* III, q. 16, a. 4.

Aspects of this quotation from Aquinas may appear on the surface to look like the later Lutheran understanding of the *communicatio idiomatum*, particularly the final sentence. Aquinas concludes the article with a clarifying comment on Augustine. In what follows Aquinas clearly notes that divine attributes are predicated of Christ according to his divine nature and human attributes are predicated of Christ according to his human nature because God the Son incarnate is one divine-human subject or hypostasis, in two natures.

> Nevertheless, it must be borne in mind that in a proposition in which something is predicated of another, we must not merely consider what the predicate is predicated of, but also the reason of its being predicated. Thus, although we do not distinguish things predicated of Christ, yet we distinguish that by reason of which they are predicated, since those things that belong to the Divine Nature are predicated of Christ in His Divine Nature, and those that belong to the human nature are predicated of Christ in his human nature. Hence Augustine says (De Trin. I, 11): 'We must distinguish what is said by Scripture in reference to the form of God, wherein He is equal to the Father, and what in reference to the form of a servant, wherein He is less than the Father.'[148]

Aquinas' careful language is reminiscent of Cyril of Alexandria's Christological discussion. Furthermore, article 5 of Question 16 makes the conclusion of the previous article explicit. Article 5 concerns 'Whether what belongs to the human nature can be predicated of the Divine Nature?' After three objections Aquinas answers the question of article 5.

> What belongs to one [nature] cannot be said of another, unless they are both the same. . . Now in the mystery of the Incarnation the Divine and human natures are not the same; but the hypostasis of the two natures is the same. And hence what belongs to one nature cannot be predicated of the other if they are taken in the abstract.[149]

Aquinas continues by adding that in the concretion of Christ's person, the divine and human attributes are both predicated of the one subject.[150] Gondreau writes on the anguish in the

[148] *ST* III, q. 16, a. 4.

[149] *ST* III, q. 16, a. 5. *Et ideo ea quae sunt unius naturae. Et ideo ea quae sunt unius naturarae, non possunt de alia praedicari, secundum quod in abstracto significantur.*

[150] Cf. *ST* III, q. 3, a. 1, *Ad Secundum.*

Garden of Gethsemane, 'By affirming the experience of real fear in Jesus and real *ut natura* recoiling from his impending death, we can affirm (predicate) real fear and *ut natura* anguish of God (the Word), and even of the divine nature itself (qua concretely joined by hypostatic union to his assumed humanity).' Gondreau correctly clarifies this statement in a footnote. 'For Aquinas, one ascribes passibility to the divine nature only inasmuch as this nature is hypostasized by a person who undergoes passibility through his assumed nature.'[151]

Question 50 of the *Tertia Pars* concerns the death of Christ. In article 2 Aquinas responds to the suggestion that the Godhead was separated from Christ's flesh in his death. Here Aquinas' exegetical skill draws from Romans 11:29 to conclude: 'What is bestowed through God's grace is never withdrawn except through fault.' Aquinas continues by arguing that 'Consequently, as before death Christ's flesh was united personally and hypostatically with the word of God, it remained so after his death, so that the hypostasis of the Word of God was not different from that of Christ's flesh after death.' Aquinas provides evidence for his argument from John of Damascus.[152] Furthermore, Article 3 discusses the suggestion that Christ's soul was separated from his Godhead. Aquinas responds by stating that the hypostatic union continues throughout the passion, death, and burial. Although the soul and the body of Christ are separated, each remains united to the Godhead. Aquinas argues that Christ suffered in his human body and soul what was appropriate to them,[153] in accordance with his orthodox understanding of the *communicatio idiomatum*.

In his Christology, particularly in Question 3, Article 4, of the *Tertia Pars,* Aquinas emphasises the divine power of God in uniting the divine and human nature in the hypostatic union. Aquinas draws a profound distinction between the act of assuming and the terminus of

[151] Gondreau, 'Aquinas,' 244.
[152] *ST* II, q.50, a. 2.
[153] *ST* III, q. 18, a. 5.

the assumption. The former element of the distinction emphasises the Patristic principle that the works of God are one, both *ad intra* and *ad extra*. It is the divine power of the one simple, divine nature that brings about the hypostatic union. The latter element of the distinction emphasises the biblical truth that it is the Son, not the Father, nor the Holy Spirit, who is united to the human nature. Dominic Legge affirms, 'the three persons act so that a human nature would be united to the one person of the Son.'[154] Aquinas' distinction preserves the unity of the works of God, which is vital to orthodox Trinitarian theology.

The distinction between the efficient cause and the terminus of the hypostatic union leads Aquinas to uphold a very high view of the hypostatic union. Aquinas sees the hypostatic union as the greatest possible way in which a creature can be related to a divine person. Legge argues that, according to Aquinas, the 'surpassingly greater union' is 'according to subsistence and being.'[155] Legge goes on to affirm that the terminus of the assumption of human nature is the Son's personal *esse*,[156] which he defines from Aquinas as 'an "act of being" or "act of existing."'[157] Legge notes that although the Latin word *esse* is often translated by the English word being, Aquinas does not use *esse* to designate a 'thing called "being," or something added to a nature;' instead Aquinas uses *esse* to designate an act. Aquinas concludes therefore, that the one who is Jesus of Nazareth is God the eternal Son in his very being.[158]

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[154] Legge, *Christology*, 104. Aquinas notes that 'a person is primarily and more properly said to assume, but it may be said secondarily that the nature assumed a nature to its person. And after the same manner the nature is also said to be incarnate.' *ST* III, q. 3, a. 2.

[155] Legge, *Christology*, 106.

[156] Aquinas also teaches that the assumption of human nature to the person of the Son took place by the power of the divine nature. *ST* III, q. 3, a. 2. He clarifies the point two articles later. 'The act of assuming proceeds from the divine power, which is common to the three persons, but the term of the assumption is a person.' *ST* III, q. 3, a. 4. Therefore, 'the assumption which is by the grace of union is common on the part of the principle, but not on the part of the term.' *ST* III, q. 3, a. 4.

[157] Legge, *Christology*, 106. *ST* III, q. 3, a. 1.

[158] For further explanation of Aquinas' understanding of the extent of the hypostatic union, and the implications see Legge, *Christology*, 106-107. Legge also notes that the distinctions that Aquinas makes in terms of *esse*, the act of assumption, and the terminus of the assumption, are often overlooked in contemporary commentary on the *Summa Theologiae*, and discussion of Aquinas' Christology and Trinitarian theology.

The greatness of the hypostatic union of the human nature and God the eternal Son, according to his *esse*, is surpassingly profound. This Thomistic understanding of the scriptural witness to the hypostatic union has deep implications for the nature of Christ's death on the cross and the interpretation of the fourth word. I discuss these implications below.

As with a number of other theologians I have looked at, Aquinas' separate discussion of Trinitarian theology and Christology, particularly the work of Christ, in the *Prima Pars* and the *Tertia Pars* of the *Summa Theologiae* partly explains why he does not discuss the fourth word through the lens of the *communicatio idiomatum* and framed by Trinitarian thought. It is also perhaps because of Aquinas' caution concerning the mystery of the cross. As I have suggested with other theologians in the Patristic era, the fact that the application of Trinitarian theology to the fourth word is not raised does not sufficiently endorse the argument that they were cautious in light of the mystery. To assert this there would need to be a specific statement of such caution, which is not found in the theologians I have surveyed.

To my knowledge Aquinas does not apply the concept of subsistent relations to his understanding of the death of Christ and to the fourth word. Aquinas refers to and discusses the fourth word twice in the *Tertia Pars*. First, in Question 15, Article 1; and secondly in Question 47, Article 3. In the first reference, Aquinas asks whether God the Father delivered up Christ to the passion. After outlining four potential objections from his interlocutor, Aquinas gives three positive reasons to defend this thesis. The third states that in the passion the Father delivers up Christ, 'By not shielding him from the passion, but abandoning him to his persecutors.' Here Aquinas immediately cites Matthew 27:46, the fourth word. Aquinas also appeals for support to Augustine.[159] The second reference is in Question 15 concerning

[159] *ST* III, q. 47, a. 3.

the defects of soul assumed by Christ. Article 1 asks if there was sin in Christ. The first objection listed under Article 1 cites the appearance of the fourth word in the Psalms. From this Christological Psalm Aquinas' interlocutor argues, 'These words are said in the person of Christ himself . . . Therefore it would seem that in Christ there were sins.'[160] Aquinas does not cite the fourth word in the Gospels or in the Psalms in the *Sed Contra* of the Article, but raises it again in his response to the objections. Aquinas bases his response on citations from John of Damascus and Augustine, both of whom state that Christ and his body the church are united as one person. From this Aquinas claims that Christ, in quoting from the Psalm in the fourth word, speaks 'In the person of his members'[161] that is, his people the church. Aquinas' response to the objection focuses on the issue of whether there was sin in Christ based on the further words of Psalm 21 (22):1. This question is different from the question of the fourth word in the Gospels. Marshall explains this important difference.

> The Vulgate rendering of Psalm 21 (22):1, based on the Septuagint by way of Origen's Hexapola, has a quite different sense from the Hebrew, and thus from any modern translation. In the Vulgate the speaker (David) does not ask, as we might expect, "Why are you so far from the words of my groaning?" but says "The outcry of my sins puts me far from my salvation." In the text which had authority for Thomas, therefore, Psalm 21 (22) is not a cry for justice from an innocent man baffled by God's absence, but a plea for mercy from one who recognises the consequences of his sin.[162]

This helps to explain why Aquinas quotes the Psalm in his discussion of the possibility of sin in Christ, but this does not mean that an ecclesiological reading is dependent on Aquinas' interpretation of Psalm 21 (22) in the Vulgate. From Aquinas' perspective, the sufferings of the Psalmist are figurative and point to their Christological fulfilment in the sufferings of Christ on the cross. Aquinas considers that Jesus' cry displays the natural weakness of his

[160] *ST* III, q. 15, a. 1.
[161] *ST* III, q. 15, a. 1.
[162] Marshall, 'Dereliction,' 260.

human flesh which is dying, rather than demonstrating Christ's bafflement at the purposes of his God.

Thomas Joseph White argues, in line with Aquinas and traditional Catholic[163] teaching on the humanity of Christ, that 'Christ possessed the "immediate vision" of God (or "beatific vision") in the heights of his soul during his earthly life.' This leads White to pose the question, 'could the agonising Christ have had the beatific vision in the heights of his soul?'[164] White draws heavily from a number of Catholic theologians in his argument which strongly opposes what he sees as the contemporary trend which affirms the full forsakenness of Christ by the Father at the cross. I suggest that White is correct to oppose much that is erroneous and unorthodox in contemporary exegesis of the fourth word, but White at times seems to neglect the strength of the words uttered by Christ on the cross and in the Garden of Gethsemane.[165] White correctly states that Christ cannot despair because this is sin.[166] He goes on, however, to argue from this that the cry is to be understood as a combination of hope and desire in Christ.[167] Much of White's argument in the section depends on his assertion that Christ's quotation from Psalm 22:1 is essentially expressing hope in his vindication. White's conclusion again seems to ignore the strength of the fourth word which is uttered prior to the expected vindication, and therefore during the experience of the sense evoked by the quotation of the opening of Psalm 22. Following his statements that Christ's words express the hope of vindication, White concludes, 'If this is the case, however, it becomes absurd to presume the existence of an experience of radical disillusionment, despair, or accusation underlying Christ's lasts words.'[168] White develops this statement by affirming the reality of

[163] White expands this teaching in chapter 5, on the beatific vision. He then applies many of the findings of chapter 5 in his discussion of Christ's fourth word from the cross. White, *Incarnate*, 236-274.
[164] White, *Incarnate*, 310.
[165] Cf. Matthew 26:38.
[166] Cf. *ST* II-II, q. 20, a. 3.
[167] White, *Incarnate*, 309-313.
[168] White, *Incarnate*, 315.

Christ's agony on the cross. 'This cry is compatible with the simultaneous presence in Christ's soul of both extraordinary knowledge and intense suffering.'[169] White argues for the compatibility of the beatific vision and intense suffering in Christ's soul on the cross by positing levels in Christ's soul. White compares these levels in Christ's soul to a great mountain, the summit of which reaches above the clouds, while the base is surrounded by fierce storms.[170]

It is significant for my purposes, writing from within the Reformed tradition, that White uses his Catholic understanding of Christ's beatific vision, even during the agony of the cross, to inform his understanding of the fourth word in a way that directly opposes the Reformed understanding of penal substitution, as expressed by Calvin.[171] White's interpretation of the fourth word focuses on a Catholic understanding of Christ's psychological condition at the cross. White does not, however, incorporate Aquinas' rich Trinitarian theology and Christology in his understanding of the fourth word.

In the *Catena Aurea* commentary on the Gospel of Matthew Aquinas writes, 'God is said to have forsaken him in death because he exposed him to the power of his persecutors; he withdrew his protection, but he did not break the union.'[172] The first part of the quotation echoes Aquinas' previous comments and those of other Fathers. The second part, which affirms the unbroken Triune union, clearly denies the possibility of obstructed fellowship between Father and Son at the fourth word.

Aquinas makes the profound observation that Christ is the first to speak after the three hours of darkness. He argues that Christ's statement demonstrates that 'he yet lives,' and that

[169] White, *Incarnate*, 338.
[170] White, *Incarnate*, 336.
[171] White, *Incarnate*, 318.
[172] Aquinas, *Catena, St. Matthew*, 957.

'he himself wrought this miracle.'[173] Aquinas develops Cyril of Alexandria's assertion of Christ's universal sovereignty even on the cross. Aquinas adds that Christ's word from the cross following the hours of darkness in Matthew and Mark speak of Christ's control over the light of the sun.

Aquinas' commentary on Psalm 21 (22) focuses much of his wider theology discussed above on the opening words of the Psalm. Aquinas charges a reading that tries to separate Christ's natures with Arianism. In response, Aquinas defines forsaken in the way that I have, as left undefended. Aquinas draws the arguments together with reference to Isaiah 54, which he interprets as follows. He writes, 'I have forsaken you for a short time, that is, I have exposed you to the passion; and I will gather you together in great mercy, namely in the resurrection. And so he says, Why have you forsaken me, that is, exposed me to the passion.'[174]

In offering different but complementary interpretations of the fourth word, Aquinas highlights the richness of the text of Scripture, as well as the breadth of his theology and its capacity for embracing the fullness of God's word. It is noteworthy that in Question 47 of the *Tertia Pars* discussed above, and in the *Catena Aurea*, Aquinas interprets the cry in a Trinitarian context in a way that is parallel to a number of other theologians.

Aquinas' orthodox employment of the *communicatio idiomatum* is central to his Christological discussion in the *Tertia Pars*. Aquinas does, however, discuss the cry with reference to the Trinity, like the Church Fathers before and the subsequent Reformed theologians, Aquinas does not apply the *communicatio idiomatum* to the fourth word in the

[173] Aquinas, *Catena*, St Matthew, 957.

[174] Thomas Aquinas, Psalm 21, a, trans. Stephen Loughlin. *The Aquinas Translation Project*, https://www.desales.edu/~philtheo/loughlin/ATP/index.html. In his commentary on Psalm 21 (22):1, Aquinas states that Christ speaks '*in persona peccatorum*,' and he also approvingly cites Augustine's letter to Honoratus. I have, however, analysed these comments and works elsewhere in this work.

context of a Trinitarian Christology. It is my argument in the present work that a fully Trinitarian reading of the fourth word must understand the event through the interpretative lens of the communication of idioms.[175] Such a reading aligns Christology and Trinitarian thought on the redemptive focal point of the cross.

Aquinas' position is clearly that later adopted by the Reformers, wherein divine and human attributes are predicated of the person rather than of the other nature. Aquinas' Scholastic approach to articulating the historic orthodox faith in the Trinity and the doctrines of Christology is evidently rooted in the teachings of the Church Fathers. In particular, his position on the *communicatio idiomatum* forms a clear conceptual and historical bridge from the Patristic understanding to that of the Reformers.

Martin Luther

Although several Reformers wrote extensively on the doctrine of the Trinity, there is little early systematic Trinitarian theology in the Reformed era. This is exemplified by the first edition of Philip Melanchthon's *Loci Communes Rerum Theologicarum* of 1521,[176] from which the doctrine of the Trinity is absent. Samuel M. Powell writes, 'The anti-speculative tenor of his statements did implicitly raise the question of the exact role of the doctrine of the Trinity for Protestants. At the very least, the doctrine received a less than enthusiastic welcome in this first systematic statement of Protestant theology.'[177] Powell notes that partly in response to the perceived anti-Trinitarian threat, Melanchthon included a significant

[175] I am not arguing that Aquinas' Christology or his reading of the fourth word is not Trinitarian, instead I argue that Trinitarian Christology has further resources discussed by Aquinas that can be brought to the interpretation of the fourth word in a way that Aquinas does not.

[176] Philip Melanchthon, *Loci Communes Theologici*, in Wilhelm Pauck, ed., *Melanchthon and Bucer*, The Library of Christian Classics, ed. John Baillie, et al., Volume XIX (London: SCM Press, 1969). Melanchthon was a Lutheran.

[177] Samual M. Powell, *The Trinity in German Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 17.

section on the doctrine of the Trinity in his 1533 edition, and begins to use technical language to describe the Trinity.

Martin Luther's understanding of the communication of idioms differs from the Reformed position and the Patristic position. I include Luther in the survey in order to demonstrate the consequences of departing from the Patristic articulation of this area of Christology. For the same reasons I include I. A. Dorner later in the survey.

Luther argues at numerous points in his theological and homiletic works that the doctrine of the Trinity is beyond human comprehension,[178] and that the exploration of the doctrine is not an appropriate task for theology.[179] In places, Luther appears to go so far as to suggest that the doctrine of the Trinity contradicts human reason.[180]

Luther's commitment to Scripture as the sole authority for theology is based on the argument that only God has perfect knowledge, and therefore only the revelation of God in the Scriptures contains the correct and sufficient vocabulary for theological propositions. While Luther's Trinitarian theology is generally limited to the statements of Scripture, he does venture to use basic Patristic language in his entirely orthodox, though provisional, doctrine of the Trinity.[181] His background in Scholastic theology gives him an understanding

[178] See Luther's sermon on John 3:1-15. Martin Luther, *Sermons of Martin Luther Volume II*, ed. John Nicholas Lenker, trans. John Nicholas Lender *et al*., (Baker Books, Grand Rapids Michigan, 2007), 406. Because of the absence of the term Trinity in the Scriptures, Luther uses the term God instead of Trinity. See also, Martin Luther, *Sermons of Martin Luther*, vol IV, 7.

[179] Martin Luther, *Sermons of Martin Luther Volume II*, ed. John Nicholas Lenker, trans. John Nicholas Lender et al., (Grand Rapids Michigan: Baker Books, 2007), 411

[180] Martin Luther, *Treatise on the Last Words of David 2 Samuel 23:1-7*, trans. Martin H. Bertram, in *Luther's Works*, vol. XV, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing, 1972), 310-311. Cf. Powell, *Trinity*, 23; and Paul Althaus, *Theology of Martin Luther* (Augsburg Fortress, 1966), 28.

[181] Martin Luther, *Sermons of Martin Luther Volume IV*, ed. John Nicholas Lenker, trans. John Nicholas Lender et al. (Grand Rapids Michigan: Baker Books, 2007), 8-9.

of historic Trinitarian orthodoxy, although his sources are difficult to trace because of his deliberate emphasis on Scripture.[182]

Luther's position on the Trinity and its ultimate inaccessibility to human reason inevitably influences his understanding of the Trinitarian relations in the suffering and death of Christ. In order to appreciate this influence it is important to understand correctly Luther's interpretation of the common Patristic analogy of the union of body and soul. Some Patristic theologians use the analogy for the hypostatic union.[183] Cyril of Alexandria is an important exception to this use, though he does occasionally employ the body and soul union as an example, rather than an analogy, [184] of the hypostatic union.[185] Luther models his doctrine of the incarnation on the union of body and soul by analogy rather than as an example or illustration. This radically alters his understanding of the interaction between the two natures of Christ in the incarnation. The union of the body and the soul produces a third ontological substance which is the human being. If this union is taken analogically, then the union of Christ's human and divine natures produces a third ontological substance, a *tertium quid*, which is neither fully God nor fully man. This notion was upheld by Apollinarius and the Miaphysites. I argue that, even though Luther would deny it, the soteriological consequence is that Christ cannot truly represent humanity to God as substitute and redeemer, nor can Christ truly represent God to humanity.

[182] As Carl R. Trueman writes, the Reformers 'regarded the Patristic writers as being of fundamental importance because of the need to establish that they were not theological innovators but restorers of the pure doctrine of the early Church.' It was significant to the Reformers, including Luther, that their theological enterprise was in line with historic orthodoxy. Carl R. Trueman, *Luther's Legacy: Salvation and English Reformers 1525-1556* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 31.

[183] For a helpful analysis of Patristic use of this analogy see Grillmeier, *Tradition*, Volume 1., 129-131.

[184] When used as nouns, an example represents all such things in a set or group; an analogy denotes equivalence or resemblance between two things or situations; an illustration is a type of example that is used to explain something.

[185] Cyril of Alexandria, *Ad Nestorium*, 3.8.

If this analysis is correct then Luther's Christology goes beyond Chalcedon's affirmation that Christ is one person in two natures, united unconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly and inseparably. Although elsewhere Luther explicitely subscribes to Chalcedon, the consequences of his use of the body and soul analogy is evidenced in Luther's understanding of the communication of properties which goes beyond the descriptive limitations of Chalcedon and enables Luther to predicate suffering of the divine nature.[186] Luther's application of his interpretation of the *communicatio idiomatum* to the cross of Christ may be observed in several of his exegetical remarks. A key exegetical example appears in his sermon on Acts 20:28.

> If such blood – the material, tangible, crimson blood, shed by a real man – is truly to be called the blood of God, then he who shed it must be actually God, an eternal, almighty person in the one divine essence. In that case we truly can say the blood flowing from the side of the crucified one and spilled on the ground is not merely the blood of an ordinary man, but of God's own.[187]

Luther does not here refer to the *communicatio idiomatum*, nor does he specify the way that the physical blood of Christ may be said to be the blood of the Son of God. The unqualified way in which he exegetes Acts 20:28 exemplifies his understanding of the *communicatio idiomatum* as *in abstracto*, that is, that the relation of the two natures of Christ is abstracted from their relation to the person, and what is predicated of one nature is, in Luther's view, to be predicated of the other nature. This Lutheran understanding of the *communicatio idiomatum* was developed in polemical contrast to the Reformed view which held that what is predicated of either nature is then predicated of the *concretum* of Christ's person, not

[186] Richard Cross argues that there are pre-Chalcedonian precedents for the Lutheran *communicatio naturarem*, but that they are 'inconsistent with any obvious understanding of Chalcedon.' Cross identifies the Tome of Saint Leo, canonised at Chalcedon, which allows for the ascription of predicates to natures, 'but it certainly does not allow any legitimate sense in which the properties of one nature could be predicated of the other, whether concretely or abstractly.' Richard Cross, *The Metaphysics of the Incarnation: Thomas Aquinas to Duns Scotus* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 183-184.

[187] Martin Luther, *Sermons, Vol. IV*, 30

immediately to the other nature in *abstractum*. Luther's exegesis of Acts 20:28 and his discussion of the suffering of Christ verifies Dennis Ngien's assertion that for Luther, 'The human *idiomatum* of suffering and dying belong to God's very being.'[188]

Luther asserts the divinity of Christ's humanity in connection with his doctrine of the *communicatio idiomatum* in *The Last Words of David*.

> But from the moment when deity and humanity were united in one Person, the Man, Mary's Son, is and is called almighty, eternal God, who has eternal dominion, who has created all things and preserves them through the communication of attributes (*per communicationem idiomatum*), because He is one Person with the Godhead and is also very God.[189]

There is slight ambiguity in Luther's use of the term 'man' in this passage. It is either a reference to the human nature of Christ, or possibly a reference to his person. The latter seems highly unlikely given Luther's understanding of the *communicatio idiomatum*, and the former seems likely given the immediate context and his clarification of the term as referring to that which was born of Mary. Therefore this passage helpfully connects Luther's dependence on the Scriptures (he quotes John 5:26, 21, 23 as evidence for his assertion), with his doctrine of the *communicatio idiomatum*.

The Lutheran understanding of the *communicatio idiomatum* developed and was focused in Luther's exegesis of Christ's words of institution at the Last Supper,[190] 'This is my body.' Luther argued that for Christ's body to be literally present in the Lord's Supper celebrated from that time onwards across the world, the risen body of Christ must be

[188] Dennis Ngien, 'Chalcedonian Christology and Beyond: Luther's Understanding of the *Communicatio Idiomatum*.' *Heythrop Journal of Theology* XLV, 2004, Blackwell, Oxford, 54-68.

[189] Martin Luther, *Luther's Works Volume XV*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing, 1972), 293.

[190] Luther's doctrine of the sacrament is articulated in Article IX of the *Augsburg Confession*. Philip Schaff, ed., *The Creeds of Christendom* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), vol. 3, 13.

ubiquitous. Zwingli and his followers contended that this was not possible. But Luther argued that the ubiquity of Christ's humanity demonstrates the unity of Christ's person.

> If you could show me one place where God is and not the man, then the person is already divided and I could at once say truthfully, 'Here is God who is not man and has never become man.' But no God like that for me! For it would follow from this that space and place had separated the two natures from one another and thus had divided the person.[191]

The strength of Luther's statement directly opposes the *etiam extra carnem* of the Reformed tradition and claims that the person of the Son is entirely circumscribed by the flesh. The theological mechanism which engendered Luther's position was a modified form of the *communicatio idiomatum* whereby properties predicated of the divine nature of Christ are directly predicated also of the human nature of Christ. This allows for statements such as 'the human nature of Christ is almighty,' and 'God died.'

> God gives us figures of speech according to which Christ is God and man in one person. There are not two persons, but two natures united in one person in such a way that what applies to human nature, can be said to apply to the divine nature, and vice versa.[192]

Luther spells out his understanding of the *communicatio idiomatum* as *in abstracto*, and Luther's claim that Christ's body is omnipresent concerns the eucharist. Other aspects of Luther's work suggest that Luther adhered to the *communicatio idiomatum in concreto*, but in a sense that is more qualified than the Reformed position.

> You must say that the person (pointing to Christ) suffers, and dies. But this person is truly God, and therefore it is correct to say: The Son of God suffers. Although, so to speak, the one part (namely, the divinity) does not suffer, nevertheless the person, who is God, suffers in the other part (namely, in the humanity).[193]

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[191] *Luther's Works* 37:218.
[192] *Luther's Works* 98:14-17.
[193] *Luther's Works* 37:210.

Luther's understanding of the eucharist appears to have led him to assert a *communicatio idiomatum in abstracto*, although in the above quotation he plainly states the *communicatio idiomatum in concreto*. This discrepancy is tracked by Johannes Zachhuber.

> Concern about the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist was close to Luther's heart from early on. Yet while it would be wrong to think that the controversy . . . in the latter half of the 1520s was the trigger for a novel development in Luther's thought, it is nevertheless true that this debate led to the most explicit reflections on Christology in Luther's works thus far, as well as to his arguably most radical and controversial doctrinal innovation: the ubiquity of Christ's human nature.[194]

Zachhuber in part defends Luther's varied employment of the *communicatio idiomatum* with reference to the development of the Eucharist controversy; however, I suggest that it is a further consequence of Luther's claim that Trinitarian and Christological doctrine is paradoxical and potentially contradictory to human reason.[195]

Luther refers to the *communicaio idiomatum* in his disputes with ancient and contemporary theologians such as Nestorius and Zwingli, but Luther does not refer to the doctrine explicitly in the context of constructive theology or scriptural exegesis. Hermann Sasse concurs with this significant point. 'Luther believes in the Real Presence without trying to build up a theory comparable to the theories of impanation, transubstantiation, consubstantiation, or whatever the subtle mind of philosophers and theologians may have devised in order to answer the question: How could the Real Presence be possible?'[196] Luther attempts to ground his doctrine solely in the Scriptures which makes it difficult to specify his precise understanding of the Lord's Supper. This is exacerbated by the development of his understanding of the Sacrament. Prior to 1519 Luther held to the official Roman Catholic

[194] Johannes Zachhuber, "Jesus Christ in Martin Luther's Theology," *Oxford Research Encyclopedias*, Accessed July 7, 2017.

[195] Martin Luther, *Treatise on the Last Words of David*, 310-311.

[196] Hermann Sasse, *This is my body: Luther's Contention for the Real Presence in the Sacrament of the Altar*. (Minnesota: Augsburg Publishing House 1959), 104.

doctrine of transubstantiation. Doubts begin to develop in this year in his *Treatise on the Blessed Sacrament of the Holy and True Body of Christ*.

It is also important to note Luther's more general argument for the ubiquity of Christ's body in *This Is My Body*.[197] The argument may be presented as a syllogism.

(1) The body of Christ is present at the right hand of God. [Premise]

(2) The right hand of God is omnipresent [Premise]

Therefore

(3) The body of Christ is omnipresent. [From (1) and (2)]

The two premises of Luther's argument are true, and accurately express scriptural propositions. The argument *prima facie* is valid; that is, the conclusion follows logically from the premises; however, the fallacy of equivocation appears in the different senses of the term 'location' in the two premises. In premise 1 'location' is used to speak of the physical location of a spatially extended and limited body. In premise 2, and the reference to the right hand of God in premise 1, 'location' is used to speak figuratively of a non-spatial and non-physical being. Therefore, although individually, the premises accurately reflect scriptural terminology, the argument is not sound because the same term is used differently in the two premises. This means that the argument is unsound and invalid in virtue of equivocation. This argument does not seem to rely immediately on the *communicatio idiomatum*, although in his *Confession Concerning the Last Supper*, Luther argues for the ubiquity of Christ's body based on his interpretation of the *communicatio idiomatum*.[198] Luther's reply to this criticism of his argument may be anticipated. Given Luther's understanding of the *communicatio*

[197] Martin Luther, *This Is My Body*. Luther's Works, vol. XXXCII, 63-64.

[198] Martin Luther, *Confession Concerning the Last Supper*. Luther's Works XXXCII, 210-210 WA XXCI 320-324. Cf. Thomas Osborne, 'Faith, Philosophy, and the Nominalist Background to Luther's Defense of the Real Presence,' *The Journal of the History of Ideas* 63, No. 1 (January 2002), 63-82.

idiomatum, he would possibly argue that the two senses of the term 'location' do not involve a fallacy of equivocation because the ubiquity of Christ's divinity is predicated of Christ's humanity, therefore it is correct to say that Christ's body is omnipresent in the same sense that the right hand of God is omnipresent. This demonstrates that the *communicatio idiomatum* is indeed the centre of the discussion. The Reformed objection to Luther's notion of the ubiquity of Christ's body claimed that it was based on an anti-Chalcedonian miaphysite Christology.[199]

The Lutheran theologian Martin Chemnitz developed Luther's doctrine of the *communicatio idiomatum* in a more subtle manner. He argued that Christ's human nature is always localised because the Lutheran *communicatio idiomatum* was not a permanent extension of divine properties to the human nature, but that it was instead a divine use of the human nature in a way that exceeds normal human limits. Chemnitz writes 'The importance and efficacy of Christ's suffering and death are so great because the person of God's Son both wills and sustains the suffering and death in the flesh which he has made his own by the hypostatic union, and which he has strengthened so that it can bear the immeasurable burden. Thus we can truly say that God suffered, because that flesh suffered in which dwelt the whole fullness of deity bodily.'[200] This text refers specifically to the way in which the human nature of Christ was enabled to endure the passion, but it implies the principle developed by Chemnitz that the properties of Christ's human nature are extended because of the hypostatic

[199] In response to the Lutheran position Calvin developed the doctrine of the *etiam extra carnem*, often known as the *extra calvinisticum*. Andrew M. McGinnis explores the doctrine from a Reformed perspective and attempts to find Patristic precedent, particularly in the writings of Cyril of Alexandria. See Cyril of Alexandria, *Tomes,* 175. Cyril of Alexandria, Epistulae 4.7 (Wickham). Cyril of Alexandria, Epistulae 39.8. McGinnis' search for precedent in Cyril appears not to give enough weight to the polemical context in the Reformed debate. The Fathers consistently argued that Christ continues to exercise divine power in the incarnation; a claim that is significanty different from the doctrine of the *etiam extra carnem*. Andrew M. McGinnis, *The Son of God Beyond the Flesh: A Historical and Theological Study of the Extra Calvinisticum* (London: T&T Clark, 2014).

[200] Martin Chemnitz, *The Two Natures in Christ*, trans. J. A. O. Preus (Missouri: Concordia Publishing House, 1971), 216 and cf. 205; 210-211.

union. This development continues to allow for the sacramental omnipresence of Christ's human nature, although in a qualified sense.

Greater doctrinal unity among Lutheran theologians concerning the *communicatio idiomatum* was reached as a result of the Formula of Concord in 1577, in which Chemnitz was a key figure, along with Jacob Andreae and Nikolaus Selnecker among others. Selnecker contributed the preface to Chemnitz's work *The Two Natures in Christ*. The Formula of Concord was the last of the classical Lutheran formulae of faith and the *communicatio idiomatum* is dealt with specifically in Article VIII.

The polemical nature of the Lutheran-Reformed debate concerning the *communicatio idiomatum* makes it difficult to specifically articulate the Lutheran doctrine. Reformed theologians accused the Lutheran orthodox of teaching *communicatio idiomatum in abstracto*. That is, they argued that the Lutheran orthodox were guilty of the logical error of using abstractions, which are properties of one nature distinct from the person, as predicates. The Lutheran view, however, is more accurately articulated by Muller. 'The Lutherans do not predicate the *abstractum* of divinity as such to the *abstractum* of humanity. Instead they rest a series of predications on the fact that the *concretum* of the Word is both the divine nature and the person of Christ.'[201] This means that the Reformed polemical articulation of the Lutheran position is occasionally a straw man that may be easily demolished on logical grounds.[202]

[201] Muller, *Dictionary, Communicatio Idiomatum*.

[202] Heinrich Heppe serves as one example. He argues that 'Lutheran Christology rests upon the essentially Nestorian assumption that the incarnation of the Logos was a union of the divine nature with the human nature to be conceived in a previous subsistence, and that in it the result is the deification of the human nature by the pouring into it of the divine attributes.' Heinrich Heppe, *Reformed Dogmatics*, trans. G. T. Thomson (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1950), 418-419.

The main difference between the Lutheran and Reformed positions on the *communicatio idiomatum* focuses on the *genus maiestaticum* [203]which is rejected by the Reformed. This Lutheran sub-definition of the *communicatio idiomatum* indicates the place of the human nature within the hypostatic union. Because the human nature subsists enhypostatically in the divine person of the Son of God, the Lutherans argued that the human nature of Christ participates in the divine attributes of glory (*gloria dei*) and majesty (m*aiestas dei*). This position does not entail a communication of idioms *in abstracto* from one nature to the other, and therefore the Reformed accusation is a straw man. Instead the Lutherans attempt rightly to acknowledge the Chalcedonian adverb of the inseparability of the divine person of Christ and the human nature which he assumed. In this way the *idiomata* of each nature in the hypostatic union is preserved while at the same time, the human nature partakes of the divine *idiomata.* Muller correctly recognises the *genus maistaticum* as 'the crucial point of contention between Lutherans and Reformed'[204] concerning the nature of the presence of Christ's body and blood in the Lord's Supper.

John Calvin

Calvin's doctrine of the *communicatio idiomatum* can be traced theologically in the *Institutes of the Christian Religion,* and exegetically in his commentaries on the Scriptures. In the *Institutes* Calvin outlines the doctrine in the fourteenth chapter of book two; which E. David Willis calls 'The kernel of Calvin's Christological discussion in the *Institutes*.'[205] Calvin's argument in this section proceeds by attempting to prove that Christ has a human nature and a

[203] The *Genus Maiestaticum* assumes that the human nature of Christ is identical with the Son of man. For further discussion in the context of the Reformed and Lutheran debates, particularly in the theology of Chemnitz, see Cross, *Communicatio,* 35-40.

[204] Muller, *Dictionary, Communicatio Idiomatum*.

[205] E. David Willis, *Calvin's Catholic Christology The Function of the so-called Extra Calvinisticun in Calvin's Theology* (Leiden, Netherlands: E.J. Brill, 1966), PAGE!

divine nature. 'For we maintain, that the entire properties of each nature remain entire, and yet the two natures constitute only one Christ.'[206] Here Calvin agrees with the Formula of Chalcedon and Cyril of Alexandria, that the Christological premise behind the *communicatio idiomatum*[207] is that Christ is one person in two natures. Calvin offers the analogy of the human soul and body which constitute one person and yet retain their own properties. From this brief grounding of the discussion in the hypostatic union, Calvin offers his definition of the *communicatio idiomatum*.

> Thus the Scriptures speak of Christ. They sometimes attribute to him qualities which should be referred specially to his humanity, and sometimes qualities applicable peculiarly to his divinity, and sometimes qualities which embrace both natures, and do not apply specially to either. This combination of a twofold nature in Christ they express so carefully, that they sometimes communicate them with each other, a figure of speech which the ancients termed a communication of properties.[208]

Importantly, Calvin's use of the personal pronoun 'him' refers to the person of Christ, the Son of God. This definition is in accordance, as Calvin asserts, with Patristic and creedal formulations.[209] While Calvin acknowledges his indebtedness to Patristic sources, he is intentionally most dependent on the Scriptures, and frames his definition in terms of the Scriptures.

Calvin then provides scriptural texts which distinguish between the two natures of Christ, and texts which emphasise the union of Christ's two natures. Following this, Calvin employs the doctrine of the hypostatic union with reference to the *communicatio idiomatum* to attempt to refute two heresies. First, Nestorianism, and secondly, the teaching of Servetus,

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[206] Calvin, *Institutes*, II. XIV. 1.

[207] I develop Cyril's distinctions in the communication of idioms further in the central argument of the thesis in Part II.

[208] Calvin, *Institutes*, II. XIV. 1.

[209] Rowan Williams also states that Calvin is certainly aware of Scholastic arguments, and that he occasionally appeals to them. Williams, *Heart*, 142.

which, 'Destroy[s] the distinction of natures in Christ, and the eternity of the divine nature of the Son.'[210]

Calvin's doctrine of the *communicatio idiomatum* is seen in his brief overview of texts from Scripture which seem to communicate predicates of either of Christ's two natures to his person. Calvin is clear that the union of the divine nature of the person of the Son of God with the flesh is a personal union, not a union which confuses the two natures. He defines divine person as 'a subsistence in the divine essence, a subsistence which while related to the other two is distinguished from them by incommunicable properties. . . Because nothing can apply or be transferred to the Son which is attributed to the Father as a mark of distinction.' Calvin, using the Scholastic language of subsistence, distinguishes between the persons of the Godhead. What is predicated of each person as distinct subsistence is not predicable of the other persons as distinct subsistences. Calvin is careful not to separate the three subsistences of the divine nature, which would generate tritheism. He argues in line with the Cappadocian Fathers that in each hypostasis (subsistence) of the divine nature, 'the whole [divine] nature is understood. . . The whole Father is in the Son, and the whole Son in the Father.'[211] Calvin develops this later in the same chapter when he asserts that it was not the Father who became incarnate, nor died and rose again. Furthermore, he states that this distinction among the persons of the Trinity exists prior to the incarnation.[212]

Calvin explicitly notes his theological indebtedness to Augustine on the doctrine of the Trinity and the hypostatic union.[213] But his dominant source for his treatment of the *communicatio idiomatum* is the Scriptures. He states that speculation concerning the extension of the doctrine of the Trinity beyond what the Scriptures explicitly teach is

[210] Calvin, *Institutes*, II. XIV. 1.
[211] Calvin, *Institutes*, I. XIII. 17-19.
[212] Calvin, *Institutes*, I. XIII. 17-19.
[213] Calvin, *Institutes*, I. XIII. 19.

dangerous and 'unlawful,' and that the believer should remain content with the 'immutable ordination of God.' Calvin claims that the attempt to extend the doctrine of the Trinity, and by implication also the *communicatio idiomatum*, beyond the remit of Scripture betrays a lack of trust in and contentment with the redemption that Christ has achieved.[214] Therefore it is not surprising that Calvin's treatment of the *communicatio idiomatum* is only a brief outline with an emphasis on the text of Scripture. To demonstrate further Calvin's caution in this area, I now turn to examine a number of references in his commentaries.

In his commentaries on the relevant texts of Scripture, Calvin generally seeks to explain the *communicatio idiomatum* from either of Christ's two natures to his person in the text. This explanation is limited to a brief outline, partly because it is repeated to explain a number of verses, and partly because the *communicatio idiomatum* is explained more fully in the *Institutes*. Because of this lack of detail concerning the *communicatio idiomatum* in Calvin's commentaries, I will restrict discussion to comments on texts which most directly relate to the doctrine in relation to the death of Christ.

The most obvious place to begin, and the place which most clearly demonstrates Calvin's caution concerning the precise intra-Trinitarian nature of Christ's death in terms of the *communicatio idiomatum*, is Calvin's comments on 1 Corinthians 2:8. This verse, which states that the rulers of this age 'crucified the Lord of glory,' is difficult to understand. Calvin's comments are restricted to asserting that if the rulers of this age had known the wisdom of God, they would not have 'crucified Christ.' It is important to note that here Calvin does not discuss the statement that it was the Lord of glory who was crucified, instead replacing 'Lord of glory' with 'Christ.' Perhaps to avoid the potential inference that it was the

[214] Calvin, *Institutes*, II. XII. 5.

divine nature as it subsists in the person of the Son incarnate that was crucified.[215] In a comment on 1 Corinthians 2:8 in 1536, which later became part of the 1543 edition of the *Institutes*, Calvin explicitly states that it is the Lord of glory who suffered, not according to the divinity, but according to the flesh.[216]

In his *Harmony of the Evangelist*s Calvin comments on the crucifixion narrative in Matthew 27 and Mark 15, on the fourth word. Calvin dismisses a number of alternative interpretations before constructing his own positive reading. He dismisses the suggestion that Christ quotes from the opening verse of Psalm 22 in order to meet the expectations of the observers who believe that he is abandoned by God. He also rejects the claims that redemption consists in nothing beyond what was visibly seen, and that Christ expresses despair in the complete absence of faith. Instead he argues that Christ continued to know the presence of God by faith, although 'the perception of the flesh would have led him to dread destruction.'[217] Calvin presents the fourth word in the first two Synoptic Gospels without reference to the *communicatio idiomatum*. He appears to exegete the verses with exclusive reference to the humanity of Christ.

Although Calvin does not mention the *communicatio idiomatum* in his commentary on the hours of darkness in the crucifixion account in Matthew and Mark, it is hinted at; and reference is made to the hypostatic union in the introduction to the section. This is significant

[215] *Calvin's Commentaries: The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians*. Trans. J. W. Fraser, Ed. D. W. Torrance and T. F. Torrance (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1960), 1 Corinthians 2:8.

[216] '*Qualiter a Paulo* (I Cor. 2) *Dominus gloriae crucifixus dicitur, non quia secundum divinitatem sit passus, sed quia Christus, qui abiectus et contemptus in carne patiebatur, idem Deus erat et Dominus gloriae. Ad hunc modum et filius hominis in coelo erat, quia ipse idem Christus, qui secundum carnem hominis filius habitabat in terris, Deus erat in coelo. Qua ratione, eo ipso loco descendisse dicitur secundum divinitatem; non quod divinitas coelum reliquerit, ut in ergastulum corporis se abderet, sed quia, tametsi omnia impleret, in ipsa tamen Christi humanitate corporaliter, id est, naturaliter habitabat et ineffabili quodam modo* (Col. 2).' Ioanne Calvino, *Institutio Christianae Religionis Nunc vere demum suo titulo respondens,* Third Edition (Strassburg: Wendenlinum Rihelium, 1543), XVIII, 23 and 25. Paragraph 24, which was a new insertion, refers to Augustine of Hippo.

[217] John Calvin, *Commentary on a Harmony of the Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, and Luke*, Trans, Rev. William Pringle (Grand Rapids Michigan, 1998), 319.

for the present discussion because I will later argue that the separate treatment of the doctrines of the person of Christ and the work of Christ is a contributing factor to the lack of precision in the articulation of the intra-Trinitarian dynamics of the fourth word and the death of Christ.

Calvin does seem implicitly to employ the c*ommunicatio idiomatum* in his introductory comments on Matthew 27:45. Calvin states that the glory of the Godhead was concealed during these hours by the weakness of the flesh. Calvin states directly that 'the Son of God himself was disfigured by shame and contempt, and, as Paul says, was emptied.'[218] This statement in Calvin is important as a site from which to offer plausible speculation concerning how Calvin may have extended his doctrine of the *communicatio idiomatum* to the death of Christ. That is, extension to precision in articulating the nature of the suffering and death of Christ. Calvin is willing to articulate, without qualification, the crucifixion narrative as teaching that 'the Son of God himself was disfigured by shame and contempt.'[219] It is interesting to note that Calvin's discussion of the death of Christ and the *communicatio idiomatum*, in general, focuses on the susceptibility of the person of the Son of God to suffering and death. Calvin does not seem to articulate the opposite view in relation to the *extra carnem*[220] concerning the existence of the Son of God beyond the flesh even during the crucifixion.

[218] Calvin, *Evangelists*, 316.
[219] Calvin, *Evangelists*, 316
[220] Andrew M. McGinnis' work on the *etiam extra carnem* argues for Patristic precedent in the writings of Cyril of Alexandria. The doctrine, developed by Calvin, claims that the Son is not entirely circumscribed by the flesh. The Lutheran tradition rejects the so called *extra Calvinisticum*. The doctrine is not seen explicitly in the Patristic writings, although it may perhaps have a parallel in the Patristic argument quoted by McGinnis that 'He continues to exercise his divine power and "restrains as God the light of the sun and makes it night at midday" during his crucifixion. McGinnis, *Beyond*, 31. See also, Cyril of Alexandria, *Epistulae* 39.8. If the *etiam extra carnem* is correct, it may be suggested that it provides a third form of predication in which the Son is not forsaken. The suggestion is tentative and goes beyond the remit of this work.

In light of Calvin's unqualified employment of the *communicatio idiomatum* concerning the crucifixion of Christ, I suggest that further speculation in this direction will either merge with the Lutheran use of the *communicatio idiomatum*, or lead directly to heresy. In defence of Calvin, it may be suggested that it is at this point that caution in the precision of his statements echoes the balance of Scripture.

Richard Sibbes

Sibbes' sermon on Christ's fourth word deals at length with the nature of the forsaking by the Father of Christ. Sibbes' Trinitarian orthodoxy ensures that he upholds the hypostatic union and the eternal love among the Triune persons, in relation to the cry. 'God never loved Christ more than now, because he was never more obedient. Nor in regard of union, for there was no separation of his divine nature from the human.' Sibbes states here that the hypostatic union is not jeopardised during the hours of darkness and the fourth word, and that the love of the Father for Christ remained unceasing. Following this statement, Sibbes also affirms that 'There was a suspension of vision, indeed; he saw no comfort for the present from God, but there was no dissolution of union; for the divine nature did many things in this seeming forsaking.' [221] Sibbes writes that the union of the Triune persons is unbroken at the cross, even as the hypostatic union remains unbroken, although his subsequent positive statement of the meaning the fourth word does not continue in these Trinitarian terms. Sibbes argues that Christ was forsaken 'in regard of his present comfort and joy;' and that his humanity, 'body and soul' were forsaken by the father.[222] This positive statement of the nature of the

[221] *Works of Richard Sibbes*, Volume 1, edited with memoir by Alexander B. Grosart (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1973), 354.
[222] Sibbes, *Works*, 355.

forsakenness is not explicitly Trinitarian, neither does Sibbes employ the *communicatio idiomatum* to understand the cry.

Thomas Manton

Thomas Manton is the most explicitly Trinitarian of the three Puritans mentioned in this survey. 'There was no separation of the Father from the Son; this would make a change in the unity of the divine essence . . . This eternal union of the person of the Father with the person of the Son always remained; for the divine nature, though it may be distinguished into Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, yet it cannot be divided.'[223] Manton directly states that the eternal union between the Triune persons was not broken or diminished at the cross. From this affirmation, Manton proceeds to assert, with Sibbes, that the hypostatic union also remained unbroken at the cross.[224] Manton quotes 1 Corinthians 2:8 and Acts 20:28 to substantiate his positive claim that it was the Lord of glory that was crucified. The resultant tension between the scriptural quotations and the claim that the hypostatic union continued, is not directly addressed by Manton, although he does provide an interesting illustration for the dissolution of the human body and soul and the continuation of the hypostatic union. 'A man drawing a sword, and holding the sword in one hand and the scabbard in another, the same person holds both, though separated the one from the other.'[225] Unfortunately, Manton does not go beyond this illustration to elucidate the fourth word beyond his positive and negative affirmations. Neither does Manton utilise the *communicatio idiomatum* in his discussion.

[223] Manton, *Works*, 266.
[224] Manton, *Works*, 266.
[225] Manton, *Works*, 266.

John Flavel

John Flavel systematically addressed particular and problematic issues arising from the fourth word. He describes the event in a striking way. 'It is the voice of the Son of God in agony.'[226] He then proceeds by defining the nature of the forsakenness. 'Divine desertion generally considered, is God's withdrawing himself from any, not as to his essence, that fills heaven and earth, and constantly remains the same; but it is the withdrawment of his favour, grace, and love: when these are gone, God is said to be gone.'[227] A distinction is drawn between two possible kinds of this absence of God. The first is 'absolutely and wholly,' as is the case with the devil and his demons. The second is 'respectively, and only as to manifestation.' In this latter sense Flavel argues that God 'sometimes forsakes his dearest children . . . he removes all sweet manifestations of his favour and love for a time, and carries it to them as a stranger, though his love be still the same.'[228] It is in this second sense, Flavel argues, that God abandoned Christ. Similarly to Sibbes and Manton, Flavel argues that the hypostatic union continued, because the divine nature did not cease its union with Christ's humanity. Flavel lists categories in which the cry is to be understood negatively. 'He did not dissolve the personal union, nor cut off divine supports, nor remove his inherent grace, nor turn his Father's love into hatred, nor continue forever, nor yet was it on both parts, Christ's forsaking God, as well as God's forsaking Christ.'[229] Flavel's language is striking, but he does not explain fully what is meant by his opening statement that it is the Son of God who utters the fourth word. Again, as with Sibbes and Manton, Flavel does not employ the *communicatio idiomatum*.

[226] John Flavel, *The Works of John Flavel, Volume 1* (London: Banner of Truth, 1968), 406.
[227] Flavel, *Works*, 408.
[228] Flavel, *Works*, 408, cf. 417.
[229] Flavel, *Works*, 409.

Francis Turretin

As with Calvin, Turretin does not offer a sufficiently precise articulation of the fourth word. Perhaps the chief and most relevant difference between Calvin and Turretin is methodological. Calvin insists on framing his doctrine using scriptural, rather than Scholastic terminology. Turretin's method allows for greater speculation, because although he consistently seeks to prove doctrine from Scripture, he is willing to use Patristic and Scholastic language which engenders greater perspicuity in defining theological concepts.

The Christological focus of the *Institutes* is in the thirteenth topic.[230] Turretin is unusual in the way that his doctrine of the person of Christ leads directly into and informs his doctrine of the work of Christ, both under the same topic; this is methodologically important for understanding the fourth word in Christological and Trinitarian context.

Turretin's eighth question about the *communicatio idiomatum* is as follows. 'Were certain properties of the divine nature formally communicated to the human nature of Christ by the personal union? We deny against the Lutherans.' The answer to the question is grounded in the previous discussion of the hypostatic union which is contextualised with reference to Nestorianism and Eutychianism and the Definition of Chalcedon. Turretin initially states, using the *communicatio idiomatum* that 'flesh is a property of the Son of God.'[231] This example of his use of the doctrine is then explained with reference to three principles which govern his understanding of the way in which various properties of Christ's human and divine natures are communicated to his person. First, that properties of each nature are communicated to the person; secondly, that offices and their effects are

[230] Turretin discusses the incarnation in general in the first five questions of the thirteenth topic, and relates it to the doctrine of the Trinity in the sixth question. The seventh introduces the hypostatic union and the eighth introduces the *communicatio idiomatum*. Questions eleven to nineteen follow the order of both the Apostles' Creed and the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed from Christ's conception and birth, to his death, burial, resurrection, ascension, and session.

[231] Turretin, *Elenctic,* Thirteenth Topic, Q. VIII, III.

communicated to the person; and thirdly, as a result of the *communicatio idiomatum*, worship is due to the God-man. Having outlined principles which govern the use of the doctrine, Turretin proceeds to define the *communicatio idiomatum*. 'The communication of attributes . . . is an effect of the union by which the properties of both natures became common to the person. Hence the phraseology . . . concerning Christ arises, by which the properties of either nature are predicated of the person of Christ, in whatever manner it is denominated.'[232] Turretin provides a standard orthodox definition, but he differs from Calvin in that he defines the *communicatio idiomatum* not primarily exegetically, but theologically. Turretin's theological statement of the doctrine is grounded in examples from Scripture, but the language used in the definition is Scholastic and theological, rather than exegetical.

From the three principles, Turretin briefly examines a number of further scriptural examples in which properties are communicated either directly or indirectly. He also affirms that the communication is not merely verbal, but real, that is, that properties of either of Christ's natures are really communicated to the person. This person 'consists of two natures really unified and claims the properties of both for itself.' This later definition is more succinct than the definition Turretin gives at the beginning of his discussion, and it is again framed in theological and Scholastic terms. The Lutheran doctrine is then criticised on the ground that it considers the communication of properties in the abstract, from nature to nature directly. Turretin is clear that he denies this position, but traces it from Luther's treatment of Christ's words of institution at the Last Supper in order to develop his own position more fully. Turretin gives ten arguments, summarised in the fifth, that there can be no communication of properties in the abstract. The fifth argues that the Lutheran position amounts to Eutychianism in confusing the two natures of Christ.[233] In the context of the

[232] Turretin, *Elenctic*, Thirteenth Topic, Q. VIII.
[233] Turretin, *Elenctic*, Thirteenth Topic, Q. VIII, XIII.

doctrine of the *extra carnem*, that the existence of the person of the Son of God is not comprehensively circumscribed by his humanity, Andrew M. McGinnis summarises the Reformed, Lutheran polemics.

> Turretin rejected the Lutheran accusation that the Reformed hold the *communicatio* to be merely verbal. On the contrary, the Reformed affirm that the *communicatio* is . . . real with respect to the person of Christ, though not with respect to the natures considered in themselves, because the divine essence and its properties cannot be communicated to another.'[234]

Calvin's reticence to speculate concerning the precise nature of the death of Christ in terms of the *communicatio idiomatum* and the Trinitarian relations is a function of his deliberate theological method of avoiding Scholastic terminology and not venturing beyond the explicit remit of Scripture. Turretin, who represents the Reformed High Orthodoxy, is willing to employ Scholastic terminology concerning the Trinity, the hypostatic union and the *communicatio idiomatum*, provided that this terminology is demonstrably grounded in Scripture. This precise terminology allows Turretin to venture further than Calvin in the extension of the *communicatio idiomatum* to the death of Christ.

In section XXXVI[235] Turretin uses synecdoche to exegete John 6:48. Turretin takes Christ's statement 'I am the bread of life' to be a propositional truth not in that Christ's flesh in itself produces eternal life, but that Christ's human nature is united to his person, and the person of Christ gives life through the merit of his death in the flesh. Turretin briefly discusses the suffering and death of Christ with reference to Acts 20:28. Turretin argues that although properties of either nature are ascribed to Christ's person, it would be wrong to infer that properties are predicated of the subject in such a way that does not belong to the subject.

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[234] McGinnis, *Beyond*, 91.

[235] Sections XXII to XLII of Question eight in the thirteenth Topic focus on sources of explanation of the *communicatio idiomatum* and provide more scriptural examples. Sections XXXVI and XXXVII directly address the extension of the *communicatio idiomatum* to the suffering and death of Christ, but this is unfortunately brief.

Turretin's example is the ascription of suffering and death to God. He explains this use of *communicatio idiomatum* in the Scriptures. 'It is not ascribed to God as the subject of inhesion, but to the person (which is God) as to the subject of denomination (which suffices to remove a false conception).'[236] This is Turretin's most explicit articulation of the extension of the *communicatio idiomatum* to the death of Christ. He affirms that God, in his divine nature, is impassible and immutable. He also affirms that the person who is God the Son suffered and died in his humanity.

Turretin argues that Christ suffered both in his body and in his soul. This dual suffering amounts to the totality of Christ's human nature undergoing suffering which can be predicated of the person of Christ. In this section and in the rest of question fourteen, Turretin does not refer directly to the *communicatio idiomatum* as a means of explaining his articulation of the suffering and death of Christ.

Turretin's exegesis of the crucifixion in terms of the *communicatio idiomatum* receives more qualifications than Calvin's, and therefore does not so closely echo the language of Scripture. Despite this critique of Turretin's theology, while Turretin's statements do not mirror the particular language of Scripture as Calvin's does, Turretin's overall theology is arguably more in line with the full spectrum of scriptural statements.

I. A. Dorner

The Lutheran position, in contrast to the Reformed position, changed more substantially in the three centuries between Luther and Dorner.[237] The linear development of the Reformed

[236] Turretin, *Elenctic*, Thirteenth Topic, Q. VIII, XIII.

[237] Jonathan Norgate notes that Dorner is often overlooked in historical theology, which tends to move from Schleiermacher to Ritschl without substantive reference to Dorner. Jonathan Norgate, *Isaak August Dorner, The Triune God and the Gospel of Salvation* (London: T&T Clark, 2009), 9. One example of this is *The*

doctrine is due to the explicit dependence on the historic creeds, particularly the Ecumenical Councils. Whereas, as Ngien highlights, Luther went beyond the Chalcedonian description of the *communicatio idiomatum*. His example is followed by later Lutherans in their emphatic subordination of creedal and confessional material to the text of Scripture.[238] I include Dorner in the survey because his Trinitarian theology, based on Lutheran theology, shows the consequences of the Lutheran doctrine of the *communicatio naturarem*. Dorner sought to develop a Christological position that would engender rapprochement between Lutheran and Reformed Christology.

To understand Dorner's view of the *communicatio idiomatum* and the hypostatic union, it is first useful briefly to unpack Dorner's Trinitarian theology. At the beginning of *A System of Christian Doctrine*, Dorner articulates his Trinitarian theology with an emphasis on Trinitarian relations.

> The Godhead must be thought as self-originating and self-conscious, just as he must be thought as voluntary love. This is only possible by the Godhead's eternally distinguishing himself from himself, and always returning to himself from his other self, that is, by God being triune. The eternal result of the eternal self-discrimination of God from himself, together with the equally eternal re-entrance into himself, is the organism of the absolute divine personality, so that he truly thinks the personal God, who does not deny the triune God, the guarantee of absolute personality.[239]

Dorner's Trinitarian theology appears to articulate personal diversity within the unity of the Godhead, although Dorner's terminology of God as 'absolute personality' appears to be susceptible to the charge of Modalism. Dorner defines the Godhead as 'absolute personality'

Trinity in German Thought by Samuel M. Powell, which extensively discusses Schleiermacher and Ritschl, but has no references to Dorner. Samuel M. Powell, *The Trinity in German Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001). This is an unfortunate lacuna considering Dorner's significant contributions to Trinitarian theology, Christology, and his reassessemt of the doctrine of divine immutability.

[238] Martin Luther, *On the Councils and the Church*, in *Luther's Works Volume XLI: Church and Ministry III*, eds. Helmut T. Lehmann and Eric W. Gritsch, trans. Charles M. Jacobs (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), 122.

[239] Isaak August Dorner, *A System of Christian Doctrine, Volume I*, trans, Alfred Cave (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1880), 1.

for two reasons. First, in order to move away from the philosophical and classical definition of God as substance, and secondly, in order to define God ethically. The latter reason is more fully developed by Dorner in his essay on *Divine Immutability*, which sees immutability as primarily ethical, rather than natural, or volitional. Norgate contends that Dorner's definition of God as absolute personality has the effect of minimising the particularities of the three persons of the Trinity. He rightly claims that it is 'A systemic weakness of Dorner's project.'[240]

This raises questions on which Norgate does not elaborate, concerning the affirmation of the Second Council of Constantinople, that distinguishes between the divine nature as it subsists in the three hypostases of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Dorner's definition of God as absolute personality mitigates against this subtle distinction, and thereby makes it impossible to specify how one hypostasis of the Godhead assumed human nature, without also saying that the entire Godhead as absolute personality assumed human nature at the incarnation. This will be discussed in more detail later in Part II.

Herman Bavinck summarises Dorner's view on the relationship between the divine nature as it subsists in the person of the Son and the humanity of Christ. 'The Logos gradually and increasingly communicates himself to the man Jesus and enters into a more organic union with him to the degree that the latter develops morally under the former's influence.'[241] This represents Dorner's concept of developmental incarnation which includes growth as an essential principle of both the humanity of Christ and the life of the Logos in union with the humanity. Dorner argues that this process unfolds through the mutual and incremental appropriation of the attributes of each nature to the other. McGinnis helpfully draws attention to the dispute this caused as Dorner's position necessarily includes the *extra*

[240] Norgate, *Dorner,* 44.
[241] Bavinck, *Dogmatics, Volume 3.* 302.

calvinisticum. Dorner expressly states this doctrine in his *A System of Christian Doctrine*, 'The human side cannot be made immediately participant in the knowledge and will of God as Logos . . . at first the actuality of the Divine Logos-Life necessarily extends beyond the humanity.'[242] For Dorner, in order for the incarnation to be a process of development whereby the humanity of Christ gradually appropriates more of the attributes of the Logos, the Logos cannot be fully circumscribed by the humanity. Furthermore, this demands greater revision of the Lutheran position on the *communicatio idiomatum*.

Dorner surveys the Lutheran and Reformed polemic concerning the *communicatio idiomatum*, and provisionally concurs with the present work, that the Lutherans held to a *communicatio idiomatum in abstracto*, and that the Reformed held to a *communicatio idiomatum in concreto*.[243] He clarifies his position and argues that Luther went beyond traditional Chalcedonian Christology,[244] and credits Luther with correctly articulating the *communicatio idiomatum* as *in abstracto*, and also with presenting a developmental incarnation. Dorner's diminished emphasis on the individual hypostases of the Godhead prevents Dorner from fully adopting Luther's Christology. This is borne out in Dorner's discussion of the conjunction of the two natures in Christ.[245] Dorner's articulation of the relation between the two natures of Christ aligns more closely with Chemnitz than with Luther, especially in Dorner's statement that Christ's Divine nature 'certainly cannot suffer of itself.' He qualifies the view by claiming that the capacities of the human nature of Christ are extended by virtue of its union with the divine nature. This is in accordance with Chemnitz's theology.

[242] Dorner, *System, Volume 3*, 333.
[243] Dorner, *System, Volume 3*, 233.
[244] Dorner, *System, Volume 3*, 224.
[245] Dorner, *System, Volume 3*, 235.

In applying his theology to the passion of Christ, he makes two preliminary claims. First, that Christ's physical sufferings are the height of his fellowship with humanity, but that the greatest intensity of the suffering of Christ's human nature was felt in his psyche. Secondly, that the psyche of Christ is most aware of the Divine wrath against sin, and that the human will of Christ is critical in his obedience. Following this, Dorner argues that the principal defect of Lutheran Christology is its purported confusion of the states of humiliation and exaltation in the incarnation. Dorner asserts that this confusion rests in the *communicatio idiomatum*. This is because the Lutheran *communicatio idiomatum in abstracto* produces statements like 'The man Christ is Almighty'. Dorner claims that this not only precludes the *extra calvinisticum* and threatens *anhypostasis,* but also conflates the two natures of Christ to the extent that the eternal blessedness of the humanity of Christ according to Luther's understanding of the *communicatio idiomatum*. Dorner asserts that this is inconsistent with the reality of Christ's suffering.[246] It is clear that his treatment of the *communicatio idiomatum* is closer to Chemnitz than to Luther. This is also true of Dorner's use of Scholastic terminology.

Reflections on the Survey and the Development of the *Communicatio Idiomatum*

The survey demonstrates three important points. First, in the literature it is agreed as a minimum, with the possible exception of Gregory of Nazianzus,[247] that for some period of time during the hours of darkness at the crucifixion, Christ is forsaken by God in some sense.[248] Additionally, when specified, it is universally agreed upon that at least the humanity

[246] Dorner, *System, Volume 3,* 31.
[247] Gregory of Nazianzus, *God, Oration* 30. 5.
[248] I have noted the validity of multiple readings, such as Cyril of Alexandria's covenantal interpretation, which seeks to centralise Christ's pivotal role in the covenant of grace as the second Adam at the cross. The present task of bringing greater precision to the articulation of the Trinitarian dynamics of the cross of Christ is parallel with recent work on the republication thesis, which considers the Mosaic covenant to be 'in

of Christ was forsaken by God the Father.[249] The universally agreed on statements contain multivalent clauses and therefore demand further clarification[250] that I attempt to offer in the present work.

Secondly, the survey demonstrates that few theologians have interpreted the fourth word through the *communicatio idiomatum,* and those that have did not combine it with an understanding of the fourth word in the context of Trinitarian theology.

Thirdly, by way of conclusion, the survey charted aspects of the development of the doctrine of the *communicatio idiomatum* through the history of theology. One of the major developments is seen in the Reformed articulation. In the Patristic era, the communication of properties is understood in terms of the mystery of the cross. Cyril of Alexandria is a clear example of this; he speaks of the Word's own flesh in a single subject Christology.[251]

The neo-Chalcedonian articulations of the sufferings of Christ in terms of the *communicatio idiomatum,* come together in the Theopaschite Confession. The Confession was presented to the Patriarch of Constantinople John the Cappadocian, after the death of the anti-Chalcedonian emperor Anastasius in 518.[252] The formula of propaganda for the Scythian monks: *unus ex trinitate crucifixus est,*[253] is not explicity quoted in the text of the Confession.

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some sense' a republication of the Edenic covenant of works. Cornelis P. Venema correctly asks in what sense this is the case, if at all. See Cornelis P. Venema, *Christ and Covenant Theology: Essays on Election, Republication, and the Covenants* (Philipsburg: P&R, 2017), 40.

[249] I have surveyed Patristic and Reformed comment on the fourth word. Here I note Augustine as an example. Augustine of Hippo, *Letter 140 to Honoratus,* Paragraph 18. In Paragraph 66 Augustine specifies that Christ was abandoned at the cross in the fourth word; though this statement is qualified and understood in a particular way by Augustine.

[250] I deliberately claim that my general statement about the fourth word requires further clarification. The same ought not to be said of the fourth word itself in the same way, because the Scriptures claim to be the word of God, therefore each statement is given according to the will of God. Statements in Scripture, however, do invite reflection and meditation.

[251] Cyril of Alexandria, *The Third Letter of Cyril to Nestorius,* in McGuckin, *Controversy*, 270.

[252] For historical background and translation of the text of the Confession see J. A. McGuckin, 'The "Theopaschite Confession" (Text and Historical Context): a Study in the Cyrilline Re-interpretation of Chalcedon,' *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 35, no. 2 (April 1984).

[253] One of the Trinity was crucified. For the history of the formula in Patristic writings see Grillmeier, *Tradition, Volume 2, Part 2,* 317-318.

Grillmeier suggests that the conclusion of the Theopaschite dispute was marked when a hymn was sung in the Church of Constantinople in 535/536 by the order of Justinian.

> Only-begotten Son and Logos of God, immortal by nature,
> For the sake of our salvation you took it upon yourself to become flesh from the holy Mother of God and ever-virgin Mary.
> Without change become a human being and crucified
> Christ God, through death treading death with the fee,
> One of the holy Trinity,
> Jointly glorified with the Father and the Holy Spirit.
> Save us![254]

The Reformed doctrine of the *communicatio idiomatum* can be read into Justinian's hymn, but the way the doctrine is expressed in Patristic writings is not explicitly with reference to the distinction between person and nature in the predication of attributes, as in the Reformed position. The distinction was not fully clarified until the Scholastic era.

A theological bridge between the Patristic and Reformed understandings of the communication of idioms can be traced through Leo the Great, Cyril of Alexandria, Maximus the Confessor, John of Damascus and Thomas Aquinas. John of Damascus directly contradicts the Lutheran *communicatio naturarum*.[255] Therefore I argue that it is not entirely anachronistic to read the Reformed, rather than the Lutheran understanding into the Patristic texts. Or at least to view the Reformed *communicatio idiomatum* as the natural theological progression from and inheritor of the Patristic understanding of the ascription of properties.

Aquinas builds on John of Damascus. 'In the mystery of the incarnation, there results a communication of the properties belonging to the nature, because whatever belongs to the nature can be predicated of the person subsisting in that nature, no matter to which of the natures it may apply.'[256] Here, Aquinas' definition and use of the communication of idioms is

[254] Grillmeier, *Tradition, Volume 2, Part 2*, 341.
[255] John of Damascus, *De Fide*, 3, 4.
[256] *ST* III, q. 3, a. 7.

clearly the precursor to the Reformed definition. At the Reformation, the focus of the communication of idioms became the predication of attributes between natures and person. I argue that the Reformed tradition is the natural development of the Patristic doctrine but in the new context of Reformation polemics.

One of the reasons why the Reformed understanding could be more precise on the predication of attributes than the Patristic tradition is that the modal distinction between person and nature was not fully developed until the Scholastic era, particularly by Thomas Aquinas.[257] The clear distinction between person and nature, which is necessary to be able to speak about the *communicatio idiomatum* in terms of person and natures, was not extensively analysed and developed in the Patristic era.[258] I examine the modal distinction in Part II.

[257] Richard Cross claims, 'The Schoolmen universally understood the communication of properties to be the ascription of divine and human properties to the (divine) person.' Cross, *Metaphysics*, 183. He adds in footnote 1 that Duns Scotus allows the predication of properties to other objects as well, such as to Christ who is considered as a whole: the Word and the human nature assumed.

[258] Several exceptions are noted in the survey, particularly the Cappadocians, who distinguished between nature as universal and hypostasis as particular.

II. How can the Fourth Word be Understood with Reference to the *Communicatio Idiomatum* and the Distinctions between Persons and Nature in the Trinity?

3. The *Communicatio Idiomatum*, Perichoresis, and the Cross of Christ

In Part I, within a Christological framework I offered a definition of ἐγκατέλιπές in the context of the crucifixion narratives, and explored Patristic, Scholastic and Reformed teaching on the communication of idioms, with reference to the fourth word. Part I included the first two sections of the lattice work of theological elements. The framework of Part II is Trinitarian theology and includes the third theological element of the lattice work. In chapter 3 I argue that the Patristic language of mutual indwelling and the later notion of perichoresis continues throughout the incarnation including at the fourth word. In chapter 4 I trace the development of the shift towards divine passibility since the late nineteenth century, in order to argue that the view is not in line with historic orthodoxy.The *communicatio idiomatum* and the modal distinction between person and nature are the aspects of theology that enable me to set up the question concerning the potential forsakenness of the divine nature at the fourth word. After arguing for the modal distinction, I will set out the question and then respond to it in chapter 6.

Perichoresis brings together the scriptural witness to the interrelations and mutual indwelling of the three divine persons of the Trinity. It balances the doctrines of the one simple divine nature, and the distinctions between nature and persons in the Godhead. The doctrine of perichoresis is a key part of a correct understanding of the relations among the Triune persons at the fourth word from the cross.

Because of the paucity of clear reference to the doctrine of perichoresis in Scripture, it is important not to overemphasise perichoresis as is sometimes the case in the contemporary literature. [1] After outlining the development, scriptural teaching, and definition of perichoresis, I will argue against Moltmann's interpretation and use of the doctrine.

Development of the Doctrine of Perichoresis

The etymology of the word περιχωρησις uncovers the development of the doctrine. G. L. Prestige notes that the verb form χωρειν (to contain) was originally used theologically to express the pervasive presence of God in all of creation. Used transitively, the verb means that God can 'hold' a certain measure.[2] The early use of the term is restricted to its verb form, περιχωρέω. Prestige states that its earliest occurrences are in Macarius of Egypt and Gregory Nazianzus where it denotes 'encompass' and 'reciprocate' respectively. Leontius of Byzantium uses the compound άντιπεριχωρέω which expresses a second early use of the term to denote the interchangeable natures of Christ in New Testament references to the person of Christ. The same compound is used by John Veccus and George Pachymeres in the thirteenth century in examining the procession of the Holy Spirit.[3] T. F. Torrance asserts that the term περιχωρησις is first used in the modern Trinitarian sense by Hilary[4] in his *De Trinitate* III.1. John of Damascus later gave credence to this Trinitarian use of the term περιχωρησις.[5]

περιχωρησις may be translated literally as 'a proceeding around.' Although the term περιχωρησις was not used for some time in the early church, the separate but related concept of indwelling was widely accepted. Letham states that the Cappadocians 'brought to the

[1] As I will argue, much of the overemphasis on perichoresis is influenced by Moltmann's interpretation of the fourth word. See, Moltmann, *Crucified,* 251; and Jürgen Moltmann, *God in Creation* (London: SCM, 1985), 14.

[2] G. L. Prestige, *God in Patristic Thought* (London: SPCK, 1952), 289.

[3] Prestige, *Thought,* 292.

[4] T. F. Torrance, *The Christian Doctrine of God* (London: T&T Clark, 1996), 102.

[5] John of Damascus, *De Fide,* 1.8.

forefront the concept of the full mutual indwelling of the three persons in the one being of God.'[6] It is sometimes argued that the Cappadocians, among other Patristic theologians, used the concept of perichoresis without using the word itself.

The changes in the definition of the term περιχωρησις and its cognates highlight its general theological context. The modern sense of περιχωρησις is restricted to Trinitarian theology. The equivalent term *circumincessio* was rendered into Latin by Burgundio of Pisa (d. 1194), and later changed to *circuminsessio*.[7] The English equivalents are co-indwelling, circuminsession or perichoresis. Muller writes, 'The term is also rendered mutual *circumplexico*, indicating the ultimate, mutual interrelation of the persons.'[8]

Scriptural Teaching

The scriptural witness concerning the Trinitarian concept περιχωρησις used in the Patristic and Reformed periods is mainly found in the Johannine material. Scripture reveals that the Father is in the Son, and the Son is in the Father (John 10:38; 14:10-11, 20; 17:21); and that both the Father and the Son are in the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit is in the Father and the Son (Romans 8:9). These passages suggest that each person of the Trinity mutually indwells the other persons of the Trinity. The Scriptures do not describe περιχωρησις beyond the mutual indwelling. Historical and contemporary Reformed theologians develop the scriptural evidence for περιχωρησις by citing passages which attribute the works of God *ad extra* to the three divine persons, particularly creation, providence, redemption, and sanctification.[9]

[6] Robert Letham, *The Holy Trinity: In Scripture, History, Theology, and Worship* (Phillipsburg, New Jersey: P & R, 2004), 178.

[7] *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*. Ed. F. L. Cross (London: Oxford University Press, 1957), *Perichoresis*.

[8] R. A. Muller, *Post Reformation Reformed Dogmatics Volume 4, The Triunity of God* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2003), 185.

[9] Cf. John Frame, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Christian Belief* (Phillipsburg: P&R, 2013), 479.

Definition

James D. Gifford Jr. surveys several attempts to define περιχωρησις in the body of contemporary literature on the subject and notes the unhelpful illustration of περιχωρησις as a dance.[10] Among others, C. S. Lewis,[11] Robert Sherman,[12] Paul Fiddes,[13] and Timothy Keller[14] utilise this view in different ways. The dance illustration is incorrect mainly because it is not how the Scriptures describe the doctrine. The scriptural emphasis is on mutual indwelling, which is also the way the doctrine is understood in Patristic writings.

Muller offers a basic and concise definition of περιχωρησις. 'The coinherence of the persons of the Trinity in the divine essence and in each other.'[15] Muller's basic definition can be expanded by Gilles Emery who gives three elements to the doctrine of περιχωρησις. The three Persons are interior to the others first, because of the one undivided essence; 'because where there is the essence of the person, there is the person himself.' Secondly, because each Person is a relation and this implies a relation to the other Persons. Thirdly, because of the divine processions. 'The Person who proceeds dwells in the person from whom he proceeds.'[16] The divine processions are important for understanding περιχωρησις because the Persons who eternally proceed eternally remain in the Person from whom they proceed. Emmanuel Durand gives another definition that is like Emery's comment.

> The mutual immanence of the three Persons is understood as a consequence of their inseperability, because, since they are all in one another, the mention or presence of one of the three Persons is accompanied by that of the two others as well. Such perichoresis can be seen, on the one hand, in the intrinsic connection between

[10] James D. Gifford Jr., *Perichoretic Salvation* (Oregon: Wipf & Stock, 2011), 15-17.
[11] C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (Glasgow: Harper Collins, 2001), 174-176.
[12] Robert Sherman, *King, Priest, and Prophet: A Trinitarian Theology of the Atonement* (New York: T&T Clark, 2004), 62.
[13] Paul Fiddes, *Participating in God: A Pastoral Doctrine of the Trinity*, (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2000), 72.
[14] Timothy Keller, *The Reason for God* (Great Britain: Hodder and Stoughton, 2008), 214-216.
[15] Muller, *Dictionary*, *Circumincessio*.
[16] Gilles Emery, *Trinity, Church, and the Human Person: Thomistic Essays* (Naples: Sapientia Press, 2007), 146.

> generation and procession, and on the other hand, in the effective reciprocity of the Trinitarian relations.[17]

The first part of Durand's definition describes περιχωρησις as a consequence of the inseparability of the three persons of the Trinity. Durand argues that the inseparability of the divine persons who subsist in the one essence gives rise to περιχωρησις. The second part of Durand's definition describes περιχωρησις in terms of the connection between the eternal generation of the Son by the Father, the eternal procession of the Holy Spirit, and the reciprocity of the Trinitarian relations. The two elements of Durand's definition are therefore the inseparability of the three divine persons and reciprocal relations of the persons.

I adopt Muller's simple definition and its expansion by Emery, which positively explains the dynamics of περιχωρησις in terms of coinherence. The verb inhere (without the prefix 'co') simply means to exist in. With reference to the mutual subsistent relations of the Trinity, the three persons exist in one another mutually.

The Cappadocian Father Basil the Great offers a helpful analogy to Trinitarian περιχωρησις. He argues that in describing the Trinitarian relations, the phrase 'be with' (συνειναι) is more appropriate than 'be in' (ένειναι).

> In relation to the Father and the Son it is more consistent with true religion to assert Him not to be in [ένειναι] but to be with [συνειναι]. . . For absolute and real co-existence is predicated in the case of things which are mutually inseparable. We say, for instance, that heat exists in the hot iron, but in the case of the actual fire it co-exists; and similarly, that health exists in the body, but that life co-exists with the soul. It follows that wherever the fellowship is intimate, congenital, and inseparable, the word with is more expressive, suggesting, as it does, the idea of inseparable fellowship.[18]

[17] Emmanuel Durand, "Perichorsis: A Key Concept for Balancing Trinitarian Theology," in *Rethinking Trinitarian Theology*, ed. Robert J. Wozniak and Giulio Maspero (London: T&T Clark, 2012), 181.

[18] Basil the Great, *De Spiritu Sanctu*. 63. Basil's illustrations suggest that he is trying to avoid a form of modalism, but on the other hand, 'be with' ought not to be taken to imply a relation between distinct entities.

This linguistic preference and analogy help to clarify the meaning of coinherence and περιχωρησις; particularly as I argue for the continuation of περιχωρησις at the fourth word below.

Basil's younger brother Gregory of Nyssa also does not employ the term περιχωρησις but discusses the concept. Daniel F. Stramara Jr. argues that although Gregory of Nyssa 'does not employ the word perichoresis in a Trinitarian sense, he avails himself of two other terms - περιφέρω and άνακύκλησις - to depict the dynamic of Trinitarian vitality and incessant intercommunion.'[19]

Charles C. Twombly correctly asserts that John of Damascus is a primary source for understanding the Patristic definition of the term περιχωρησις.[20] He quotes from John of Damascus' work *De Fidei Orthodoxa*.

> The abiding and resting of the Persons in one another is not in such a manner that they coalesce or become confused, but rather, so that they adhere to one another, for they are without interval between them and inseparable and their mutual indwelling is without confusion. For the Son is in the Father and the Spirit, and the Spirit is in the Father and the Son, and the Father is in the Son and the Spirit, and there is no merging or blending or confusion. And there is one surge and one movement of the three Persons. It is impossible for this to be found in any created nature.[21]

The Damascene notes that the subsistences are contiguous, and that the persons are inseparable in their surge or movement. The paragraph also asserts the full coequality of the three persons. None of these points is in itself a description of περιχωρησις. Instead, they state that περιχωρησις does not mean coalescence. The penultimate sentence, 'ἔν γάρ έξαλμα και μία κινησισ τών τριων ύποστασεων' speaks of surge or 'leaping out', and movement or 'motion'. The context suggests that έξαλμα and κινησισ do not connote aspects of some

[19] Daniel F. Stramara Jr., "Gregory of Nyssa's Terminology for Trinitarian Perichoresis," Vigiliae Christianae 52 (1998): 263, accessed January 28, 2017.

[20] Charles C. Twombly, *Perichoresis and Personhood: God, Christ, and Salvation in John of Damascus* (Eugene: Pickwick, 2015), 1.

[21] John of Damascus, *De Fide,* I.14.

contemporary definitions of perichoresis as dance. Instead the use of μία to qualify έξαλμα and κινησισ, and the reference to the unity of divine operation in the following paragraph, suggests that the reference is to divine operations.

In the Reformed era Calvin writes, 'In each hypostasis the whole nature is understood, the only difference being that each has his own peculiar subsistence. The whole Father is in the Son, and the whole Son is in the Father.'[22] Calvin claims that his doctrine of περιχωρησις is grounded both in the Scriptures, and in the Church Fathers, particularly Augustine. Gregory of Nyssa, although not using the precise term περιχωρησις, utilises the same concept referred to by Calvin. Gregory of Nyssa argues that the divine persons contain one another. 'Clearly, the One in his entirety, entirely in the Other; the Father, not superabounding in the Son, nor the Son diminishing in the Father.'[23] David S. Cunningham makes the point that the dynamism of the perichoretic relations is such that each is invoked in the thought of the others. He argues that each of the Triune persons gives to and receives from the others 'What they most properly are.'[24] Cunningham's point makes most sense when περιχωρησις is understood according to Emery's position, as mutual indwelling in consequence of the one essence, the relations, and the processions.[25] Colossians 2:9, among other texts, demonstrates Emery's concern. It teaches that the whole divine nature is the nature of the three divine persons.

An Argument against Moltmann for the Continuation of Perichoresis at the Fourth Word

[22] Calvin, *Institutes*, 1.13.19.

[23] Gregory of Nyssa, *Refutatio Confessionis Eunomii*, (CE 2.4), GNO 2. 322, 27-323, 2.

[24] David S. Cunningham, *These Three Are One: The Practice of Trinitarian Theology* (Massachusetts: Blackwell, 1998), 115.

[25] Gilles Emery, *Trinity, Church, and the Human Person: Thomistic Essays* (Naples: Sapientia Press, 2007), 146.

The authors I have referred to in the survey do not directly apply the related concepts of perichoresis or mutual indwelling to the fourth word. This is true beyond the limited selection of authors mentioned. The link between perichoresis and the fourth word is even more scarcely treated in contemporary theology than the link between more general Trinitarian concepts such as the eternal generation of the Son in relation to the fourth word. This is particularly the case within the Reformed tradition.

I therefore move towards a precise articulation of the state of the Trinitarian relations in terms of indwelling and perichoresis at the fourth word. This articulation will be offered in critical engagement with the Trinitarian theology of Jürgen Moltmann. I argue that the balancing concept of perichoresis describes the permanent Trinitarian relations from eternity past to eternity future. This is corroborated by Christ's extended statements on the doctrine of perichoresis and the Trinitarian relations immediately prior to his arrest and subsequent crucifixion in the Gospel of John.[26]

Moltmann's work on the doctrine of perichoresis[27] is symptomatic of his Social Trinitarianism[28] as it leads him to map the doctrine onto human ecclesiology and government.[29] Moltmann's emphasis on the threeness of God to the detriment of the doctrine

[26] John 14:1-17:26. See also John 8:29.

[27] See Moltmann, *Creation*; Jürgen Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God* (London: SCM, 1981). Anthony Thistleton claims that Moltmann's use of perichoresis aligns with both its use in the Cappadocians and Hilary of Poitiers, and the early development of perichoresis as involving God's immanence in creation. Anthony Thistleton, *The Hermeneutics of Doctrine* (Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2007), 478. Moltmann is strongly influenced by Hegel's theology of God's historicity and interaction with creation.

[28] Letham notes Molnar's citation of several theologians that accuse Moltmann of tritheism. P. D. Molnar, *Divine Freedom and the Doctrine of the Immanent Trinity: In Dialogue with Karl Barth and Contemporary Theology* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2002), 227. Letham adds the criticism that Moltmann correlates God and creation and collapses the immanent Trinity. Letham, *Trinity*, 308.

[29] I discuss an objection to my central thesis from Social Trinitarianism in Part III. Karen Kilby claims that Social Trinitarianism has 'become the new orthodoxy. Increasingly, indeed, one finds reference to it in popular Christian literature. Karen Kilby, 'Perichoresis and Projection: Problems with Social Doctrines of the Trinity,' New Blackfriars, (October 2000). Kilby's counterargument to Social Trinitarianism concludes that the doctrine of the Trinity should be understood as divine grammar rather than as a tool for social reformation. Katherine Sonderegger critiques Moltmann and to a lesser extent Karl Barth, in their location of the cross at the heart of the doctrine of God. Katherine Sonderegger, *Systematic Theology: Volume 1, The Doctrine of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2015), 157. Behind Sonderegger's critique is the argument that scriptural monotheism is incompatible with Moltmann's Social Trinitarianism which seeks to define God through the matrix of the cross. Moltmann assumes that the fourth word is the final and definitive utterance from the cross. The assumption is based on his textual criticism of the Gospels.

of the indivisibility of the one divine nature is the theological site from which he makes his argument concerning the fourth word.

Moltmann attempts to develop John of Damascus' statements on perichoresis in a way that is consistent with Patristic and Reformed interpretation of the concept.[30] From his comments, Moltmann appears to argue that perichoresis temporarily ceases at the cross, although he does not use the term perichoresis in this context. In a personal letter to the author, Moltmann argues that 'The Father and the Son are united in the Spirit of sacrifice and perichoretically in each other in the moment of their deepest separation to overcome the God-forsakenness of this world.'[31] Moltmann's statement seems to depend on the principle that the shared experience of mutual separation is itself a unifying perichoretic experience. I argue that the principle is not correct because common experience (mutual separation) does not entail shared life (perichoresis). In the same way, two individuals on separate planets cannot claim a unifying experience beyond the fact that they are both on a planet.

In other writings the temporary ceasation of perichoresis is logically entailed. For example, in Moltmann's exposition of 2 Corinthians 5:21 and Galatians 3:13. He concludes the passage by arguing that his own interpretation of the fourth word and the death of Christ upholds Trinitarian theology.

> In the forsakenness of the Son the Father also forsakes himself . . . The Fatherlessness of the Son is matched by the Sonlessness of the Father, and if God has constituted himself as the Father of Jesus Christ, the he also suffers the death of his Fatherhood in the death of his Son.[32]

[30] Moltmann, *Trinity*, 174.

[31] Jürgen Moltmann, letter to author, February 18, 2017.

[32] Moltmann, *Crucified*, 251. Moltmann intends the implication that the Reformed interpretation reverts to a monotheism that is incapable of being truly Trinitarian. Cf. Thomas H. McCall comments, 'God's very identity is constituted by this event (along with the resurrection), which means that without us- without our sin and the abandonment that it occasions – God would not be God. McCall, *Forsaken*, 17.

Moltmann's theological method involves embracing the paradoxes produced by the serious implications of his Trinitarian theology of the cross.[33] The acceptance of paradox does not remove the logical problem of the incompatibility of the Son's abandonment by the Father in Moltmann's theology, and the continuance of perichoresis at the fourth word. Although Moltmann denies the cessation of perichoresis at the fourth word, I argue that it is logically entailed by the supposed death of the fatherhood of the Father, and the death of the Sonship of the Son.

The entailed cessation of perichoresis at the fourth word further implies the cessation of the Trinitarian subsistent relations of eternal generation and procession upon which perichoresis is founded. If the Father ceases to be the Father of the Son, then the eternal generation which produces this relationship therefore also ceases. Since it is the person of the Son that is eternally generated by the person of the Father, the cessation of eternal generation implies the cessation of the person of the Son. In turn this also implies the cessation of the person of the Holy Spirit who proceeds from the Father and the Son. In summary, if Moltmann's claims are correct, the persons of the Son and the Holy Spirit cease to exist as divine persons and only divine unicity remains. Reduction to divine unicity ironically goes beyond the very monotheism that Moltmann is trying to avoid in his Trinitarian theology.

Moltmann's staurocentric Trinitarianism also results in the redundancy of the Holy Spirit, who, in Patristic writing, perichoretically functions as the love between the Father and the Son. This implication is reflected in the conspicuous absence of references to the Holy Spirit and his involvement at the cross. Moreover, Moltmann's Trinitarian pneumatology is

[33] 'God abandoned God, and contradicted himself, and at the same time a unity in God, in so far as God was at one with God and corresponded to himself. In that case one would have to put the formula in a paradoxical way: God died the death of the godless on the cross and yet did not die.' Moltmann, *Crucified*, 253. Another relevant methodological issue is Moltmann's use of the Lutheran *communicatio naturarem*. Moltmann, *Crucified*, 253-254.

well developed in his *History and the Triune God*,[34] but he fails to integrate it into his theology of the cross.[35]

[34] Moltmann, *History*, 57-69.

[35] Dennis W. Jowers concurs, 'In spite of his insistence on the distinct subjecthood of each of the three persons of the Trinity, Moltmann ascribes to the Holy Spirit no role in the cross/resurrection event which requires the act of a distinct subject.' Dennis W. Jowers, "The Theology of the Cross as a Theology of the Trinity: A Critique of Jürgen Moltmann's Staurocentric Trinitarianism," Tyndale Bulletin 52 (2001): 263, accessed January 20, 2017. Paul S. Fiddes writes, 'Moltmann himself seems a little uneasy that in his thought the being of God might be broken up eternally, and so offers a contrast between what God is now and what he will be.' Paul S. Fiddes, *The Creative Suffering of God* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1988), 202. Although Fiddes' position is less extreme than Moltmann's, Fiddes aligns himself with Moltmann's view on the passibility of the divine essence, and the resultant death of God in the cross of Christ. Fiddes also attempts to introduce the Holy Spirit in his theology of the cross, but the claim that the Father and the Son lose their Fatherhood and Sonship at the cross removes the possibility of any role for the Holy Spirit because of the cessation of the personal properties of the Triune persons.

4. The Theological Trend towards Divine Passibility

I. A. Dorner's 1883 *Divine Immutablitiy: A Critical Reconsideration*,[1] was a response to the classical doctrine of divine immutablitiy and contemporary kenotic Christological debates. Dorner reframes divine immutability in God's ethical consistency, rather than his unchangeable nature. Dorner's work on the subject set the scene for later critical reflection on the classical doctrine of divine immutability. In 1924, J. K. Mozley claimed that the issue of divine impassibility was ignored in many theological works.[2] Since then the argument for divine passibility has become increasingly popular. This trend has increased exponentially from the mid 1970s.[3] I argue that the trend can be traced to three main causes. First, the influence of the philosophy of G. W. F. Hegel. Secondly, a thread of individual theologians from the Patristic and Reformed eras who adhered at least partly to divine passibility. Thirdly, the theological response to the increased public awareness of suffering. In the third point, the general shift in academia from impassibilism to passibilism is most apparent.

In general, the Patristic and Scholastic doctrine of God holds that the divine nature is immutable and impassible because God is simple. This was historically considered to be the orthodox and confessional position. The Council of Nicaea (325) anathematised those who would attribute alteration to the person of God the Son. In the French Reformed Confession of Faith (*de la Rochelle*), with which Calvin was involved, the first article mentions the divine attribute of immutability. Impassibility is also attributed to God in the second chapter

[1] Isaak August Dorner, *Divine Immutability: A Critical Reconsideration*, trans. Robert R. Williams and Claude Welch (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994).

[2] J. K. Mozley, *The Impassibility of God: A Survey of Christian Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1926), 128.

[3] Cf. Jung young Lee, *A Systematic Inquiry in a Concept of Divine Passibility* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1974), 1. In 2015, Brandon F. Smith and James M. Renihan commented, 'For the better part of the last two centuries the orthodox consensus has been slowly eroding, to the point that, as it stands today, this particular doctrine is a byword for archaic and mistaken theology in both academic and ecclesiastical circles.' *Confessing the Impassible God: The Biblical, Classical, & Confessional Doctrine of Divine Impassibility*, eds. Ronald S. Baines, Richard C. Barcellos, James P. Butler, Stefan T. Lindblad and James M. Renihan (Palmdale, RBAP, 2015), 253.

of the Westminster Confession of Faith (1647), which states that God is 'without body, parts, or passions.'[4] This exact phrase appears in the Forty-Two Articles (1552); the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England (1563); the Irish Articles (1615); the Savoy Declaration (1658); and the Second London Confession of Faith (1677/1689). The uniform acceptance of the doctrines of divine immutability and impassibility is demonstrably clear from creedal and confessional material.

From the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the doctrine of divine impassibility began more frequently to be contested within orthodoxy. The historical shift focused on divine impassibility. The three trajectories outlined below summarise the developments in the understanding of divine impassibility.

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831)

First, the philosophy of Hegel has profoundly influenced Christian theology to the detriment of divine impassibility. In general, Trinitarian theology was not central in the theological landscape in the eighteenth century, both in rational theology and pietism. The generalisation must be cautioned by Cyril O'Regan's comment: 'As with all generalities, this conspectus is approximate. It is possible to see even in . . . Leibniz, something like an adumbration of the Trinity.'[5] The marginalisation of Trinitarian theology is systematised as a result of Kant's influential epistemology in the *Critique of Pure Reason,* which profoundly affected the course of theological development in the nineteenth century. Kant argues that possible human judgements are limited to twelve categories, which are based on Aristotle's *praedicamenta*

[4] *Westminster Confession of Faith* (Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1969), Chapter II. I.
[5] Cyril O'Regan, 'The Trinity in Kant, Hegel, and Schelling,' in *The Oxford Handbook of The Trinity*, eds. Gilles Emery, O. P. and Matthew Levering (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 254.

and *post praedicamenta*.[6] If human judgments and concepts and cognition are limited to these categories,[7] then human judgements are limited to sense perception. In his work *Religion within the Bounds of Reason Alone*,[8] Kant argues that the doctrine of the Trinity is ultimately incomprehensible because it lies beyond the comprehension of human cognition. The implications of Kant's assertion are worked out more fully in his *The Conflict of the Faculties* in which he claims that the doctrine of the Trinity 'has no practical relevance at all, even if we think we understand it; and it is even more clearly irrelevant if we realise that it transcends all our concepts.' Kant claims that the plural number of hypostases is not comprehensible in the one God, and it 'makes no difference in his rules of conduct.'[9] The impact of Kant's epistemology on subsequent theology in general and Christology in particular is immense.

In Hegel, the doctrine of the Trinity is partially reclaimed from Kantian epistemology and recentralised in theology; but it is modalistic and not Trinitarian in the orthodox sense.[10] Hegel's philosophy of religion begins with God; the other branches of his philosophy result with God. Dialectically, God is the goal of Hegel's philosophy. Hegel strongly criticised the

[6] The purpose of both Aristotle's (realist) and Kant's (conceptualist) list of categories is the enumeration of the highest genera under which all entities of human cognition can be subsumed; an exhaustive ontological inventory. In the Metaphysical and Transcendental Deductions of the first *Critique*, Kant defines the categories as pure, a priori concepts of the faculty of the understanding. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Werner S. Pluhar (Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1996), A79/B106.

[7] Kant gives twelve categories listed under four headings which are derived from the forms of judgement. Categories of Quantity: Totality, Plurality, Unity; Categories of Quality: Reality, Negation, Limitation; Categories of Relation: Substance, Causality, Community; Categories of Modality: Possibility, Existence, Necessity. Kant's categories of Modality concern the attitude of the epistemic agent towards the content of judgements. Kant, *Critique*, A74/B100. The deduction of the categories is central to Kant's critical project from his *Inaugural Dissertation* of 1770 onwards. Immanuel Kant, *On the Form and Principles of the Sensible and Intelligible World* [Inaugural Dissertation], Cambridge Edition I, Theoretical Philosophy 1755-1770, trans. and ed. David Walford in collaboration with Ralf Meerbote (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

[8] Immanuel Kant, *Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone*, trans. Theodore M. Greene and Hoyt H. Hudson (San Francisco, Harper Torchbooks, 1960).

[9] Immanuel Kant, *The Conflict of the Faculties*, trans. Mary J. Gregor (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1979), 66.

[10] In phrasing Hegel's position this way I am treating his logic as a tool rather than as the hub of his system.

theology of the Enlightenment which attempted to remove reciprocal personal relations from God.

Few Reformed theologians who discuss divine impassibility refer to Hegel's influence by specifically engaging with Hegel's works. Richard Muller,[11] Richard Creel,[12] Rob Lister,[13] and the authors of *Confessing the Impassible God*,[14] are four examples. The lack of reference to Hegel is not present in theologians influenced more directly by Pannenberg, Moltmann, Jungel, and Rahner; although few such theologians write from within the Reformed tradition.

Hegel's *Lectures in the Philosophy of Religion*, and *Phenomenology of Spirit* are two of Hegel's texts which have had a profound influence on the contemporary understanding of divine impassibility. It is in these texts that Hegel critically engaged with Kant's epistemology, which led him to reject two doctrines that undergird the creedal and confessional doctrine of divine impassibility: the doctrine of divine simplicity, and the Thomistic doctrine that God is *actus purus*. O'Regan cites recent scholarly investigation into Hegel's pre-Phenomenology period in which clues, 'to the effect that even as early as 1803/4 Hegel was exploring the prospects of aligning the Idealist triadic schema with the Christian symbol of the Trinity.'[15] Such clues may corroborate my interpretation that Hegel employs logic as a structural tool, rather than as the central thesis of his philosophy of religion.

[11] Richard A. Muller, *Post Reformation Reformed Dogmatics, Volume 3* (Michigan: Baker Academic, 2003). Muller does not refer to Hegel in this volume, although Hegel's lifetime does not fall within the scope of Muller's work.

[12] Richard Creel, *Divine Impassibility* (Origen: Wipf &Stick, 2005). Creel gives one footnote reference to Hegel.

[13] Rob Lister, *God is Impassible and Impassioned: Toward a Theology of Divine Emotion* (England: IVP, 2012). Lister does not cite Hegel's works in the bibliography, although there are two references in the text, at 126, footnote 16, and 145, quoting Muller.

[14] *Confessing*, eds. Baines, *et al*.. Hegel is not cited in the text or the bibliography.

[15] O'Regan, *Handbook*, 257.

Hegel refers to Christianity in his *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* as 'The Consummate Religion'[16] that is, the form in which the concept of religion has become objective to itself. Hegel's philosophical system begins with the three moments of syllogistic progression which he coordinates with the structure of Christianity. Universality (*Allgemeinheit*) coordinates with God in and for itself, 'in his eternity before the creation of the world and outside the world.' Particularity (*Besonderheit*) coordinates with God creating the world which gives rise to separation. 'What is first created is at first another, posited outside of God. But God is essentially the reconciling to himself of what is alien. . . He must restore to freedom and to his truth what is alien, what has fallen away. This is the path and the process of reconciliation.' Singularity (*Einzelheit*) coordinates with the result of this process of reconciliation. 'Through this process of reconciliation, spirit has reconciled with itself what is distinguished from itself . . . and thus it is the Holy Spirit, the Spirit in its community.'[17] The progression forms the basis of Hegel's understanding of the structure of Christianity. The same Trinitarian progression appears in Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit.[18] In both works Hegel does not advocate a tri-personal Trinity, but rather a modalist theology. This is partly because Hegel is using philosophical rather than theological categories, but also because he regards the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit as 'vanishing moments'[19] rather than persons. Concerning God's personhood Hegel writes, 'God is the completely universal object, not some particularity or other, but the highest personhood, the most universal personhood itself, singularity in its absolute universality.[20] Hegel does attribute personhood to God, but as Robert R. Williams rightly comments, for Hegel, 'Consciousness of method is

[16] G. W. F. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, ed. Peter C. Hodgson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2006), vii.

[17] Hegel, *Lectures*, 415-416.

[18] G. W. F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans A. V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 325, 465, 525.

[19] Hegel, *Lectures*, 194

[20] Hegel, *Lectures*, 263.

inseparable from ontology.'[21] Hegel's Philosophy of divine personhood is not Trinitarian but modalist.[22]

Hegel's discussion of the incarnation and the death of Christ treats the divine essence of God as the 'essential moment.'[23] It is significant for the present thesis that Hegel quotes a Lutheran hymn in his assertion 'God himself is dead.' Hegel expounds this by arguing that the weakness, finitude, frailty and most importantly, the negative, are moments within God himself. Hegel claims, 'That finitude, negativity, otherness are not outside of God. . . In this way what is external and negative is converted into the internal. . . Death itself is this negative, the furthest extreme to which humanity as natural existence is exposed; God himself is [involved in] this.'[24] In *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, Hegel gives greater emphasis to this dialectic. 'The death of the divine Man, as death, is abstract negativity, the immediate result of the movement which ends only in natural universality.

Hegel is able to assert that the negative of death is a moment in God himself only on the basis of his understanding of the doctrine of the Trinity, which he suggests has lost much public theological interest, although it is a 'weighty doctrine.'[25] For Hegel, the doctrine of the Trinity allows for otherness to be a moment in the divine life, because the three persons of the Trinity exist as one divine essence while also being distinct persons. From this orthodox conception of the Trinity, Hegel suggests that creation and reconciliation are inevitable, and that in the process of reconciliation, the negative of death and the weakness of human finitude also become moments in the history of God.

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[21] Robert R. Williams, *Hegel on the Proofs and the Personhood of God: Studies in Hegel's Logic and Philosophy of Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 195.

[22] Hegel's influence is seen in Dorner's modalist claim that God is 'absolute personality.' Isaak August Dorner, *A System of Christian Doctrine, Volume 1,* trans, Alfred Cave (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1880). 1

[23] Hegel, *Lectures*, 464.

[24] Hegel, *Lectures*, 468. Cf. Hegel, *Spirit*, 475-476.

[25] Hegel, *Lectures*, 83.

Hegel's understanding of finitude, weakness, and death as dialectical moments in the history of God as Trinity, has profoundly influenced contemporary articulations of divine impassibility. This is perhaps most notably the case in the writings of Moltmann, particularly in his most significant work, *The Crucified God*. I argue that Hegel's influence on Moltmann, and Moltmann's influence on contemporary theology, is one of the main causes of the paradigm shift in understanding God no longer as impassible, but as passible.

The point at which Moltmann's dependence on Hegel is most apparent occurs in his discussion of the Trinitarian theology of the cross.

> If one describes the life of God within the Trinity as the history of God (Hegel), this history of God contains within itself the whole abyss of godforsakenness, absolute death and the non-God. . . Because this death took place in the history between Father and Son on the cross on Golgotha . . . The concrete "history of God" in the death of Jesus on the cross on Golgotha therefore contains within itself all the depths and abysses of human history and therefore can be understood as the history of history. All human history, however much it may be determined by guilt and death, is taken up into this history of God, i.e. into the Trinity, and integrated into the future of the history of God. There is no suffering which in this history of God is not God's suffering; no death which has not been God's death in the history on Golgotha.[26]

Moltmann depends on Hegel's articulation of the history of God as including weakness and death. Moltmann argues from this that all human suffering is incorporated in the history of the life of God, and that this is demonstrated at Golgotha. Moltmann continues this argument and theme in *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God*,[27] and *History and the Triune God.*

The influence of Moltmann's theology of the cross and the suffering of God is highly significant. Moltmann is frequently referred to as an important Protestant theologian who espouses divine passibility.[28] This is due on the one hand to the sheer quantity of his writings

[26] Moltmann, *Crucified*, 255.
[27] Moltmann, *Trinity*, 17, 36.
[28] Cf. *The Power and Weakness of God*, Ed. Nigel M. de S. Cameron (Edinburgh: Rutherford House, 1990), 53-68; Fiddes, *Suffering*, Preface; McCall, *Forsaken*, 15-18; Weinandy, *Suffer?* 1.

on the subject and on the other hand to the incisive and direct style he employs to articulate this position.

An Historical Passibilist Thread

Secondly, a limited number of theologians from the Patristic[29] era to the Reformation have affirmed divine passibility, or at least a qualified doctrine of impassibility. In the early church there are only two significant treatises which focus on divine impassibility: Gregory Thaumaturgus' work more specifically and systematically deals with divine impassibility. From the Church Fathers Origen speaks in clearly passibilist terms of the Father and the Son. In *Homiliae in Ezecheilem* Origen states 'The Father himself and the God of the whole universe is 'long suffering, full of mercy and pity. Must he not then, in some sense, be exposed to suffering? . . The Father himself is not impassible.'[30] On the other hand, in *On First Principles*, Origen outlines a basic doctrine of divine simplicity which is opposed to the notion of divine passibility.[31] Interestingly, Luther follows Origen's more passibilist statements in positing a passible God who suffers as God, not merely in the human flesh in the incarnation. This is in part due to his employment of the *communicatio idiomatum* as *communicatio naturarum*. The quotations from these authors, especially Origen, may easily be taken out of context to claim that they are passibilists akin to Moltmann, however, this is an unmeasured conclusion. Instead the trajectory of the articulation of divine passibility may

[29] R. P. C. Hanson notes the passibilist conceptions of God behind the Arian theology. R. P. C. Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1988), 109.

[30] Origen, *Homiliae in Ezecheilem* 6.6, 185-254.

[31] Origen, *On First Principles* (U.S.A.: Ave Maria Press, 2013), Book I, Chapter I, 6. Contemporary passibilist theologians, intending to claim historical precedents for passibilism, occasionally note apparently passibilist texts in Origen, without taking the context of his other writings into account.

be noted in their writings. It is beyond the purview of this work fully to examine the number of theologians who have advocated divine passibility.

A Paradigm Shift

Thirdly, the theological climate moved increasingly towards the doctrine of divine passibility in response to the increased public awareness of suffering caused by the Industrial Revolution, and the two World Wars.[32] The question of divine impassibility focused on whether or not God could suffer. B. R. Brasnett stated in 1928 that, 'Men feel, and perhaps will feel increasingly, that a God who is not passible, who is exempt from pain or suffering, is a God of little value to a suffering humanity.'[33] If God could suffer, then the protest atheism which Moltmann equates with Albert Camus, could potentially be avoided. Moltmann's startling theological response to E. Weisel's account of a prolonged hanging at Auschwitz, in *Night*,[34] gave visceral weight to the passibilist argument in academia. In response to the question where is God? Weisel recounts hearing a voice reply, 'He is here, He is hanging there on the gallows.' Moltmann responds in *The Crucified God*.

> Any other answer would be blasphemy. There cannot be any other Christian answer to the question of this torment. To speak here of a God who could not suffer would make God a demon. To speak here of an absolute God would make God an annihilating nothingness. To speak here of an indifferent God would condemn men to indifference.[35]

[32] A growing individualism has resulted not only in public horror at the immense sufferings of the twentieth century, but also more recently in a tendency to believe that humans ought not to suffer.

[33] B. R. Brasnett, *The Suffering of the Impassible God* (London: SPCK, 1928), ix.

[34] E. Weisel, *Night* (London: Fontana/Collins, 1972), 76-77.

[35] Moltmann, *Crucified*, 283.

Moltmann consistently sounds this note throughout his theological writings,[36] as he assumes that an impassible God must be indifferent to human suffering.

The influence of Hegel, a slender historical thread of theologians, and social and historical developments since the 1890's constitute the threefold historical background to the contemporary doctrine of divine passibility.[37] This historical overview provides the background for understanding the doctrines of divine simplicity, divine immutability, and divine impassibility, which I explore in the following chapter.

[36] Cf. Moltmann, *History*, 29; Moltmann, *Trinity*, 47. Moltmann's theology is parallel in this respect to the famous statement written by Dietrich Bonhoeffer on the wall of his prison cell: 'Only a suffering God can help.' Cited in Letham, *Trinity*, 303.

[37] My overview of the rise of passibalist theology since the late nineteenth century clearly demonstrates that the doctrine of divine passibility is the majority view in contemporary theology; particularly within evangelicalism broadly conceived. It must be emphasised, however, that there is a growing number of voices across the traditions articulating divine impassibility. Among many others, Thomas Weidnandy in Catholic theology, and Robert Letham in evangelicalism, have argued for the theological power and utility of the doctrine of divine impassibility.

5. What are the Distinctions Between Persons and Nature in the Trinity?

The *communicatio idiomatum* brings precision to an interpretation of the fourth word from the cross by stating that what is said of Christ's human nature and Christ's divine nature in the fourth word is true of God the Son incarnate. Following Cyril of Alexandria,[1] I argued that the *communicatio idiomatum* excludes the divine nature from suffering in itself, because what is attributed to Christ's human nature is not predicated of the divine nature but of the single subject of both natures.[2] Two further questions can now be asked that will govern the rest of Part II. First, what is the distinction between the person of the Son and the divine nature? Secondly, and related to the first, what is the distinction between the three divine persons? The answer to these questions will further inform the use of the *communicatio idiomatum* for interpreting the fourth word in the next chapter.

To answer these questions on the persons and nature distinctions, I turn to Thomas Aquinas, for three main reasons. First, because his Christology is constantly framed in Trinitarian theology;[3] secondly, because his theology is grounded in Patristic thought; and thirdly, because Aquinas's writings on Christology and Trinitarian theology form a benchmark. Aquinas is one of the first theologians to attempt a comprehensive analysis of Christology. His clarificatory questions may appear to be irrelevant speculations, but as Rowan Williams argues, the questions form 'a massive grammatical clearing of the ground.'[4] Because of these reasons, exploring Aquinas will help focus and develop my central

[1] See McGuckin, *Controversy*, 190-193; Cyril, *Unity*, 117.

[2] The attributes of one of Christ's natures is directly attributed to the other nature in the Lutheran *communicatio naturarum.*

[3] In the opening sections of the *Compendium of Theology* Aquinas connects Christology to Trinitarian theology by centralising the doctrines in the system of Christian doctrine. 'The Lord taught that the knowledge making us blessed consists of two objects, namely, the divinity of the Trinity and the humanity of Christ. . . the humanity of Christ is an object of faith, since it is the way by which we attain the divinity.' Aquinas, *Compendium*, 18. For fuller discussion of the Trinitarian context of Aquinas' Christology see also, Legge, *Christology*. Legge quotes a similar passage from the *Compendium of Theology* in his introduction.

[4] Williams, *Heart*, 12.

argument and the interpretation of the fourth word; particularly concerning the doctrine of persons as subsisting relations, and the modal distinction between persons and nature. I also interact with other theologians, particularly on the concept of personhood. In the next chapter I apply the answers to the questions of distinctions in the Trinity along with the *communicatio idiomatum* to the fourth word.

While serving at the papal court in Orvieto between 1261 and 1265 Aquinas enjoyed much greater access to the Patristic writings, particularly Greek texts, than he had previously known. C. G. Geenen notes the impact of this time of Patristic study on many of Aquinas' works, particularly the *Catena Aurea* and the *Tertia Pars* of the *Summa Theologiae*.[5] Aquinas' dependence on Patristic sources is evident throughout the *Summa*. [6]

Aquinas' doctrine of the Trinity is developed most comprehensively in the *Prima Pars* of the *Summa Theologiae*. His Trinitarian thought and Christology is also set out substantially in the *Summa Contra Gentiles*.[7] Aquinas' doctrine takes a more emphatically exegetical aspect in the *Catena Aurea* and especially his comments on the Gospel of John. I focus my discussion of Aquinas' Trinitarian theology on his writings in the *Summa Theologiae*.[8]

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[5] C.G. Geenen, 'The Council of Chalcedon in the Theology of St. Thomas Aquinas,' in *From an Abundant Spring: The Walter Farrel Memorial Volume of 'The Thomist,'* ed. Staff of the Thomist (New York: P. S. Kennedy, 1952), 172-217. Aquinas focuses on John of Damascus in his treatment of the *comunicatio idiomatum* but on this doctrine Aquinas also cites Athanasius, Gregory Nazianzen, Cyril of Alexandria, Ambrose of Milan, Augustine of Hippo, Leo the Great, and Pseudo-Dionysius. Cf. *ST* III, q. 16, and q. 46. Aquinas, however, was also familiar with Ignatius of Antioch, Tertullian, Origen, Hilary of Poitiers, Athanasius, Cyril of Jerusalem, Gregory of Nyssa, and Epiphanius. Paul Gondreau comments that as a result of the fruitful time at Orvieto, Aquinas quotes 'certain Greek Fathers . . . for the first time in the Latin West.' Gondreau, 'Communication,' 219-221.

[6] Therefore, moving from examining the Church Fathers regarding the *communicatio idiomatum* to Aquinas is not methodologically problematic, but is a reasonable development considering Aquinas' synthesis of much Patristic theology.

[7] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles, Book Four: Salvation*, trans Charles J. O'Neil (London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1975).

[8] The cyclical development of the arguments in the *Treatise on the Most Holy Trinity* moves from the divine processions to the divine persons and returns with more clarity and insight to the divine processions as the starting point. The cycl is a microcosm of the structure of the *Summa Theologiae* as a whole, which moves from God, to creation, to man, to creation returning to God through man, to Christ, to the sacraments, and back

Aquinas follows and develops the Trinitarian Scholastic logic of his contemporary Bonaventure (1221-1274).

> There are five notions in God: 'innascibility,' 'paternity,' 'filiation,' 'common spiration,' 'and 'procession.' Of these only four are relations, for 'innascibility' is not a relation, except by reduction . . . Four only are properties. For 'common spiration' is not a property; because it belongs to two persons. Three are personal notions – i.e., constituting persons, 'paternity,' 'filiation,' and 'procession.' 'Common spiration' and 'innascibility' are called notions of persons, but not personal notions.[9]

Bonaventure argues that the two emanations or processions are from nature and will, whereas Aquinas argues instead that the two processions are from intellect and will.[10] The concept of relations in the Godhead will be taken up below in discussion of the personal subsistence and subsistent relations of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Muller notes similarities between Bonaventure, Aquinas, and Augustine in speaking of the lover and the beloved in the Triune relations. These similarities are intentional but often left unspecified because Aquinas assumed familiarity with Augustine's theology.[11]

Aquinas' definition and explanation of the terms person and nature flow throughout the *Treatise on the Most Holy Trinity* in Questions 27 to 43 of the *Prima Pars*. More narrowly, Aquinas' definition and explanation of the term subsistence is mainly located in the *Prima Pars*, Question 29 Articles one and two, and Question 39 Article one.

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to God as the starting point. See Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, *The Trinity and God the Creator: A Commentary on St. Thomas' Theological Summa, Ia, q. 27-119*, trans. Frederic C. Eckhoff (Ex Fontibus, 2015), 262-263.

[9] Bonaventure states his point more succinctly in the same passage. 'Sacred doctrine teaches that in the divine persons there are two emanations, three hypostases, four relations, and five notions, but there are only three personal properties.' Bonaventure, *Breviloquium* in *Opera Omnia*, vol. 5. I. ii. 3.

[10] Duns Scotus argues that memory and will are necessarily productive in God. He speaks of memory as the 'storehouse of mental acts of cognition.' By linking memory to cognition and intellect, Scotus is closer to Aquinas than to Bonaventure. Scotus' argument is quoted, set out, and evaluated in Richard Cross, *Duns Scotus on God* (London: Routledge, 2016), 132-142.

[11] Muller, *Dogmatics, Volume 4*, 46.

What is the Divine Nature?

The divine nature is what makes each person God; it is the quiddity, or what-ness of God.[12] The doctrine of the divine nature contains fewer potential complex pitfalls and aberrations than the doctrine of the Trinity. Aquinas' doctrine of the divine nature as simple, absolute, and eternal, is continued in orthodox theology proper into the Reformed[13] tradition.[14]

In the *Prima Pars,* after affirming the existence of God, Aquinas proceeds to state the doctrine of divine simplicity and its concomitant doctrines of non-corporeality, goodness, infinity, immutability, eternity, and unity.[15] According to Aquinas, knowledge of God's essence is limited to what God is not. 'Now, because we cannot know what God is, but rather what he is not, we have no means for considering how God is, but rather how he is not.'[16] Aquinas' *via negativa* is seen clearly in his discussion of divine simplicity, which he defines as the denial of composition in God.[17]

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[12] The Scriptures speak of God's nature to refer to his Godness in Romans 1:20. James E. Dolezal comments on this verse: 'There is something that we call "divinity" by which God is divine and which is the foundation for his act of creation – the Godness of God, so to speak.' James E. Dolezal, *All That Is In God: Evangelical Theology and the Challenge of Classical Christian Theism* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2017), 114. Dolezal makes similar comments about Colossians 2:9 and Galatians 4:8. It is important to note that the divine persons are God as divine persons, and that each person is fully God.

[13] For a distinctly Reformed critique of Aquinas' thought and writings, see K. Scott Oliphint, *Thomas Aquinas* (New Jersey: P&R, 2017). Oliphint focuses on epistemology and the existence of God. The work is strongly critiqued within the Reformed tradition by R. A. Muller, 'Aquinas Reconsidered,' review of *Thomas Aquinas*, by K. Scott Oliphint, *Reformation21*, February 19, 2018.

[14] The continuity of Aquinas' doctrine of the divine nature into the Reformed tradition is perhaps seen most clearly in the Westminster Confession of Faith. *Westminster Confession of Faith* (Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1969), Chapter 2. During the seventeenth century, theologians such as John Biddle (1615-1662) first began to reject the doctrine of divine simplicity, which is so central to Thomist thought. Biddle's hermeneutic was based on a more literal reading of the Scriptures, and in this respect it was comparable to the Socinian Racovian catechism. D. Stephen Long helpfully follows John Owen's polemic against Biddle in the *Vindiciae Evangelicae* of 1655, and notes that prior to Owen's work Parliament passed a law which made the denial of the deity of the Son and the Holy Spirit, and the denial of God's being and perfections, a capital offense. Biddle was jailed but was never executed for his heretical writings. Cf. D. Stephen Long, *The Perfectly Simple Triune God: Aquinas and His Legacy* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2016), 143-157.

[15] These orthodox affirmations are clearly and deliberately echoed in the words of the Westminster Confession.

[16] Thomas Aquinas, *The Summa Theologiae of Saint Thomas Aquinas, Latin-English Edition, Volume I, Prima Pars* (NovAntiqua, 2008), I, q. 3.

[17] Aquinas unpacks non-composition in God in Question 3 in terms of non-corporeality, matter and form, composition of quiddity, essence and nature, subject and accident, genus and difference, composition with other things. *ST* I, q. 3.

The one indivisible God exists in three persons; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The persons are not separate portions of the divine essence, they are subsistences of the divine essence. The vocabulary of subsistence enables precise expression of the relation of the persons to the divine essence which avoids modalism and tritheism. Divine simplicity logically grounds immutability which in turn logically grounds impassibility; because of this simplicity often appears in Scholastic theological systems as the first divine attribute to be treated.[18]

The simple divine essence is not composite and is not compounded in any way; neither physically, metaphysically, nor logically. God is free of potency-act composition, and matter-form composition. Paul Thom comments on Bonaventure's Trinitarian metaphysics which also aligns with Aquinas' views, 'God must be a substance-term, nothing else applying to the Godhead can be a substance-term, God must not inhere as an accident in anything, and nothing can inhere in God as an accident.'[19] Bonaventure and Aquinas uphold the orthodox doctrine that God is not a composite being.

Aquinas expresses the doctrine of divine simplicity by stating that God is *ipsum esse* (to be itself), and therefore *actus purus*, that is, that God is pure actuality, possessing no potentiality (*potentia*).[20] Aquinas argues that, 'In the first cause of motion, if it is altogether

[18] A significant exception is Duns Scotus' argument that divine infinity entails simplicity and is therefore fundamental. Duns Scotus, *Philosophical Writings*, trans. Allan Wolter (Indianapolis: Hacket, 1987), 88. See also, Cross, *Scotus*, 96-99. Development of Scotus' argument is beyond the scope of my current focus and is not a necessary move for the presentation of my argument.

[19] Paul Thom, 'Inherence and Denomination in the Trinity,' *European Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 6, no. 2 (Summer 2014): 143. 139-153.

[20] The doctrine that God is *actus purus* is upheld in the Reformed tradition. The Westminster divine Francis Cheynell links the doctrines of necessity, *actus purus*, and simplicity to exegesis of Exodus 3:14. 'It is utterly impossible that God should not exist, because the Divine Nature is a pure Act, an absolute, necessary, eternal, infinite, independent single Being. For it is manifestly absurd to conceive this pure, infinite and eternal Being not to be in Act, since it is a pure Act. God doth declare the incomprehensible purity of his infinite and single Being in that amazing and yet edifying text, I am that I am . . . as if he had said there is nothing in your God which is not God; my Attributes do not differ from myself, my Being is absolutely necessary, every way perfect, altogether pure, single and infinite.' Francis Cheynell, *The Divine Triunity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit* (London: T. R. and E. M., 1650), 8-9. In *God Without Passions: A Reader*, ed. Samuel Renihan (Palmdale: RBAP, 2015), 159.

immovable, there cannot be potentiality with actuality, for a thing is movable because it has potentiality.'[21] God in himself[22] is, both essentially and personally, absolutely and eternally perfect.[23]

The classical formulation of divine simplicity also stipulates that God is free of existence-essence composition, and that therefore God is identical to his existence. The literature explores the claim that God is a necessary being, which is central to divine simplicity.[24] God is identical with each of his attributes, therefore the proposition that God has the attribute of goodness or justice is technically false; instead, divine simplicity means that God is goodness and God is justice. What are commonly called attributes[25] of God cannot be separated or abstracted from the divine essence.

Alvin Plantinga criticises this philosophical approach to divine simplicity on the grounds that it excludes all distinctions in the Godhead, including the distinctions among the persons of the Trinity. Plantinga argues, using the transitivity of identity, that if God is simple

[21] Aquinas, *Compendium*, 1.9; 1.11; *ST* I. Q. 9, a. 1, 2.

[22] This must be limited to God's Triune essence *ad intra*. Concerning God's relationship to his creation, God's will *ad extra* may be considered to be *in potentia*.

[23] The view of God as *actus purus* is entirely opposed in the philosophical theology of Hegel, who argued for the history of God, and therefore, the becoming of God. The becoming of God necessarily involves potentiality in God *ad intra*. If Hegel is correct, then God cannot be immutable because God is not *actus purus*. Hegel's position heavily influenced Moltmann, who in turn influenced contemporary articulations of the divine essence in terms of suffering and change. 'Faith must understand the deity of God from the event of the suffering and death of the Son of God and thus bring about a fundamental change in the orders of being of metaphysical thought . . . it must think of the suffering of Christ as the power of God and the death of Christ as God's potentiality. Moltmann, *Crucified*, 222.

[24] Kant argued that the proposition 'God exists' is an existential proposition and is therefore synthetic. Further, its denial does not entail a contradiction. Kant, *Critique*, A595/B623. Although separating existence-essence composition from the doctrine of divine simplicity would not derail the argumentative moves from divine simplicity to impassibility, it would move my overall argument away from historical creedal orthodoxy concerning divine simplicity.

[25] In the Reformed Tradition a recent treatment of the divine attributes is seen in Terry L. Johnson, *The Identity and Attributes of God* (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2019). Johnson is an example of the way that contemporary Reformed theologians adopt the language of divine attributes with minimal attention to the philosophical difficulties involved concerning divine simplicity. Johnson briefly outlines the doctrine of simplicity, 78-86. In relation to divine attributes he states, 'We comprehend the attributes differently, but they are all one in him' 79. Geerhardus Vos provides a nineteenth century Reformed example of the importance of affirming metaphysical non-composition in God and divine simplicity, as being in line with historic orthodoxy. Geerhardus Vos, *Reformed Dogmatics*, trans. Richard B. Gaffin, Jr. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Lexham Press, 2014), 5-9.

then God is identical with each of his properties, and therefore each of his properties is a property, and God becomes a 'self-exemplifying property.'[26] Muller claims that many contemporary readings of the Scholastic doctrine of divine simplicity, including Plantinga's, misinterpret the doctrine.[27] 'According to traditional orthodoxy, there *are* distinctions in God, but they are distinctions that in no way detract from or impugn the non-compositeness and, therefore, the ultimacy of the divine essence.'[28] The Scholastic nuance in the term 'identity' is achieved by stipulating various levels of identity such as essential identity and formal identity. Therefore, in Scholastic terminology, identity does not always refer to full equation. Dolezal offers an alternative to the terms attribute or property that avoids Plantinga's criticism, when he discusses the option that God is the absolutely simple truthmaker of his attributes.

> To what could God's attributes refer if not to divine properties? The truthmaker account answers that these attributes refer to the divine substance itself. But substances and properties cannot be in a single ontological category. Therefore, when an attribute is ascribed to God its referent is the divine substance, while, when applied to a creature, the same attribute refers to a property in the creature.[29]

Instead of identifying God with his property, and assuming that the property remains, the truthmaker account argues that the simple divine nature is the explanation of what are referred to as his divine attributes in modern property accounts of divine attributes. A truthmaker for a proposition (P) is defined by Chad Vance as a thing in virtue of which P is

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[26] Alvin Plantinga, *Does God have a Nature?* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1980), 46-47. Graham Oppy adds the interesting complication that a subject with one property has an infinite number of properties. Subject *a* has the property F. Therefore, *a* also has the additional property of having at least one property. Therefore, *a* also has the property of having at least two properties, *ad infinitum*. See Graham Robert Oppy, 'The Devilish Complexities of Divine Simplicity,' *Philo* 6 (Spring - Summer 2003): 10-15. The phrase 'has at least one property,' as opposed to 'has one property,' avoids the paradox in which 'has one property' is true only if 'has one property' is not a property, in which case Oppy's complication does not obtain.

[27] One of the functions of the doctrine of divine simplicity is epistemological, it marks the divine existence as unique and incomprehensible. Plantinga's criticism of the doctrine appears to miss the Patristic insistence that the divine nature cannot be known fully, it is ultimately a mystery.

[28] Muller, *Dogmatics, Volume 3*, 41.

[29] Dolezal, *God*, 155.

true. He gives the example of the proposition 'The Eiffel Tower exists.' The concrete object that makes the proposition true is the Eiffel Tower.[30]

Dolezal cites Jeffrey E. Brower's explanation of the truthmaker account of divine attributes.

> According to the truthmaker interpretation, God is identical with the truthmakers for each of the true (intrinsic) predications that can be made about him. Thus, if God is divine, he is identical with that which makes him divine; if he is good, he is identical with that which makes him good; and so on in every other such case. Now, since nothing can be regarded as identical with anything other than itself, this interpretation just amounts to the claim that God *is* the truthmaker for each of the predications in question.[31]

Brower's statement of the truthmaker account of divine simplicity also responds to the false assumption that propositions about God that involve predicating an attribute to a subject must reveal an underlying ontological structure in which God is a subject of which attributes are predicated.[32]

Difficulties in the doctrine of divine simplicity and the way human language appears to predicate attributes of God may also be addressed by regarding the distinction of the attributes as the effects of God's works *ad extra* and not in God himself *ad intra*.

If God is simple and free from all composition, divine immutability is entailed. Scripture is clear that God is unchanging, although this is variously interpreted.[33] The relationship between divine simplicity, immutability and impassibilty is complex. It is made

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[30] Chad Vance, 'Modal Truthmakers, Truth Conditions, and Analyses: or, How to Avoid the Humphrey Objection,' *Acta Anal* 32 (2017): 147-148. Vance distinguishes between a truthmaker and truth conditions. The truth conditions for P are a set of necessary and sufficient conditions for P.

[31] Jeffrey E. Brower, 'Making Sense of Divine Simplicity,' *Faith and Philosophy* 25 (2008): 19.

[32] It would be anachronistic to expect a defence against Plantinga's property argument in the High Orthodox era of the Reformed tradition, but the tradition clearly attempts to uphold a doctrine of divine attributes that does not compromise divine simplicity. See Edward Leigh, *A Systeme or Body of Divinity* (London: A. M. For William Lee, 1662), 160-166.

[33] For example, Exodus 3:14; 1 Samuel 15:29 (cf. v10); Psalm 90:1-2; 102:27; Malachi 3:6; Isaiah 41:4; Romans 11:29, 36; 1 Timothy 6:15-16; Hebrews 1:10-12; James 1:17; Revelation 4:8-10.

more obscure because in much of the literature the terms are not defined with sufficient precision.[34] This is particularly the case with impassibility. If the essence of God is simple, he has no composition because he has no parts. Divine immutability is a direct consequence of divine simplicity, because change is only possible when there is distinction between act and potency in a being. The connection is seen in the development of historic orthodoxy and it is also a logical connection. Therefore, once divine simplicity is established, divine immutability follows, and from divine immutability, divine impassibility follows.

The proposition that divine simplicity entails immutability which entails impassibility in the divine nature is widely accepted in the literature on impassibility, although it does not necessarily signify impassibility in God's will, knowledge, and emotion. The distinction between divine immutability and divine impassibility is easily blurred. Divine immutability neither implies, nor is implied by divine impassibility. A being could be impassible but mutable, if such a being could change itself but was impervious to external causal influence. Conversely, it is conceivable that God could be immutable but passible by, for example, being changelessly grieved by sin.

Richard Creel draws attention to the complexity of the doctrine of divine impassibility. He derives eight varied definitions of divine impassibility in the extensive literature on the subject, and argues that the most common definition is that 'impassibility is imperviousness to causal influence from external factors.'[35] Creel adds the further complication that some theologians posit that God may choose to become impassible. He then applies this main definition to God's nature, will, knowledge and feeling, designating

[34] John S. Feinberg examines the distinctions between divine aseity, sovereignty, immutability, and simplicity. He upholds aseity and sovereignty but jettisons the historic doctrine of divine simplicity on scriptural and metaphysical grounds. Feinberg is a clear example of the evangelical trend of rejecting divine simplicity. John S. Feinberg, *No One Like Him: The Doctrine of God* (Illinois: Crossway, 2006), 277-337.

[35] Creel, *Impassibility*, 11.

each as either passible or impassible to produce a table which describes all possible positions on divine impassibity. Creel summarises his findings. 'It should be clear now that the question with which we are concerned does not come down to a choice between two simple alternatives: Is God passible or impassible? It comes down to a choice among sixteen permutations.'[36] The Thomistic definition of divine simplicity requires that God be impassible in nature, will, knowledge, and feeling.

The description of God as impassible in the Thomistic and Reformed sense has been objected to by Moltmann who argues that such a God would be static, stagnant, and inert. Moltmann claims that the biblical God is not revealed to us in these terms, and that therefore God is neither immutable nor impassible. The recent theological trend towards God as becoming and passible is expressed nicely by Henri Blocher. 'The epithet 'static,' which suits Being, has become distinctly pejorative. Dynamically to be on the move now holds supreme value.'[37] The criticism that an immutable God is an inert or static God, fails to understand the Scholastic doctrine that God is *actus purus*.

I respond to the criticism that God as *actus purus* is static and inert with one point of clarification and two lines of argument. The point of clarification concerns the doctrine of divine simplicity. If God is simple, which I affirm, then it is not the case that God instantiates the property of being *actus purus*, because no real distinction can be made between God and his being *actus purus*.[38]

The first line of argument is as follows. At the most basic level, if God is becoming rather than being, as Hegel and Moltmann claim, then God lacks a perfection, namely, the

[36] Creel, *Impassibility*, 12.

[37] *The Power and Weakness of God*, Ed. Nigel M. de S. Cameron (Edinburgh: Rutherford House, 1990), 1.

[38] 'Because Go is *ipsum esse* he has no self-constituting potency which needs to be actualised in order for him to be more fully who he is, not because he is something fully in act, but again, because he is act pure and simple.' Weinandy, *Suffer?* 122.

perfection of being. If God has potential, he can necessarily become better than he is in some way *ad intra*. This is surely an unacceptable conclusion for the passibilist. Specifically, if God is becoming, then he cannot be *ipsum esse*, and therefore he cannot be self-sufficient. Again the Scriptures reveal that God is the self-sufficient God.

The second line argues that inertia and stagnation are the very opposite of correct descriptions of God as *actus purus*. Passibilists such as Moltmann understand *actus purus* and immutability to mean that God is unchanging like a rock: static and therefore unfeeling; this is an incorrect interpretation of the Thomistic doctrine. If God is *actus purus* then he possesses no potentiality to be more of what he already is. The Scriptures reveal God to be love.[39] Therefore, if God has no potentiality, it is not the case that he is static in his love, but instead quite the opposite is true. God, as *actus purus*, could not be more love. He is love fully in act, with no potential to be more love than he is. *Actus purus*, when properly understood, indicates that God is dynamic rather than static. All that God is, he could not be to a greater or lesser degree.

What is a Divine Person?

I concluded Part I by arguing that the Reformed understanding of the *communicatio idiomatum* could be more precise than the Patristic understanding because it was able to incorporate the Scholastic development of the modal distinction between person and nature in the Trinity. The distinction is crucial for a clear articulation of the *communicatio idiomatum* which concerns the ascription of attributes of natures to the person of the Son. In the Patristic theologians discussed in the survey, the distinction between person and nature was described but not systematically discussed and agreed. The distinction is a necessary condition for the

[39] 1 John 4:8.

Reformed understanding that properties of natures are ascribed to the person, rather than to natures. The lack of clarity on the distinction between person and nature in the Patristic era meant that the *communicatio idiomatum* was less clearly defined. As Cross notes, the schoolmen universally argued for the communicatio idiomatum and not the later Lutheran version in which properties of one nature are predicated of the other.[40]

I have explored the doctrine of the divine nature; I now turn to the questions concerning the divine persons. I will then draw my discussions of person and nature together in arguing for the modal distinction between person and nature. Answering the questions I began Part II with on the distinctions between persons and nature will shed light on the use of the *communicatio idiomatum*, especially with reference to the cross and the fourth word.

Aquinas' definition of personhood is dependent on a trajectory started by Boethius. I therefore examine several theologians in order to return to Aquinas and present a coherent account of divine personhood. Before I turn to Boethius, I note two general introductory points. First, as John Zizioulas argues, the concept of personhood is 'purely the product of Patristic thought,' in such a way that without these theological roots, 'the deepest meaning of personhood can neither be grasped nor justified.'[41] Zizioulas' comments show that it is vital to establish any definition of divine personhood on Patristic precedent, and not merely on

[40] Cross, *Metaphysics*, 183.

[41] John D. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion: Studies in Personhood and the Church* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 2004), 27. Zizioulas discusses the ecclesiological aspect of personhood with reference to the relational human act of love that brings about the conception and birth of a new hypostasis.

contemporary philosophical[42] or even sociological speculation and analysis.[43] Secondly, it is important to develop an analogical rather than univocal understanding of personhood, in which it is understood that person has distinct meanings in the contexts of Trinitarian theology, Christology, and anthropology.[44] The distinctions in meaning can lead to difficulty in defining person in a way that works in these various branches of theology.

A very general definition of person is offered by Lucian Turcescu, in his discussion of Gregory of Nyssa's concept of persons; it is intended to satisfy all sides of the debate. He borrows from W. Arnold's Psychological definition.[45] 'A person is an indivisible, unique and therefore non-replicable unity in human existence.'[46] Although Turcescu's definition

[42] Contemporary Western conceptions of the person generally focus on the subjective, self-conscious, and moral aspects. This accent is influenced most notably by Enlightenment philosophers from Descartes, through Locke and Hume, to Kant. The term person is used in contemporary epistemology to designate an agent with continuous consciousness over time and the resultant ability to perceive the world and act on the basis of judgements. The question of personal identity over time is central to philosophical debate about human personhood, but it is not relevant in the same way to divine personhood because God is immutable.

Daniel Dennet suggests six necessary criteria for any individual being a person. A person is: a rational being; has states of consciousness; others regard it as having states of consciousness; is capable of regarding others as having states of consciousness; is capable of verbal communication; is self conscious. Daniel Dennet, 'Conditions of Personhood,' in *The Identities of Persons*, ed. Amelie Oksenberg Rorty (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), 175-196. Criterion four applies to divine persons only hypothetically prior to the incarnation on the assumption that verbal speech is possible only in embodied existence. The issue of consciousness and self-consciousness is discussed below in my critique of Social Trinitarianisms. For discussion of the application of Dennet's criteria to divine persons see William Lane Craig, *Time and Eternity: Exploring God's Relationship to Time* (Illinois: Crossway, 2001), 79-86.

The philosopher Gilbert Ryle discusses the mystery of the first-person personal pronoun I as an indexical that stands for the self, the human person. 'Like the shadow of one's own head, it will not wait to be jumped on.' He concludes, 'There is one influential difference between the first personal pronoun and all the rest. "I", in my use of it, always indicates me and only indicates me. "You", "she", and "they" indicate different people at different times. "I" is like my own shadow; I can never get away from it, as I can get away from your shadow. There is no mystery about this constancy, but . . . it seems to endow "I" with a mystifying uniqueness and adhesiveness.' Gilbert Ryle, *The Concept of Mind* (England: Penguin Books, 1949), 178, 189.

[43] Contemporary sociological and economic theory often focuses on the rights of the individual human person. Shoshana Zuboff comments, 'Each of these rights invokes claims to individual agency and personal autonomy as essential prerequisites to freedom of will and to the very concept of democratic order.' Shoshana Zuboff, *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism: The Fight for the Future at the New Frontier of Power* (London: Profile Books, 2019), 54.

[44] Cf. Angel Cordovilla Perez, 'The Trinitarian Concept of Person,' in *Rethinking*, 107.

[45] W. Arnold, 'Personhood,' in *Encyclopaedia of Psychology*, eds. H. J. Eysenck, W. Arnold, and R. Meili (New York: Herder, 1972), 778. Turcescu cites Cornelia J. de Vogel, 'The Concept of Personality in Greek and Christian Thought.' De Vogel distinguishes between person ('man as a rational and moral subject') and personality ('man's individual character, his uniqueness'). Turcescu criticises de Vogel for confusing the distinction in the body of the article. Lucian Turcescu, *Gregory of Nyssa and the Concept of Divine Persons* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 13.

[46] Turcescu, *Persons*, 12.

identifies the uniqueness of personhood in a way that is uncontroversial, it does little to distinguish it from particular natures, and it is framed as a definition of human personhood.

Michael Gorman identifies four key points about persons that are explicit in Aquinas' thought: persons are individuals that subsist, and substand, and are unified. He notes a further three points that are implicit: persons are wholes, they exist *simpliciter*, and they truly act and bear properties.[47] Generally, a person is a rational hypostasis or supposit. Timothy Pawl unpacks standard Scholastic distinctions between person, hypostasis, and supposit given the definition: x is a person if and only if x is a supposit with a rational nature. 'All persons are hypostases, but not all hypostases are persons. Non-rational animals fulfil the necessary and sufficient conditions for being supposita, but as non-rational, they do not fulfil a necessary condition for being persons.'[48] In my discussion of persons below I work with the basic definition that a person is a rational supposit. The history of the development of the definition is important; it begins in earnest with Boethius.

In the sixth century Boethius defined person in his *Theological Treatise against the Doctrine of Eutyches and Nestorius*. The basic definition is quoted by Aquinas: '*Persona est rationalis naturae individua substantia*.'[49] Boethius' definition is built on a number of preceding qualifications that form a logical argument. 'If person is only in substances, and only in those that are rational, and if substance is a nature that is not in the universal but is found in the individual, the definition of person has been found: individual substance of a

[47] Michael Gorman, *Aquinas on the Metaphysics of the Hypostatic Union* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 18. To substand is to underlie or underpin something, in this context, properties or accidents. Gorman uses the term first substance or supposit in his discussion of Aquinas, instead of person at this point.

[48] Timothy Pawl, *In Defense of Conciliar Christology: A Philosophical Essay* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 32.

[49] 'The person is an individual substance of a rational nature.' *ST* I, q. 29, a. 1. Interestingly, Boethius and Cassiodorus set the course for the translation of the Greek term hypostasis into the Latin term *subsistentia*. It is interesting to trace the trajectory of this basic definition through the history of the church. Although it is rejected by a number of theologians, it lasts into the Reformation and beyond. For one example from eighteenth century Scotland, see John Brown of Haddington, *Systematic Theology: A Compendious View of Natural and Revealed Religion* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Reformation Heritage Books, 2015), 130.

rational nature.'[50] The qualifications make three assumptions, first, that persons can only exist in natures; secondly, that the nature in which the person subsists is rational; thirdly, that a nature in which a person subsists is a particular nature, not universal. The first assumption is widely accepted but is questioned by John Philoponus,[51] who rejected the formula of Chalcedon. The second is fundamental to Christian theology, and the third raises a number of complications but is widely accepted. Acceptance of Boethius' assumptions does not entail acceptance of his definition of person.

Boethius' is the most historically significant definition of person, and it has been agreed with,[52] modified, or rejected by subsequent Trinitarian theologians, particularly in the Scholastic era, and in contemporary theological exploration of personhood as relational.[53] Boethius' definition is problematic in Trinitarian theology because the Triune persons are not individual substances separate from the one divine substance; the rational nature of God belongs to each Triune person as the one divine essence. Muller notes that 'Boethius' definition applies equally well to either the Godhead or the three hypostases, though not perfectly in either case.'[54] As Zachary Hayes comments, Boethius' definition, when applied to the Trinity, leads to tritheism, because it requires that the three persons be three individual

[50] Boethius, *Opuscula Theologica, V, Contra Eutychen et Nestorium*, 3.

[51] John Philoponus was anathematised posthumously at the Third Council of Constantinople (680-681), because his Trinitarian theology was considered to be heretical. See E. Muehlberger, 'John Philoponus, Fragments on the Trinity,' in *The Cambridge Edition of Early Christian Writings*, ed. A Radde-Gallwitz (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 347-358.

[52] In addition to Aquinas' agreement with Boethius, Zachhuber argues that Severus of Antioch holds a similar position on personhood to that of Boethius. 'It is, therefore, arguable that personality for Severus (as for his contemporary Boethius) is not something that goes beyond nature, but the particular expression and outgrowth of a particular kind of nature.' Johannes Zachhuber, 'Personhood in Miaphysitism: Severus of Antioch and John Philiponus,' in *Personhood in the Byzantine Christian Tradition: Early, Medieval, and Modern Perspectives*, eds. A. Torrance and S. Paschalidis (New York: Routledge, 2018), 38.

[53] Cf. my discussion of Aquinas' doctrine of subsistent relations below. See also M. William Ury, *Trinitarian Personhood: Investigating the Implications of a Relational Definition* (Origen: Wipf and Stock, 2002); and Angel Cordovilla Perez, 'The Trinitarian Concept of Person,' in *Rethinking*, 130-139. An ontologically relational description of person in the Trinity must be more clearly analogical than non ontologically relational definitions such as that of Boethius.

[54] Muller, *Dictionary*, *Persona.*

substances.[55] In the same way, Boethius' definition does not perfectly apply in Christology because Christ is one person but he is not one substance or nature. Because of the Trinitarian and Christological difficulties in Boethius' definition of person, a number of Scholastic theologians offer alternative definitions.

Richard of St. Victor (d. 1173) attempted to modify Boethius' definition in a way that M. William Ury calls 'a creative insertion into the dogma of the Trinity which was seldom the case in the Augustinian lineage.'[56] Boethius' definition lay beneath much of the Trinitarian theology of the intervening centuries. Richard speaks of persons as substances of a rational nature without the inclusion of the term individual.[57] Ruben Angelici argues that Boethius' addition of the term individual is an 'intensification . . . of individuality in the understanding of personhood.' He asserts, referring to Roscelin of Compiegne, that the individualism inherent in Boethius' definition led to nominalist heresies between the ninth and twelfth centuries. Angelici also cites Anselm, who opposed Roscelin by lessening the individualism.[58] The individualism of Boethius' definition does not leave room for the inherently relational aspect of the Trinitarian persons, a deficiency that Aquinas sought to rectify in his teaching on subsistent relations. Richard of St. Victor defines person as an 'incommunicable existence of the divine nature.'[59] He characterises a person as an individual possessing will and existing in relation. Nico Den Bock argues that Richard, 'Maintains the idea which he considers to be incomprehensible yet not self-contradictory, namely that the Trinity must be an incommunicable substance communicated by three incommunicable

[55] *Works of Saint Bonaventure III: Disputed Questions on the Mystery of the Trinity*, trans. Zachery Hayes (New York: The Franciscan Institute, 2000), 37. Hayes' comment finds precedent in Bavinck. 'Boethius provided the influential definition of person as an individual rational being, potentially leading to tritheism and a loss of divine unity.' Bavinck, *Dogmatics, Volume 2*. 258.

[56] Ury, *Personhood*, 210.

[57] Richard of St. Victor, *On the Trinity, Book 4, VIII*, trans. Ruben Angelici (Cambridge: James Clarke & Co., 2012).

[58] Richard, *Trinity, Book 4, VIII*, IL.

[59] Richard, *Trinity, Book 4, VIII, XVIII.*

persons.'[60] The theological line of the definition of person in Trinitarian theology runs through Richard to Bonaventure. By contrast, Aquinas follows the line from Augustine.[61]

Aquinas shows preference for Boethius' definition of person, a central Trinitarian term. Aquinas defends his modification of Boethius' definition. 'The term "individual substance" is placed in the definition of person, as signifying the singular in the genus of substance; and the term "rational nature" is added, signifying the singular in rational substances.'[62] Aquinas gives the brief example of an individual man. An individual man is a hypostasis or subsistence of the genus substance of humanity.[63] He reaffirms Boethius' definition of person with reference to Aristotle.

Aquinas develops Boethius' definition of person in his understanding of the divine persons as subsisting relations. He accepted Boethius' definition of person but sought to develop it because he recognised the possible tendency to tritheism because of the individualism. Aquinas insists that the term substance in the definition of person does not signify three substances or essences in the Godhead, but instead the reality of three persons, each fully having the one divine substance. Although Aquinas developed aspects of Boethius' definition, he applies the general definition very broadly, which is seen in the abbreviated forms of the definition to 'an intellectual nature.'[64]

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[60] Nico Den Bock, *Communicating the Most High: A Systematic Study of Person and Trinity in the Theology of Richard of St. Victor* (Paris: Brepolis, 1996), 267. For Bock's most focused discussion of Richard of St Victor's definition of person, see Bock, *Communicating*, 54-65. Bock also discusses aspects of Richard of St Victor's understanding of the modal distinction and and the processions. For example: 'A person must be the individual divine substance having two individual qualifications of origin . . . the Son and the Spirit are from the Father's substance.' Bock, *Communicating*, 267-268.

[61] Hayes notes the history of the doctrine of the Trinity in De Regnon in which the theological lines are traced. '1) Dionysius – Richard of St. Victor - William of Auvergne - William of Auxerre - Alexander - Bonaventure; and 2) Augustine - Anselm - Lombard – Albert – Aquinas. The fundamental differences between the two he [De Regnon] traces to the dynamism of neo-Platonic thought in the first line and the static character of Aristotelian thought in the second.' *Bonaventure, Trinity*, 18.

[62] *ST* I, q. 29, a. 1.

[63] Cf. *ST* I, q. 29, a. 4.

[64] *Natura intellectuali*. *ST* III, q. 3, a. 3.

Aquinas focuses his explanation of this definition on the term individual in connection with the related term substance. He argues, 'Although the universal and particular exist in every genus, nevertheless, in a certain special way, the individual belongs to the genus of substance. For substance is individualized by itself.'[65] Gilles Emery's analysis of this section of the *Prima Pars* offers a helpful summary of Aquinas' argument at this point.

> An individual substance is characterized by its own 'mode of existence': it does not exist in and through another, but in and through itself. This fact of existing through itself is the fundamental characteristic of substance, and thus of the person. A *person* is the individual substance which possesses its own being in and through itself.

Emery notes that the 'through-itself' being of the individual substance or person is rightly called subsistence.[66] Aquinas equates the term person as defined by Boethius, with the term subsistence.

> Substance means a subject or *suppositum*, which subsists in the genus of substance. . . As it underlies some common nature, it is called "a thing of nature"; as for instance, this particular man is a human natural thing. As it underlies the accidents, it is called "hypostasis," or "subsistence." What these three names signify in common to the whole genus of substances, this name "person" signifies in the genus of rational substances.[67]

According to Aquinas a hypostasis, a subsistence, and a person signify the same thing, and Aquinas shows preference for the term person; that is the individual substance possessing its own being in and through itself.[68] Emery explores Aquinas' definition of person and notes the

[65] *ST* I, q. 29. a. 1.

[66] Gilles Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of St Thomas Aquinas* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010). 105-106.

[67] *ST* I, q. 29, a. 1.

[68] The terms substance and subsistence are common terms in philosophical metaphysics from Aristotle to Kant and in contemporary metaphysics. Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) similarly defines the two terms. 'If now we attribute a special existence to this real in substance (e.g., motion, as an accident of matter), then this existence is called inherence, as distinguished from the existence of substance, which is called subsistence.' Kant, *Critique*, A186/B229. Additionally both Aristotle's and Kant's list of categories include the category of relation

importance of an individual substance. Emery notes that Aquinas develops this in his analysis of action.

> Particularity and individuality are found in a still more special and perfect way in rational substances, which have control over their actions, and are not just acted upon as other beings are, but act on their own initiative; and actions are carried out by singular beings. It follows from this that, amongst all the substances, individual beings with rational nature have a special name; that of person.[69]

Aquinas argues that individual substance is the genus that is closest to his interpretation of Boethius' definition of a person and that the specific difference is linked to its being a rational nature. Emery summarises Aquinas' definition of person as follows.

> The person is defined by its existing through itself (subsistence), in an irreducible and entirely singular way (individuality), with freedom of action which is drawn from its essence (intellectual nature). All of these character traits ground the dignity of the person. The theological use of this definition secures the divinity of the three persons (the divine intellectual nature), as against Arianism, it preserves the real distinction of the persons and the subsistence which fits them (the individual substance) against Sabellianism, and it founds their action (as an individual substance which is intelligent and free.[70]

It is important to note that for Aquinas, a divine person exists in a way that is different from the existence of a created person. The analogical relationship between human and divine personhood is instructive but only analogical.

Emery also picks up on Aquinas' response to my second question: the distinctions between the divine persons. The connections between the different terms used by Aquinas are important and can be better understood when the overall structure of the Questions is appreciated. Aquinas' discussion of divine persons occurs after he has set the intellectual ground in Question 27 on the divine processions, and Question 28 on the divine relations.

[69] ST I, q. 29, a. 1.
[70] Emery, *Trinitarian*, 106.

Following these questions, Aquinas subsequently addresses questions on the persons of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. He then returns in his cyclical form to discuss person in relation to essence (Question 39); person compared to relations or properties (Question 40); and person in reference to the notional acts (Question 41). Questions 39 to 41 return to the discussion of divine personhood and although some of the material is repetitive, greater depth of understanding is achieved by Aquinas' cyclical format concerning the divine essence and the persons of the Triune Godhead.

To summarise, Aquinas treats the divine processions as the foundation of the really distinct relations of paternity, filiation, and spiration (active from the Father, and passive from the Son). The really distinct relations in turn formally constitute the divine persons. Garrigou-Lagrange states, 'The persons are constituted by subsisting relations opposed to one another, which are in God not only virtually but also formally.'[71] Therefore, the divine processions are the foundation of the really distinct subsistent relations, which in turn found and constitute the divine persons. Aquinas' response to the question concerning the distinctions between the persons of the Trinity is that the distinctions are real, not formal or modal. I will expand on this response to the question further, but it is worth noting the basic response at this point.

Divine Persons and Divine Simplicity

Aquinas quotes Augustine as holding the same Boethian understanding of divine persons. 'Augustine says (De Trin. Vi, 7); "When we say the person of the Father we mean nothing else but the substance of the Father."[72] Aquinas cites Augustine as evidence to corroborate

[71] Garrigou-Lagrange, *Trinity*, 109.
[72] *ST* I, q. 39, a. 1.

his understanding of person. Aquinas proceeds by arguing that 'essence is the same as suppositum' in God because of the doctrine of divine simplicity. If the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, were not each fully God[73] they would constitute parts in the Godhead which would lead to the denial of divine simplicity. The relationship between the doctrine of divine simplicity and the Triune persons is complex and I discuss it further below concerning the understanding of the divine persons as subsistent relations. Aquinas comments that the identity of essence and person in the Trinity has been denied by some because of the difficulty that 'while the divine persons are multiplied, the essence nevertheless retains its unity.[74] Aquinas concludes Article one by responding to this difficulty.

> In creatures relations are accidental, whereas in God they are the divine essence itself. Thence it follows that in God essence is not really distinct from person; and yet that the persons are really distinguished from each other. For person . . . signifies relation as subsisting in the divine nature. But relation as referred to the essence does not differ therefrom really, but only in our way of thinking; while as referred to an opposite relation, it has a real distinction by virtue of that opposition. Thus there are one essence and three persons.[75]

In Aquinas' understanding of the Trinity therefore, the persons of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are individual relations subsisting in the divine nature. Each individual person is identical with the divine essence because of the doctrine of divine simplicity which denies material logical or metaphysical composition in the Godhead.[76] It is important to note

[73] Cf. Colossians 1:19, 2:9 teach that the Lord Jesus Christ has the fullness of the divine nature.
[74] *ST* I, q. 39, a. 1.
[75] *ST* I, q. 39, a. 1.
[76] Karl Rahner's critique of the Western theological tendency to proceed from *de deo uno* to *de deo trino* focuses on Aquinas as a crucial defender of the Western tradition and, according to Rahner, the pioneer of this tendency. Karl Rahner, *The Trinity*, trans. Joseph Donceel (London: Continuum, 1970), 16. Rahner comments that the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard subsume the doctrine of God under the doctrine of the Trinity, and that it is in Aquinas' *Summa Theologiae* that the separation of discussion of God's essence from discussion of the Trinity first takes place. Richard Cross defends Aquinas in this respect, on the grounds of the archtectonic of the *Summa Theologiae* which moves from material knowable by natural reason to what can only be known through revelation in Scripture. 'Placing the discussion of natural theology first is a function of Aquinas' understanding of the *ordo inventionis*, not of the *ordo essendi*.' Richard Cross, 'On generic and derivation views of God's trinitarian substance,' 56 (4), (2003), *Scottish Journal of Theology*, 475. Therefore, in treating the doctrine of God's essence before the doctrine of the Trinity, Aquinas follows the flow of knowledge from natural to revealed knowledge.

Aquinas' teaching that relations are the essence itself only in the divine uncreated Godhead, whereas in creatures, relations are accidental. Emery again summarises much of Aquinas' discussion of divine persons. 'Faith recognises three "distinct subsistents" in the unity of the divine substance: it was precisely in order to articulate this that the church called on the words *person* and *hypostasis*.'[77]

Below I discuss the identity of person and nature in terms of subsistent relations which will clarify the issue. But at this point the question raised at the beginning of Part II must be noted. The *communicatio idiomatum* means that whatever is said of either of Christ's natures is true of the single subject, God the Son. The Cyrilline formulation of the communication of idioms is used to express biblical truth while not attributing suffering to the divine nature itself. If there is no distinction, however, between nature and person in the Godhead, divine passibilism seems to obtain. The language of subsistent relations, and the subsequent discussion of the distinction between nature and person, sheds light on this logical difficulty. It develops my response to the question of the distinctions between the divine persons and the divine nature.

Subsistent Relations

Fundamental to Aquinas' doctrine of the divine persons is the concept of subsistent relations.[78] John Lamont notes the influence of Augustine on Aquinas in this and adds that Aquinas' 'Aristotelian conception of the will and the intellect and his rather more elaborate

[77] Emery, *Trinitarian*, 114.

[78] Emery calls Aquinas' doctrine of subsistent relations 'the soul of Aquinas' speculative Trinitarian theology.' Emery, *Trinitarian*, 127. Dominic Legge calls it 'the heart of Thomas' speculative Trinitarian theology.' Legge, *Christology*, 110.

theory of relations lead to differences between his Trinitarian theology and St. Augustine's.'[79] The differences spoken of by Lamont are mainly because of the greater technicality of Aquinas' Trinitarian theology rather than because of any significant disagreement in this area. Aquinas cites Augustine a number of times to corroborate his own views. This happens at the beginning of Aquinas' discussion of divine relations.[80]

Aquinas' understanding of subsistent relations develops through his writing and is at its most mature in the *Summa Theologiae*. On the question of plurality in the Godhead, in his writing on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard, Aquinas does not yet employ the notion of subsistent relations. Emery notes that at this point in his theological development Aquinas is 'still thinking in terms of "natural-mode" or "voluntative-mode" processions, without also clearly making use of the theory of subsistent relations.'[81] This way of understanding the plurality in the one Godhead in terms of subsistent relations is central to Aquinas' Trinitarian thought in the *Summa Theologiae*.

Because the doctrine of divine simplicity teaches that there can be no distinction between any absolute features in God, the distinction between the persons must be a relative distinction, although the relations must be real[82] rather than merely logical in order to avoid Sabellianism. Legge summarises Aquinas' position: 'The divine persons are distinguished because they are subsistent relations, relations that do not divide but that subsist in the one divine nature, relations that are founded on the order of processions in God.' Legge continues

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[79] John Lamont, 'Aquinas on Subsistent Relation,' *Recherches de theologie et philosophie medievales*, Vol. 71, No 2 (2004), 263. Lamont disagrees with Aquinas doctrine of subsistent relations on the grounds of his own understanding of the philosophical notion of relation but concludes that this need not preclude the possibility of distinguishing between the divine persons on the basis of the relations that exist between them. Because my discussion of Aquinas is intended as a survey of Trinitarian concepts rather than a critique of subsistent relations I will not respond to Lamont's and others' criticism of Aquinas' doctrine of the Trinity at this point.

[80] *ST* I, q. 28, a. 1. Ayres argues that Aquinas' understanding of Trinitarian persons and processions closely parallels Augustine's, and that interpreting the tradition from Augustine to Aquinas requires sensitivity to internal modulations and disputes. Ayres, *Augustine*, 272.

[81] Emery, *Trinitarian*, 131.

[82] *ST* I, q. 28, a. 1.

to defend divine simplicity in this context. 'There is absolutely no distinction in the one God except with respect to these relations of origin, which imply this relation 'mode of existing' of the divinity according to the order of the processions.'[83] Aquinas argues that real relations can only come from action, passion, and quantity. Only action is a possible basis for distinction among the divine persons.[84] Therefore any relation in God must be based on action. Lamont notes Aquinas' teaching that there 'are only two kinds of internal action in an agent with a nature that is divine and intellectual; the operation of the intellect, and the operation of the will.'[85] According to Aquinas, it is the operation of the intellect that leads to the paternal and filial relations in the Trinity; and it is the operation of the will that leads to 'the procession of love,' that is the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son.[86] Aquinas' technical development allows him to distinguish between the generation of the Son and the procession of the Holy Spirit.[87]

Aquinas' argument contrasts with Gregory Nazianzus' view. 'Insofar as he proceeds from the Father, he is no creature; inasmuch as he is not begotten, he is no Son; and to the extent that procession is the mean between ingeneracy and generacy, he is God.' Gregory continues by arguing against his interlocutor about the distinction between generation and procession.

> Thus God escapes your syllogistic toils and shows himself stronger than your exclusive alternatives. What, then, is "proceeding"? You explain the ingeneracy of the Father and I will give you a biological account of the Son's begetting and the Spirit's proceeding – and let us go mad the pair of us for prying into God's secrets.[88]

[83] Legge, *Christology*, 110.
[84] *ST* I, q. 28, a. 4.
[85] Lamont, 'Subsistent,' 264.
[86] *ST* I. q. 28, a. 4.
[87] Aquinas' technical terminology is not novel but reflects Patristic theological insights into the eternal generation of the Son. Hilary of Poitiers writes 'We believe that this God gave birth to [eternal generation] the only-begotten Son before all worlds, through whom he made the world and all things, that he gave birth to him not in sembrance, but in truth, following his own will.' Hilary, *Trinitate*, 6.5.
[88] Gregory of Nazianzus, *Orations*, *Oration* 31. 8.

Contrasting Gregory's statement that the distinction between generation and procession is real but incomprehensible, with Aquinas' comments is intended simply to highlight different theological approaches which show the technical advances made by Aquinas in his Trinitarian thought.

Aquinas holds that the relations among the persons are identical with the divine essence and also that the divine persons themselves are identical with their relations.[89] The significance of this can be seen in Emery's comparison of Bonaventure and Aquinas on subsistent relations.[90] Aquinas quotes Bonaventure's argument that origin constitutes the divine persons and therefore the Father is Father because he begets. Aquinas, however, opposes Bonaventure's view and instead argues that 'It is because he is the Father that the Father begets.'[91] Speaking of the persons of the Trinity as subsisting relations has raised questions concerning the doctrine of divine simplicity which Aquinas, in line with historic orthodoxy, is at pains to uphold. Emery considers the significance of subsisting relations and the doctrine of divine simplicity.

> In the final analysis, this identity of relative property and person rests on the nature of a divine relation, and . . . divine relations formally possess the being of the divine essence. This applies in full to the three personal relations, that is, to the three relative properties which constitute the persons: paternity, filiation, and procession. These relations or relative properties are the subsisting persons themselves: paternity is the Father himself, filiation is the Son, and procession is the Holy Spirit.[92]

[89] Cross argues for the generic as opposed to the derivation view of God's Trinitarian substance, and summarises Aquinas' understanding of the relation between the unity and Trinity of God. 'I conclude that Aquinas affirms that God is nothing other than the Trinity of persons, despite our ability to think of the essence in abstraction from the persons.' Cross, 'Views,' 475.

[90] Emery, *Trinitarian*, 125.

[91] *ST* I, q. 40, a. 4. '*Quia pater est, generat*.'

[92] Emery, *Trinitarian*, 121.

Emery's comment on Aquinas' position has significant implications for the application of Aquinas' Trinitarian theology to the fourth word with reference to the *communicatio idiomatum*. I discuss the application at the end of this chapter.

I have argued in favour of Aquinas' definition of divine persons as subsisting relations, my argument has been framed by the doctrine of divine simplicity. These elements of Aquinas' thought have led to the conclusion that the distinctions between the divine persons are real, not modal or formal. This answers the second question at the beginning of Part II: what are the distinctions between the divine persons?

The Distinction between Divine Persons and the Divine Nature

I turn now to explore the relationship between the divine persons and the one divine nature, in order to answer the first question: what is the distinction between the person of the Son and the divine nature? In stating the purpose of this section in this way it is important immediately to defend against the accusation that I am postulating a divine quaternity instead of the Trinity of orthodox Christianity.[93] Faith does not profess three persons and one essence, instead faith professes one essence in three persons. The Triune persons are each fully God, and are yet really distinct from one another. A divine quaternity would be the logical conclusion if it were stated that the persons did not have the whole divine essence, or

[93] McCall outlines and evaluates Social Trinitarianism, Relative Trinitarianism, and what he calls Latin Trinitarianism. Unfortunately, McCall's brief initial (49-55) discussion of the latter does not include mention of Thomas Aquinas. Aquinas is referenced in the Doctrine and Analysis chapter (87-144) a number of times. McCall interacts with many contemporary analytic theologians and philosophers of religion and argues that Latin Trinitarianism is in danger of postulating a quaternity rather than a Trinity. It is not appropriate to critique McCall's arguments here, but he provides a helpful survey of some of the problems that may imply quaternity in the Godhead, as he sees them. Thomas H. McCall, *Which Trinity? Whose Monotheism? Philosophical and Systematic Theologians on the Metaphysics of Trinitarian Theology* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2010), 115-117.

that the persons were really distinct from the essence. Both of these assertions are denied by orthodox Trinitarian theology.[94]

Patristic Origins: οὐσία and ὑποστάσις

The Patristic use of the terms οὐσία (nature, essence, being) and ὑποστάσις (person) is difficult to discern accurately in historical context. In the writings of the New Testament and the Apostolic Fathers, Lucian Turcescu writes, 'It is generally acknowledged that ὑποστάσις was synonymous with οὐσία in the time of Paul and later.'[95] Turcescu's claim is demonstrated clearly at the Council of Nicaea (325) which anathematised those who say that the Son 'came to be from things that were not, or from another hypostasis (ὑποστάσις) or substance (οὐσία).'[96] Ayres suggests that 'It is only much later in the century that the two are more clearly distinguished by some. . . Those who formulated Nicaea's creed appear to demonstrate at least a lack of interest in the technical Origenist sense of hypostasis and possibly deep hostility to it.'[97] The synonymous use of the technical terms οὐσία and ὑποστάσις at Nicaea began to be distinguished as greater technical precision was required to affirm the Triunity of God, in contrast to the Nicene task of affirming the deity of the Son against Arianism.

The linguistic difficulties in the deployment of οὐσία and ὑποστάσις are increased by two main factors. First, the changing and often regional Patristic use of the terms is different from the use of οὐσία and ὑποστάσις in the New Testament.[98] Secondly, the Greek words are

[94] See Thomas Aquinas, *Thomas Aquinas's Quodlibetal Questions*, trans. Turner Nevitt and Brian Davies (USA: Oxford University Press, 2020), Quadlibet VI, p311. Question 1, Article 1.

[95] Turescu, *Gregory*, 51.

[96] Tanner, *Decrees*, 1:5.

[97] Lewis Ayres, *Nicaea and its Legacy: An Approach to Fourth-Century Trinitarian Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 98.

[98] ὑποστάσις occurs five times in the New Testament: 2 Corinthians 9:4; 11:17 (confidence); Hebrews 1:3 (reality/being) 3:14; 11:1 (assurance/conviction).

translated into Latin, but there is no direct linguistic equivalent. The confusing result is that Greek writers and Latin writers use different words in different languages to describe the same distinction, in a way that is often not mutually appreciated.

William P. Alston places the Patristic terminology in the context of Aristotelian substance metaphysics. Aristotle taught that primary substance refers to the concrete individual, and secondary substance refers to the feature of the individual that makes it a substance. Alston relates primary and secondary substance (οὐσία) in Aristotle to the confusion in interpreting οὐσία in Patristic texts. 'The different persons are each said to be a prote ousia [primary substance], a subsistent individual. The divine unity, when put in terms of ousia, is taken to consist of the common essential (divine) nature which the three persons share. The use of the same term for both was bound to cause trouble and it did.'[99] Although Alston provides a helpful conceptual landscape, his statements must be qualified by Ayres' warning against attempts to define fourth century terminology solely with reference to the philosophical or non-Christian use of the terms. Instead he argues that all attempts to clarify fourth century theological terms must be based on the evidence, and must be content with the level of clarity offered by the individual Patristic voices.[100]

The two words οὐσία and ὑποστάσις were used synonymously until the later part of the fourth century. A distinction between the two terms is drawn and clarified as a result of the writings of the Cappadocian fathers. Joseph T. Lienhard tracks the development of the Patristic terms οὐσία and ὑποστάσεις in what is known as the Cappadocian settlement, μία οὐσία τρεις ὑποστάσεις.[101] The formula asserts identity of substance (οὐσία) because there is

[99] William P. Alston, 'Substance and the Trinity,' in *The Trinity*, ed. Davis et al. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 185.

[100] Ayres, *Nicaea*, 92.

[101] Lienhard also notes the fourth century Greek conceptions of something that subsists. 'Fourth century Greek had three words for something that subsists: οὐσια, ὑπόστασις (and in one of its senses) ὑπαρξις; to these three nouns there corresponded three verbs that mean 'to subsists': εἰναι, ὑφίστασθαι, and ὑπάρχειν.'

one God, but distinction of persons (ὑποστάσεις), the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The formula does not contradict the anathema of Nicaea because the Nicene use of ὑποστάσις was synonymous with οὐσία; instead it redefines the term. Lienhard argues, against Prestige,[102] that the Cappadocian settlement is 'more a piece of modern academic shorthand than a quotation from the writings of the Cappadocians,' [103] although Lienhard shows that the formula μία οὐσία τρεις ὑποστάσεις does occur in the writings of the Cappadocian Fathers.[104] He also shows that a similar formula is used in texts from Didymus the Blind, and that the terms οὐσία and ὑποστάσεις are used together with the same doctrinal sense in the letter from the Synod of Constantinople (382) to the Western Bishops.[105] The first to attempt to draw a distinction between οὐσία and ὑποστάσεις was Basil of Caesarea. Basil makes the distinction in order to oppose the Sabellians and Arians.

The Patristic distinction between οὐσία and ὑποστάσεις that was clarified in the fourth century is primarily written about as a distinction, and not as a pair of definitions. The same is true of Patristic discussion of the difference between the eternal generation of the Son and the eternal procession of the Holy Spirit. The Church Fathers generally do not define the difference; they simply acknowledge that there is a difference. In Chapter 2 I argued that the lack of distinction in the Patristic understanding of οὐσία and ὑποστάσεις sometimes led to a lack of clarity in the communicatio idiomatum.

The Latin term persona is equivalent to the sense of ὑποστάσις as person, as distinct from οὐσία. Persona was used by Tertullian against the Sabellian heresy. Muller summarises

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Lienhard, 'Ousia and Hypostasis: the Cappadocian Settlement and the Theology of "One Hypostasis,"' in *The Trinity*, 103.

[102] Prestige, *Thought*, 233.

[103] Joseph T. Lienhard SJ, 'Ousia and Hypostasis: The Cappadocian Settlement and the Theology of 'One Hypostasis,' in *The Trinity: An Interdisciplinary Symposium on the Trinity*, ed. Stephen T. Davis, Danuel Kendall SJ, and Gerald Collins SJ (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 99.

[104] Gregory of Nazianzus, *Orations 21 On the Great Athanasius*, 35.

[105] Tannar, *Decrees*, Vol. I, 28.

Tertullian's approval of the term. 'Tertullian found the terms *persona* and *substantia* ideal for identifying an objective threeness and an objective oneness, respectively in God. In addition, the definition of three *personae* sharing one *substantia* made sense using legal analogies.'[106] οὐσία had been translated into Latin as substantia, and ὑποστάσις had been translated as persona. The term Persona gains conciliar authority in the Council of Chalcedon.

The word subsistence (*subsistentia*), used by both Hilary of Poitiers and Marius Victorinus, is defined by Turretin as 'A mode of existing proper to substances.' He further clarifies this by stating that 'Subsistence marks a mode of subsisting or personality.'[107] The term is used synonymously with the more self-explanatory term *modus subsistendi*. Subsistence language is useful because it accurately depicts the relation between the divine nature *in abstracto* and the three subsistences *in concreto* as subsistences of the divine nature, rather than different existents. The first canon of the Second Council of Constantinople (553) deliberately abandons Cyril of Alexandria's context-dependent use of *physis* and *hypostasis* in favour of the term subsistence.[108] With reference to the Trinity, Muller defines a divine subsistence as 'An individual instance of a given essence.'[109] Muller's use of the word instance is problematic because it suggests that God is a member of a single instance set or class. The definition also has a possible tendency towards tritheism, comparable to the term *persona*.[110] Turretin's definition of subsistence as 'A mode of existing proper to substances'[111] is more helpful than Muller's definition, because it does not use the problematic term instance. In the present work I adopt the term person because it is more

[106] Muller, *Dictionary*, *Persona.*
[107] Turretin, *Institutes*, *Vol. 1*., Third Topic, Question twenty-three, V.
[108] Grillmeier, *Tradition*, *Volume 2*, *Part 2*, 430-446.
[109] Muller, *Dictionary*, *Subsistentia*.
[110] Karl Barth argues that contemporary definitions of person distort the theological use in describing the Trinity. He therefore prefers the German term '*Seinweise*' which translates into English as 'mode of being.' Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, ed. G. Bromiley (Edinburgh: T and T Clark, 1956-1975), 1/1: 359.
[111] Turretin, *Elenctic*, *Vol. 1*., Third Topic, Question twenty-three, V.

common in the literature and is more intuitively understandable; but my definition incorporates orthodox use of the term subsistence.

A Modal Distinction between Nature and Person in the Trinity: Scholastic Description in Aquinas and Turretin

The Patristic language of personhood provides the background for my argument in this section, based on the writings of Aquinas and Turretin, that the distinction between person and nature in the Trinity is modal, not formal or real. The modal distinction will then clarify the predication of human and divine attributes to the person of the Son incarnate, which will in turn set up the question to which this work is a response: how can one avoid predicating suffering of the divine nature given the doctrines of the *communicatio idiomatum* and the modal distinction between person and nature.

A number of contemporary Evangelical theologians who discuss the distinction between person and nature in the Godhead often assert that the two are distinct, characterised by the questions 'who,' and 'what?'[112] I argue that without the modal distinction, a fully Trinitarian theology is not achievable, although it also raises a number of additional complexities. Additionally, without the modal distinction, interpreting the fourth word in a Trinitarian theology is incomplete.

From the sixth century with Boethius, and then into the Scholastic era and High Orthodoxy, theologians tried to go beyond the Patristic description of the distinction between

[112] Examples of Evangelical theologians who do not address the modal distinction include Letham, *Trinity*; and Stephen J. Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate: The Doctrine of Christ* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2016), 425-450. In his *Systematic Theology*, Letham explores some of the issues surrounding the modal distinction but does not state the distinction explicitly. He does state briefly, following Aquinas, that the distinctions between the persons are real. Robert Letham, *Systematic Theology* (Illinois: Crossway, 2019), 107-108. Lack of precision about the distinction between person and nature in the Godhead is often accompanied by a deep separation of Greek, Cappadocian emphasis on the persons, and a Latin, Augustinian emphasis on the divine nature.

οὐσία and ὑποστάσεις, and began to attempt definitions of the terms. Emery writes about Aquinas and Boethius on the distinction and affirms, 'The individual finds its supreme realisation in the substance.'[113] This statement, based on Boethius, succinctly and simply connects person and nature regarding both creatures and God. The distinctions between person and nature are also clear. Writing from within the tradition of High Orthodoxy in the seventeenth century, Turretin argues that 'The persons are manifestly distinct from the essence because the essence is only one while the persons are three.' Following this basic statement of difference, Turretin offers a number of subsequent ways in which the essence is distinguishable from the persons.

> The former is absolute, the latter are relative; the former is communicable (not indeed as to multiplication, but as to identity), the latter are incommunicable; the former is a something broader and the latter are narrower. . . The former is the common principle of external operations, which are undivided and common to the three persons; the latter are the principle of internal operations, which belong to the single persons mutually related to each other.[114]

When considered conceptually in this way outlined by Turretin, it is clear that the divine persons can be considered distinctly from the divine nature,[115] however, as Turretin proceeds to affirm, the precise nature of the distinction between person and nature in the Godhead 'can but very imperfectly' be explained. 'It is better to be satisfied with this general notion that there is a distinction, although what and how great it is cannot be comprehended and expressed by us.'[116]

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[113] Giles Emery, O.P., *The Trinity: An Introduction to Catholic Doctrine on the Triune God*, trans. Matthew Levering (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 2009), 102.

[114] Turretin, *Elenctic, Vol. 1*, Third Topic, Question twenty-seven, I.

[115] Cf. *ST* I, q. 39, a. 1.

[116] Turretin, *Elenctic, Vol. 1*, Third Topic, Question twenty-seven, II.

Muller outlines the five distinctions between person and nature in Scholastic Trinitarian thought.[117] The three main distinctions are formal, modal, and real. Put simply, a formal distinction is a distinction perceived by reason that does not rest in the thing itself, but only in the mind of the perceiver. A modal distinction is a distinction between the thing and the way in which the thing exists. A real distinction is a distinction between one thing and another thing. A formal distinction, without qualification, would therefore collapse the distinctions between the persons, because each person would also be only formally distinct from the other persons. A real distinction between person and nature in the Trinity would deny divine simplicity and block the vital orthodox assertion that each person is fully God. Therefore, the modal distinction, which states that the distinction between person and nature is the distinction between a thing (the divine nature) and the modes of existence of the thing (the subsistences or persons), is the best fit with the claims of orthodox Trinitarian theology. My use of the modal distinction in the present work borrows from Turretin, who expressly affirms the modal distinction. The modal distinction between person and nature is a powerful tool for the logical clarification of the communication of idioms because it distinguishes clearly between person and nature in the predication of attributes. The modal distinction allows for much richer theological engagement in the doctrine of the Trinity that will enable a more focused articulation of my central thesis in the present work.

Turretin's respect for the mystery of Trinitarian theology fuels the profundity of his theology as he continues to argue that the species of distinction between the divine nature and

[117] *Distinctio realis*: a distinction between two independent things; *distinctio formalis a parte rei*: a distinction between two aspects of (or within) a thing; *Distinctio rationis ratiocinatae quae habet fundamentum in re*: a distinction by reason of analysis founded in the thing (this represents a truth of reason about the thing and not a distinction in the thing); *Distinctio rationis rationans*: a distinction resting on the operation of reason, not on the thing; and *Distionctio modalis*: the modes of subsisting of a thing, or various ways in which a thing exists. Muller, *Dictionary*, *Distinctio*. Muller states that the modal distinction is most logically similar to the formal distinction. As Turretin notes, however, the divine human analogy is not univocal, and therefore the formal distinction is different from the modal distinction in Trinitarian theology. Turretin, *Elenctic*, Third Topic, Question twenty-seven, I.

the divine persons that appears to be the most precise is the modal distinction. In this distinction the mode is distinguished from some thing.[118]

> The personal properties by which the persons are distinguished from the essence are certain modes by which it may be characterised; not indeed formally and properly[119] . . . but eminently and analogically, all imperfection being removed. Thus the person may be said to differ from the essence not really (*realiter*), i.e., essentially (*essentialiter*) as a thing and thing, but modally (*modaliter*) – as a mode from the thing (*modus a re*).[120]

Turretin argues that the modal understanding of the distinction between person and nature avoids contravening the doctrine of divine simplicity because the modal distinction does not consider the persons to be distinct from the essence as a thing from a thing, as with the essential distinction understanding. Instead, Turretin argues that the distinction is between the divine essence as the thing, and the divine persons as the modes of the thing, 'by which it is not compounded but distinguished.'[121]

Turretin states that theologians disagree about the distinction between person and essence. 'Some maintain that it is real; others formal; others virtual and eminent (of reasoned rationcination, which although it may not be on the part of the thing, still may have its foundation in the thing); others personal; others, finally modal.'[122] If the distinction is real (*distinctio realis*), God is no longer simple but is composite and is no longer God. If the distinction is formal (*distinctio formalis a parte rei*), the persons cannot each be fully divine, and therefore modalism obtains. If the distinction is by reason of analysis founded in the thing (*distinctio rationis ratiocinatae quae habet fundamentum in re*), then there is no

[118] The Scholastic theologian Richard of St. Victor begins his discussion of person and nature by distinguishing them in a way that is parallel with the distinction between something and someone. Richard of St. Victor, *On the Trinity*, trans. Ruben Angelici (Cambridge: James Clarke & Co., 2012), Book Four, VII.

[119] Turretin asserts in a parenthesis, 'as modes are said to be in created things, which as finite can be differently affected and admit modes really distinct and posterior to the thing modified, which cannot fall on the infinite and most perfect essence of God.'

[120] Turretin, *Elenctic, Vol. 1*, Third Topic, Question twenty-seven, III.

[121] Turretin, *Elenctic, Vol. 1*, Third Topic, Question twenty-seven, IV.

[122] Turretin, *Elenctic, Vol. 1*, Third Topic, Question twenty-seven, II.

distinction. I assume that by 'personal' Turretin means the *distinctio rationis rationans*, that is a distinction not in God but in the subject contemplating the divine Trinity rationally.

Turretin's argument is comparable to Aquinas' in several ways, despite the four centuries between their writings. Unsurprisingly the terminology they use sometimes differs, although in this aspect of Trinitarian theology they overlap. Aquinas argues:

> In creatures relations are accidental, whereas in God they are the divine essence itself. Thence it follows that in God essence is not really distinct from person [*Ex quo sequitur quod in Deo non sit aliud essentia quam persona secundum rem*]; and yet that the persons are really distinguished from each other.[123]

This is closely echoed by Turretin's affirmation that the persons are distinguished from the essence not *essentialiter* but *modaliter* as a mode from the thing. Turretin offers an account parallel to Aquinas' exploration of subsistent relation. Again, Aquinas writes:

> For person, as above stated, signifies relation as subsisting in the divine nature. But relation as referred to the essence does not differ therefrom really, but only in our way of thinking; while as referred to an opposite relation, it has a real distinction [*realem distinctionem*] by virtue of that opposition.[124]

Garrigou-Lagrange notes that the propositions in Question 28 Article 2 on the real relations and the divine essence are defined in the Council of Reims (1128) against Gilbert of Porretanus, and the Fourth Lateran Council (1215)[125] in which the principle of Eckard, that

[123] *ST* I, q. 39, a. 1.
[124] *ST* I, q. 39, a. 1.
[125] The Confession of Faith of the Fourth Lateran Council affirms the real distinctions between the divine persons, the Triune operation behind the incarnation, and the communication of idioms in Christ who is one person in two natures. The Confession of Faith states that the Holy Trinity 'is undivided according to its common essence but distinct according to the properties of its persons.' The Son 'became incarnate by the action of the whole Trinity in common . . . having become true man, composed of a rational soul and human flesh, one person in two natures.' 'Although he is immortal and unable to suffer according to his divinity, he was made capable of suffering and dying according to his humanity.' Concerning the distinction between person and nature in the Triune Godhead, the Fourth Lateran Council defends the work of Peter Lombard against the error of abbot Joachim. 'In God there is only a Trinity, not a quaternity, since each of the three persons is that reality – that is to say substance, essence or divine nature – which alone is the principle of all things.' The statement continues, 'In being begotten the Son received the Father's substance without it being diminished in any way, and thus the Father and the Son have the same substance. Thus the Father and the Son and also the

there are no conceivable distinctions in God was condemned.[126] The divine subsistent relations, that is, persons, are distinguished from one another relationally by their relative eternal properties of generation, filiation, and procession. The persons are not distinguished from the essence relatively, neither are they distinguished from the essence really, but conceptually and modally.

The modal distinction between the divine persons and the divine essence expresses the relations between persons and nature in Trinitarian theology more adequately than the term subsistence, defined by Muller as an individual instance of a given essence.[127] Muller demonstrates the way the term subsistence was adopted by some Reformed theologians from Patristic and Scholastic sources and he correctly notes the importance of divine simplicity for a correct understanding of subsistence in the Godhead.[128] I have argued that Aquinas' understanding of subsistence and subsistent relations differs from the definition of subsistence offered by Muller.[129] My argument that Aquinas' understanding of the real distinction among the persons in terms of subsistent relations is not the same as Muller's definition of subsistence, is based initially on the problems raised by the use of the term instance. Problems are raised by the term instance and the univocity in which this can be paralleled with an instance of human nature. Although there may be advantages of precision in using this definition of subsistence - and Aquinas appears to approach this use of subsistence - the possible areas of confusion are fraught with danger. Aquinas appears to come close to defining a divine person as an individual instance of the divine essence in Question 29 Articles 1 and 2, and again in Question 39 Article 1.

Holy Spirit proceeding from both are the same reality.' Papal Encyclicals Online, The Fourth Lateran Council, accessed on 04.06.2018, www,papalencyclicals.net/councils/ecum12-2.htm.

[126] Garrigou-Lagrange, *Trinity*, 119.

[127] Muller, *Dictionary, modus subsistendi*.

[128] Muller, *Dogmatics, Vol. 4*, 51, 73, 164, 174, 177, 182-195, 324.

[129] Muller, *Dictionary, modus subsistendi*.

In light of the Trinitarian theology of Aquinas and Turretin, four basic statements can be made about the relationship between the divine persons and the divine nature as a summary of the above discussion, and in response to the first question which governs Part II: what is the distinction between person and nature? First, the persons, generate, spirate, and proceed. The persons differ from the essence not really but modally, or by reason, as a thing from the mode of the thing. Secondly, the processions are the foundation of the really distinct relations, and the really distinct relations formally constitute the persons. Thirdly, the persons are subsistent relations. As real relations the persons are really distinct from one another. The relations are real and not merely verbal, conceptual, or modal. Fourthly, the persons as subsistent relations are each fully divine, because of the doctrine of divine simplicity. Nothing that is in God can be other than fully God. The Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God. These four summary statements of the relationship between the divine essence and the divine persons can now be used speculatively to apply Aquinas' Trinitarian theology and Christology to the Fourth Word of the Lord Jesus Christ from the cross. A theology of the cross that incorporates the modal distinction in the Trinity is rarely found in contemporary Evangelical writings. The distinction between person and nature is noted,[130] but the distinction is rarely treated fully.

The Modal Distinction in Trinitarian Theology and the Hypostatic Union: are the Distinctions Between Christ's Person and his Natures Real or Modal?

In the second question of the *Tertia Pars* of the *Summa*, Aquinas asks 'Whether the union of the incarnate Word took place in the person?'[131] In the second article Aquinas briefly treats

[130] An example of discussion of person and nature in British Evangelical theology is found in Colin E. Gunton, *Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: Toward a Fully Trinitarian Theology* (London: T&T Clark, 2003), 43-48. Gunton uses the doctrine of perichoresis to describe the distinctions between person and nature in the Trinity.

[131] *ST* III, q. 2, a. 2.

the Christological application of the modal distinction in Trinitarian theology, although his writing is not in this context, the application is inferred. The *sed contra* of the article bases Aquinas' argument on the four Chalcedonian adverbs. Aquinas then argues that the distinction between the person of Christ and his human nature is real. The distinction is real because, as Aquinas explains, in the human nature of Christ which is composed of matter and form, the particular human nature of Christ is distinct from the species of human nature. Aquinas argues that where this is not the case, in God for example, 'there would be no need to distinguish the nature from the suppositum of the nature (which is the individual subsisting in the nature).'[132] Therefore, in God, the distinction between person and nature is modal, not real; but Christ's person is really distinct from his human nature. Put more simply, if Christ's person were only modally distinct from his human nature, then one could also argue that Christ's divine nature is only modally distinct from his human nature.[133] Therefore, it must be concluded that the person of Christ is not modally distinct from his human nature; the distinction is real.

Following Aquinas' reasoning here and in the *Prima Pars*, Christ's person is modally distinct from the divine nature in the hypostatic union. This also implies that Christ's human nature is really distinct from Christ's divine nature. Aquinas begins with the Chalcedonian adverbs, and although the context is different, the Chalcedonian adverbs harmonise well with the real distinction between Christ's person and his human nature.

Implications of the Modal Distinction between Persons and Nature

[132] *ST* III, q. 12, a. 2.

[133] The reasoning would be by the law of transitivity: If a is only modally distinct from b, and b is only modally distinct from c, then a is only modally distinct from c.

Does the modal rather than the real distinction between nature and person in the Godhead, in the context of the fourth word, in any way imply that the divine nature is the subject of the forsakenness expressed by the fourth word? The seriousness of this question can be fleshed out in the following argument. The person of God the Son incarnate is forsaken by the Father according to the fourth word and the *communicatio idiomatum*, and yet the person of the Son is only modally distinct from the divine nature. Therefore, it seems that in some sense one must assert that the divine nature is forsaken by the Father in the fourth word. The argument appears to be sound, but the conclusion appears to be heterodox. Moreover, if the divine nature is the subject of the death of Christ and the suffering and forsakenness of Christ, one is immediately driven to various other heresies as a secondary result, particularly theopaschitism[134] and patripassianism.[135] Apart from the technicalities of the argument, it parallels contemporary interpretations[136] of the cross seen in Moltmann, and the Russian Orthodox theologian Sergei Bulgakov.[137]

[134] Theopaschitism is the heretical view that the divine nature suffered in the incarnation. A group of orthodox Cyrilline theologians, known as the Theopaschites, travelled to Constantinople in the early sixth century. In some matters their orthodoxy in the *Theopaschite Confession* was upheld by Emperor Justinian and Leontius of Byzantium, but the associated Theopaschitism is heretical insofar as it asserts the passibility of the divine nature. For the translated text of the Confession see McGuckin, 'Theopaschite,' 239-255.

[135] Patripassianism is a form of monarchianism from the early third century. Because of its sabellian modalistic thought, patripassianism asserts that the Father suffered in the suffering of the Son.

[136] In his work *The Cross of Christ*, evangelical author John Stott directly links the orthodox notion of divine impassibility with God's inability to experience emotion or affection. Following William Temple, Stott rejects this aspect of Patristic theology because he wishes to see in Christ's death, the solidarity of God with suffering humanity both at the cross and throughout history. Stott's claims must be understood in light of his previously stated opposition to both theopaschitism and patripassionaism. On the whole Stott seems to follow Moltmann's leading away from historic orthodoxy in favour of the post holocaust theology which tends to reject the impassibalist theology of the Patristic writers. Stott, *Cross*, 155, 330. *The Cross of Christ* was first published in 1986. More recently, in conservative Evangelical theology, Donald Macleod has written along similar lines regarding the suffering of God in the suffering of Christ, and God's solidarity with the suffering of his creatures. Macleod, *Crucified*, 22, 49-50, 64, 96, 119, 128, 131, 177-179.

[137] Sergei Bulgakov, *Du Verbe incarne: L'Agneau de Dieu*, trans. Constantin Andronikof (Lausanne: L'Age d'Homme, 1982), 48-49. Emery summarises Bulgakov's conclusions, 'In virtue of the perichoresis of the natures in Christ, the divinity of our Lord, while being different from the flesh, participates spiritually in the sufferings of the flesh. . . the divine nature cannot fail to suffer if its hypostasis is subjected to suffering.' Gilles Emery, 'The Immutability of the God of Love and the Problem of Language Concerning the "Suffering of God,"' in *Divine Impassibility and the Mystery of Human Suffering*, ed. James F. Keating and Thomas Joseph White, O. P. (Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans, 2009), 47.

If the problem I have raised from the modal distinction and the communication of idioms is valid, another form of patripassianism[138] and theopaschitism will emerge. In this case, the Father might be said to suffer because the divine nature of the Son might be said to suffer and there is but one divine nature. Additionally, the charge of theopaschitism will be plain because the problems raised lead to the conclusion that the divine nature suffers, is forsaken, and dies. These implications show the vital importance of correctly understanding the *communicatio idiomatum* and the distinction between person and nature. If either or both are misunderstood, heterodoxy swiftly obtains, but often in a similar form to contemporary trends in Evangelical theology.

I have focused this discussion of the modal distinction on the fourth word because it highlights the complexity of the Trinitarian relations in a way that exploring the death of Christ does not. The problem outlined above concerning the modal distinction and the fourth word also raises the same problem for all of Christ's actions and the *communicatio idiomatum*. For example, if, according to the *communicatio idiomatum*, the human nature of Christ undergoes death and therefore the person dies, this may be suggested to imply that the divine nature also dies. Although the claim that God dies in his divine nature is increasingly common in contemporary theology, I have argued that such an understanding of the death of Christ is inconsistent with and contrary to the teaching of Scripture. Historic orthodoxy has consistently claimed prior to the late nineteenth century, that the divine nature is simple, immutable, and impassible. Therefore, the modal distinction and the *communicatio idiomatum* when combined, raise some difficult problems, this is seen most clearly, and in a way that highlights the Trinitarian relations, in the fourth word of Christ from the cross.

[138] Paul L. Gavrilyuk offers an account of the patripassian controversy. Paul L. Gavrilyuk, *The Suffering of the Impassible God: The Dialectics of Patristic Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 91-100. Gavrilyuk also draws attention to Thomas Weinandy's briefer treatment of the heresy. Weinandy, *Suffer*, 14-19; 176.

In response to the problem of the modal distinction and the *communicatio idiomatum* in the fourth word, it may be suggested that one must re-evaluate either the *communicatio idiomatum* or the modal distinction between persons and nature in the Trinity, or both. The modal distinction is, as Garrigou-Lagrange correctly affirms, 'commonly accepted,'[139] although it is perhaps less frequently discussed, particularly in recent scholarship. Furthermore, the doctrine of the *communicatio idiomatum* may be argued to rest more obviously on scriptural exegesis, and it receives more comprehensive affirmation in Patristic, Scholastic, and Reformed theology, than the modal distinction in Trinitarian thought. Therefore, it appears more intuitive to question the theological legitimacy of the modal distinction in Trinitarian theology, than to question the Reformed expression of the *communicatio idiomatum*.

If the distinction between the divine nature and the divine persons is not modal, then the problem of the fourth word and the *communicatio idiomatum* may be resolved. An alternative distinction between person and nature must replace the modal distinction, and all other alternatives previously discussed prove equally or more problematic, and do not resolve the problem, but compound it. I argue that the modal distinction between person and nature in the Trinity is the only distinction that holds the doctrines of divine simplicity and the Trinity together in an orthodox way.

The person of the Son essentially has the divine nature and personally assumes human nature in the incarnation. Whatever is said of either nature is true of the person having that nature, whether eternally or by personal assumption, but it cannot be said of the other nature because persons, not natures, have natures. From this, persons experience things, natures do

[139] Garrigou-Lagrange writes that 'St. Thomas proved the commonly accepted doctrine that the real relations in God are not really distinct from the divine essence but are distinguished from it only by reason.' Garrigou-Lagrange, *Trinity,* 120.

not experience things. It is vital to add that persons only experience things in natures. The experience cannot escape the nature; I will develop this argument further in chapter 6.

I have already quoted Turretin's affirmation that the persons differ from the nature modally (*modaliter*) as a mode from the thing (*modus a re*).[140] Turretin argues, following Aquinas, that this understanding preserves divine simplicity, because the distinction is between the divine essence as the thing, and the divine persons as the modes of the thing.[141]

On the basis of the modal distinction, subsistent relations and the doctrine of divine simplicity, Aquinas, following a quotation from Augustine's *De Trinitate*, argues that 'in God essence is the same as suppositum, which in intellectual substances is nothing else than person.'[142] Aquinas notes that because of the doctrine of divine simplicity, and in light of his comments on subsistent relations, the identity of persons and essence, and indeed person and essence, is 'clear.'[143] Therefore, as Matthew Levering points out, 'it follows that it is only in our mode of thinking – not in God himself – that there is a difference between essence and relation in God.'[144] Emery repeatedly points out Aquinas'[145] insistence that 'the relations are really identical to the essence.'[146]

Aquinas' position at this point is clearly based on the doctrine of divine simplicity and the subsistent relations. Aquinas' comments echo the teaching of Augustine. 'For we say

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[140] Turretin, *Elenctic, Vol. 1*, Third Topic, Question twenty-seven, III.

[141] Turretin, *Elenctic, Vol. 1*, Third Topic, Question twenty-seven, IV.

[142] *ST* I, q. 39, a. 1.

[143] *ST* I, q. 39, a. 1. *Respondeo dicendum quod considerantibus divinam simplicitatem, quaestio ista in manifesto habet veritatem.*

[144] Matthew Levering, *Scripture and Metaphysics: Aquinas and the Renewal of Trinitarian Theology* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), 220.

[145] *ST* I, q. 28, a. 2; q. 39, a. 1; Aquinas, *Compendium*, I, 66.

[146] Gilles Emery, 'Essentialism or Personalism in the Treatise on God in Saint Thomas Aquinas?' *The Thomist* 64, no. 4 (October 2000): 534. Cf. 535, 547. Emery clarifies Aquinas' emphasis on the simplicity of the Triune God. 'In God, the essence is really identical to each of the three supposits or persons, but since it is necessary to take account of the mode of our knowledge and of our language, the essence is grasped in the notional act on a different mode from the person, since the person is distinct whereas the essence is common.' See also, Gilles Emery, 'The Personal Mode of Trinitarian Action in Saint Thomas Aquinas' *The Thomist* 69, no. 4 (October 2005): 33-77.

that in this Trinity two or three persons are not anything greater than one of them.'[147] Augustine argues from Scripture that the fullness of the Godhead is had by each person of the Trinity, and that this must be true because otherwise there would be parts in God which denies divine simplicity.

I have drawn parallels between Aquinas and Turretin, and argued they are in general agreement in their Trinitarian thought. Emery comments on Aquinas' writings on subsistent relations and divine simplicity, 'Simplicity lays itself down as a fundamental rule of Trinitarian doctrine: God is his own essence or nature, and the persons themselves are this nature.'[148] This teaching affirms the present argument that the persons are only modally distinct from the divine essence. I have set out the problems raised by the modal distinctions and the communication of idioms at the fourth word. I now move towards a potential solution.

[147] Augustine, *De Trin*, 8. 1.
[148] Emery, *Trinitarian*, 143.

6. Trinity, *Communicatio Idiomatum*, and the Fourth Word

In order to articulate my interpretation of the fourth word, a background lattice work interlocking three different elements has been developed in Part I and Part II. The first element discussed in Part I is exegetical and involves narrowing down the precise meaning of ἐγκατέλιπές in Mark 15:34. I argued that ἐγκατέλιπές is best understood in context as left undefended. The second element is Christology; specifically, the *communicatio idiomatum*, discussed in Part I. The third element is Trinitarian theology; specifically, the distinctions between the persons (*distinctio realis*), and the distinction between person and nature (*distinctio modali*). I have argued that the modal distinction is key for the Reformed expression of the *communicatio idiomatum*; and that the Reformed, rather than the Lutheran position, is the inheritor of the Patristic doctrine, although the polemical contexts of the sixteenth century shaped the development of the doctrine.

The distinction between the person of the Son (who, in the incarnation, is forsaken by the Father in the fourth word according to his personally assumed human nature) and the divine nature of the Son (which is the Son's by nature and not by personal assumption, and is not forsaken) is a modal and not a real distinction. The *distinctio modali* between the divine nature and the divine persons[1] is a distinction between the existence of the simple divine nature and the mode of existence of the divine nature in the three divine persons. The modal distinction is made on the basis of the personal properties of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit: paternity, filiation, and procession.[2]

I turn now to respond to the question that I have developed over the course of the present work. If the communication of idioms requires the statement that God the Son was

[1] The distinction between persons and nature is not a distinction between genus and species because God is not a genus or a class of things of which there are three instances, this is the heresy tritheism.

[2] *ST* I, q. 29, a. 4; q. 30, a. 1.

forsaken at the fourth word, and if there is only a modal distinction between the person of the Son and the divine essence, how can the proposition that the divine nature suffered be avoided? In response to the question I initially present and combine three arguments from Cyril of Alexandria, Bonaventure, and Aquinas. The argument from Cyril focuses on the communication of idioms, and the arguments from Aquinas and Bonaventure focus on subsistent relations and substance in the Trinity. In each argument the original context does not address the fourth word from the cross. The three arguments are similar but with nuances that complement one another to support the overall argument. I then combine and develop the arguments as a statement of my central thesis.

Cyril of Alexandria and the Assymetrical Predication of Attributes in the *Communicatio Idiomatum*

My argument that persons experience only in natures finds further expression in the theology of Cyril of Alexandria. Cyril argues that both human and divine attributes are predicated of God the Son at the same time, but not in the same way. Both sets of predicates are true, but, as Siddals argues, it is impossible for both to be true in the same way.[3] Cyril criticises the Arians for failing to correctly analyse the *communicatio idiomatum* as stating that the scriptural statements concerning Christ's divine nature are not true of the one subject in the same way as the scriptural statements concerning Christ's human nature.[4] Siddals synthesises the various elements of Cyril's arguments and writes, 'Cyril is distinguishing here between what can be predicated of the Word with reference to what the Word is by nature and

[3] Siddals argues that Cyril's early exposure to Classical logic informed his Christology, particularly in opposition to Nestorius. Siddals, 'Logic', 360. Cyril's use of logical tools is disputed in contemporary literature, and exploration of the issues involved is beyond the scope of this thesis.

[4] Cyril, *Thesaurus*, *PG* 75 29B.

substance, and what can be predicated of him as regards what he has become.'[5] Cyril argues that the suffering of Christ is to be understood 'οικείωσιν οίκονομικην.'[6] He writes, 'we say that the Word of God the Father himself suffered in the flesh for our sake.'[7] Cyril states that according to the Scriptures, the person of the Son suffered, although that suffering was experienced in his humanity, not his deity; and is with reference to what the Word has become in the incarnation.

Siddals suggests that the logical tools required for Cyril's understanding of the *communicatio idiomatum* are borrowed from Porphyry's text on Aristotle's *Categories*; *the Isagoge*.[8] Porphyry makes a distinction between predicates that are entailed by the substance of the subject (καθ' αύτάς), and predicates that are not entailed by the substance of the subject (κατά συμβεβηχός).[9] Siddals argues that the parallel in Cyril's treatment of the *communicatio idiomatum* is the distinction between Christological predicates 'that hold true κατά ατά φύσιν or κατά ατ' ούσίαν and those that hold true καθό γέγονεν άνθρωπος.'[10] If this distinction is correct then statements concerning Christ's humanity are to be predicated of the person of the Son because of his personal assumption of humanity, rather than because of his divine nature which is his eternal substance. Siddals asserts that Cyril's distinction is consistently applied in his exegetical works.

If the *communicatio idiomatum* interprets the Scriptures as predicating divine and human attributes of the single subject God the Son; and if the hypostatic union is understood in accordance with the Cyrilline adverbs used at Chalcedon, a qualification is needed. Cyril

[5] Siddals, 'Logic', 360.
[6] PG 75:1327. McGuckin translates this as 'economic appropriation,' Cyril, *Unity*, 107.
[7] Cyril, *Unity*, 115. Cf. Cyril's 12th Anathema (third letter Ep. 17)
[8] The *Isagoge* was originally written in Greek in 270 and was translated into Latin by Boethius. It was the standard textbook on logic for over one thousand years. Siddals confirms that Cyril neither cites Porphyry in this context, nor are there clear parallels in vocabulary. Nonetheless, the parallel between the logical analysis used by Porphyry and the application to the *communicatio idiomatum* in Cyril is clear.
[9] On this point Siddals refers to Porphyry, *Isagoge*, 9:14.
[10] Siddals, 'Logic', 360.

provides the qualification by claiming that the divine nature is the Son's essentially, whereas the human nature is assumed by the Son in the incarnation. Therefore, the *communicatio idiomatum* connects the natures of the hypostatic union asymmetrically to the Son.[11]

It may be objected, based on Cyril's insistence from the union of Christ's natures that he 'suffered impassibly,'[12] that the above presentation of Cyril's argument fails to account for his statements of the uniqueness and therefore the mystery of the hypostatic union of the incarnation. I respond that the majority of the Cyrilline statements on the suffering of Christ emphasise the impassibility of the divine nature. The emphasis is true even of the 'suffered impassibly' passage.

> He suffered impassibly, because he did not humble himself in such a way as to be merely like us, rather, as I have said before, he reserved to his own nature its superiority over all these things. But if we say that he passed over into the nature of the flesh by some change or transformation of his own nature, then we cannot possibly avoid confessing, even if we wanted to, that this ineffable and divine nature was passible.[13]

Cyril's balance of the mystery of the union with his teaching on the impassibility of the divine nature is apparent throughout his writings, particularly in the *Scholia on the Incarnation*,[14] *On the Unity of Christ*,[15] and in his *Dialogue with Theodoret*.[16] Cyril is

[11] Cyril's distinction drawn out by Siddals is often overlooked in the literature. See for example Wellum, *Incarnate*, 326-327. Wellum attempts to resolve the potential problems in the communication of idioms with reference to the incarnation. 'The Son does not give up his divine nature but assumes a new nature, a new mode of existence, and so makes human experience his own – human experience that can be predicated of him.'

[12] Cyril, *Scholia*, 35.

[13] Cyril, *Scholia*, Section 35. Cf. Cyril, *The Second Letter of Cyril to Nestorius*, in McGuckin, *Controversy*, 265. Here Cyril asserts, 'he both suffered and rose again; not meaning that the Word of God suffered in his own nature . . . for the divinity is impassible because it is incorporeal. But in so far as that which had become his own body suffered, then he himself is said to suffer these things.'

[14] Cyril, *Scholia*, Section 33, in McGuckin, *Controversy*.

[15] Cyril, *Unity*, 107. See also 121, 'In his own nature he certainly suffers nothing, for as God he is bodiless and lies entirely outside suffering.'

[16] St Cyril of Alexandria, *Three Christological Treatises*, Translated by Daniel King (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 2014), 128-130, 179. I quote some of the passages in further discussion of Cyril's 'suffers impassibly' statement below.

consistently emphatic that the divine nature of God the Son is impassible but that it was truly the Son who suffered in his human nature.

Bonaventure and the Manner of Predication in the *Commicatio Idiomatum*

Discussion of Christology is frequently isolated from Trinitarian doctrine, particularly in Reformed theology. This tendency is not followed by Bonaventure, for whom, as Hayes observes, 'The Trinity and Christology are inseparably intertwined.' Hayes continues, 'It is the mystery of Christ that leads us to the Trinity; and the Trinitarian concept of God is developed as a function of Christology.'[17] Because of this doctrinal synthesis, elements of my proposed Trinitarian reading of the fourth word are to be resourced from Bonaventure.[18] Aquinas' Christology is also Trinitarian, and some of Bonaventure's arguments are also found in Aquinas; I interact with Bonaventure at this point, rather than further discussion of Aquinas to bring more Scholastic voices to give evidence for the orthodoxy of my conclusions.

Bonaventure claims that a unity which can remain one in many subjects is superior to a unity which can only maintain its unity in one subject. Therefore, according to Bonaventure, the Triune God is the ultimate unity, and this further establishes his assertion that divine simplicity and divine triunity are not contradictory.[19]

Bonaventure makes a second argument that helps resolve the problem of the modal distinction and the communication of idioms in the fourth word. He asserts:

[17] From Zachary Hayes' introduction, *Works of Saint Bonaventure, Disputed Questions on the Mystery of the Trinity*, trans. Zachary Hayes (The Franciscan Institute, 2005), 31.

[18] Ilia Delio states that, 'Bonaventure's theology begins with the Trinity . . . he described a model of the Trinity that had its roots in the Greek Patristic tradition.' Ilia Delio, *Simply Bonaventure (2nd Edition)* (New York: New City Press, 2018), 39-40.

[19] Bonaventure, *Disputed*, q. 2, a. 2,

> Indeed the difference found in the *modus essendi* is found in the relations of persons to each other. Even though all have the same being, they have it in different modes. This is because one has it from himself, the other from another. This is sufficient diversity to forbid one person being called another.

Bonaventure concludes that these modes of having the divine essence do not introduce composition, but they do allow 'true distinction.'[20] The 'true distinction' asserted by Bonaventure is a distinction of subjects or persons, terms used synonymously in this context. Bonaventure's claim, if true, helps avoid Patripassianism and Theopaschatism, because it avoids the potential attribution of the experience of the Son in the incarnation to the Father or the Holy Spirit, through the modal distinction between person and nature. The twin heresies are plausible consequences of attributing suffering to the Son through the communication of idioms, then attributing that suffering to the divine nature from the person of the Son through the modal distinction between person and nature, and concluding that the persons of the Father and the Holy Spirit also suffered. Bonaventure's distinct modes in which the persons have the one divine nature avoid this scenario.

J. Isaac Goff comments that Bonaventure distinguishes the manner in which the divine persons relate to the divine essence. Distinct manners of relating to the divine essence arise from the distinct modes of having the divine essence (*modus se habendi*). These distinct modes are seen in Bonaventure's comment on John of Damascus' discussion of Aristotle on generation.

> The divine substance is not capable of division. Therefore, it is necessary that the one who generates gives his entire substance to the one that is generated. Therefore they cannot be distinguished according to substance. And yet they are distinguished. But neither are they distinguished accidentally because in God there is no accident. Therefore they are distinguished in person; for there remains the distinction in person together with total indistinction in nature.[21]

[20] Bonaventure, *Disputed*, q. 3, a. 2.
[21] Bonaventure, *Disputed*, q. 2, a. 2,

Bonaventure works through three types of generation, of substance, of accident, and of person, and concludes that the former two are not in accordance with orthodoxy. This further allows him to assert the compatibility between supreme divine unity and triunity.

Goff notes that because of the various modes, 'it is possible, *a parte rei*, to say something of a divine person (e.g., "to originate," *oriri*) that cannot be said of the divine essence, and vice versa.'[22] A distinction in what can be said of the divine nature and the divine persons, and what can be said of the distinct persons, provides a platform from which to distinguish between person and natures in Christ at the cross. Therefore it is possible *a parte rei*, to say of the person of the Son incarnate that he was forsaken by the Father at the fourth word. It is not possible to say this of the divine essence or of the persons of the Father or the Holy Spirit. The predicate 'is forsaken' is true of the Son incarnate but not the divine essence because of the distinct modes of having the divine nature in the Triune persons, and the distinction between nature and person.

Aquinas and Subsistent Relations

The third element of my initial response to the problem raised by the modal distinction and the communication of idioms at the fourth word is found in Aquinas' understanding of the Patristic rule of the necessary simultaneity of correlatives. Aquinas conceptually prioritises the person of the Father over the notional act of generation, hence his dictum '*Quia Pater est, generat*' which is given in opposition to the proposition that the Father is the Father because he begets.[23] Therefore, Aquinas asks, 'Whether the hypostases remain if the relations are

[22] J. Isaac Goff, *Caritas in Primo: A Study of Bonaventure's Disputed Questions on the Mystery of the Trinity* (New Bedford, MA: Academy of the Immaculate, 2015), 245.

[23] *ST* I, q. 40, a. 4.

mentally abstracted from the persons?'[24] Aquinas clearly responds negatively, 'if the personal relations are mentally abstracted, the hypostases no longer remain.'[25] Aquinas' response is based on the Trinitarian principle that the subsistent relations are a priori not accidental to the hypostases. The real identity of the person and essence, however, may lead to the flawed assumption that the divine being in each person relates to the divine being in each other person.[26]

When the flawed assumption that the divine being relates is removed, the problem stops. If it were the divine being that related, one could deduce that each person has the divine being as distinct entities which related to each other's divine being. This is tritheism. Therefore, each person does not have the divine essence as distinct relating entities, instead each person is a distinct relation subsisting in the divine essence. It is the relations subsisting in the divine essence that relate to one another, as distinct modes of the one divine essence. The relations do not relate to the divine essence, for that would produce composition which denies divine simplicity;[27] the relations only relate to the divine essence subsisting in the persons.

The principles I have outlined in this discussion may be applied directly to the fourth word from the cross. The subsistent relation of the Son became incarnate and, on the cross, uttered 'Ὁ Θεός μου ὁ Θεός μου, είς τί έγκατέλιπές με;' The Father is the subject and the Son incarnate is the object of the verb έγκατέλιπές. The divine essence cannot be the subject or

[24] Cf. Aquinas, *Compendium*, I. 61, 'The hypostases do not remain when the intellect has subtracted the personal properties.'

[25] *ST* I, q. 40, a. 4. Aquinas states that if the innascibility of the Father is mentally abstracted, the person remains. This is because innascibility is a notion of a person, not a personal notion. Whereas personal properties (paternity, filiation, and procession) do not add to the persons 'as a form is added to a pre-existing subject.' The personal properties therefore 'are themselves' subsisting persons; thus paternity is the Father himself.'

[26] Levering expresses the same concern when he poses the questions, 'is not paternity the same as the divine being? Why then would not the divine being (in the Father) be related to filiation?' Levering, *Scripture*, 218.

[27] *ST* I, q. 30, a. 1.

the object of the verb ἐγκατέλιπές because that would imply that it is the divine essence that relates, in which case the divine essence becomes either a fourth thing in the Trinity, or tritheism obtains. It is the subsistent relations that relate to one another, and therefore it is the subsistent relation of the Son who became incarnate who uttered the fourth word.

According to the correlative principle in Aquinas, the Son is also active, and an active participant in the event of the fourth word. The unity of divine action *ad extra* in creation and redemption demonstrates the Patristic principle *opera Trinitatis ad extra sunt indivisa*.[28] Emery traces the way in which Aquinas[29] links the Patristic principle to the doctrine of perichoresis. Emery argues from Aquinas that because of divine perichoresis, the acts of the divine persons are united and indivisible, as are the effects of the divine acts. 'The action of persons in the world cannot be different, since each person acts by having the others in him and by being in the others. Likewise, the effects cannot be related to a single person, because the three persons act mutually.' The unity of the divine acts and their effects demonstrates the fundamental importance of the doctrine of perichoresis,[30] and more clearly works out the Patristic principle *opera Trinitatis ad extra sunt indivisa*. The Son incarnate is not merely the victim of the Father pouring out wrath at sin on Christ because of the inseparable operations of the Triune persons: the Son incarnate willingly submits himself to the Father's wrath.[31]

[28] For recent Reformed discussion on the Patristic principle see Stephen R. Holmes, 'Trinitarian Action and Inseparable Operations: Some Historical and Dogmatic Reflections,' in Advancing Trinitarian Theology: Explorations in Constructive Dogmatics, ed. Oliver D. Crisp and Fred Sanders (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2014), 60-74.

[29] *ST* I, q. 42, a. 5. Emery states that Aquinas teaches a threefold aspect to perichoresis. First, the common essence of the divine persons; secondly, each relation implies its correlative; thirdly, in the divine processions, the proceeding person dwells in the person from whom he proceeds. Emery, 'Action,' 68.

[30] Emery, 'Action,' 70.

[31] Matthew 26:39; 42; Mark 14:36; Luke 22:42. Augustine emphasises the scriptural teaching that the Father does not spare his Son (Romans 8:32), and that the Son gives himself up (Galatians 2:20). 'This passion happened to one of them but was brought about by both.' *The Works of Saint Augustine: Sermons III (51-94) on the New Testament*, trans. Edmund Hill, O.P., ed. John E. Rotelle (New York: New City Press, 1991), Sermon 52, section 12. I further discuss wrath being poured out on the Son in Part III below.

Related to the doctrine of subsistent relations is Aquinas' teaching on the correlativity of the persons, which is worked out economically in the Father sending the Son and the correlate of the Son being sent by the Father. The Son must not be thought of as passive in being sent, he is active in being sent.

When the unity of divine acts and the unity of their effects are emphasised in relation to the fourth word, it is clear that the Son must be active in being sent. It is also clear that the Son incarnate, in uttering the fourth word, must be active, and not an unwilling party. The act of forsaking in the fourth word, like the act of the incarnation, is a Triune act, however, as with the incarnation; the act terminates on the person of the Son incarnate. Concerning the incarnation, Aquinas argues that the act of assumption proceeds from the divine power common to the three persons, but the terminus of the assumption is the person of the Son.[32] Aquinas' distinction between the act of assumption and the terminus of the assumption[33] can be extended to the parallel situation of the fourth word. Christ as the Son incarnate is forsaken in his human nature by the Father. The Triune persons act as a united single being and the single effect that follows is that the action of forsaking terminates on the person of the Son incarnate. The terminus of the action is such that neither the Father nor the Holy Spirit was forsaken; only the Son incarnate was forsaken, and yet the act is Trinitarian.

The arguments I have explored from Cyril, Bonaventure and Aquinas each distinguish in different ways between the divine and human natures of Christ and his person. The

[32] *ST* III, q. 3, a. 4. '*Respondeo dicendum quod, sicut dictum est, assumptio duo importat, scilicet actum assumentis, et terminum assumptionis. Actus autem assumentis procedit ex divina virtute, quae communis est tribus personis, sed terminus assumptionis est persona.*'

[33] Dominic Legge offers a helpful summary of Aquinas' distinction and explores some of the ramifications for Christology and Trinitarian theology. Legge, *Trinitarian,* 104-106. 'We can affirm the Trinitarian truth that the person of the Son is never separated from the Father and the Holy Spirit, nor acts apart from them. Legge, *Trinitarian*, 106. Cf. Emery, 'Action', 45-48.

distinction is necessary in order to ascribe suffering, and particularly forsakenness, to the Son only in the incarnation, and not in his divine nature.

Positive Statement of the Central Thesis

I now set out a positive statement of my central thesis which offers a Trinitarian and Christological reading of the fourth word. The central thesis combines the three elements of the interlocking lattice work, and the preliminary arguments from Cyril, Bonaventure, and Aquinas. I also present arguments concerning the roles of the Father and the Holy Spirit at the fourth word and the continuation of Trinitarian perichoresis.

Cyril and Bonaventure argue that an event experienced by the Son is predicated of the Son in a way that it cannot be predicated of the divine nature or the Father or the Holy Spirit. Aquinas argues that persons relate rather than natures. These arguments come together in the simple maxim that persons experience in or according to natures. By this I mean that a person's experience is always and only in reference to the person's nature, and not abstracted from the nature. Events happen to persons in natures, not persons abstracted from natures. The correlativity principle and the modal distinction of Aquinas, and the understanding of Trinitarian theology and the communication of idioms in Bonaventure and Cyril are upheld by the maxim in such a way that allows for extension to the suffering and passion of Christ; and more specifically to the fourth word.

It is, therefore, the person of God the Son who experiences according to a nature, it is not either the human or the divine nature that experiences apart from the person, nor is it the person who experiences apart from the nature. The denial of either aspect of this maxim leads to the contradiction of one or more of the three arguments from Cyril, Bonaventure, and

Aquinas. If natures, not persons experience, then natures would relate; this contradicts Aquinas' doctrine of subsistent relations. If persons could experience apart from a nature, then forsakenness would be predicated of the Son directly, rather than through the human nature of the incarnation; in which case the modal distinction between person and nature would entail that the divine nature is forsaken. Additionally, if the person of the Son could experience forsakenness in both natures, Cyril and Bonaventure's doctrine of the communication of idioms would be contradicted. If the person of the Son experienced in such a way that one could also predicate the experience of the Father and the Holy Spirit, then Bonaventure's statement 'One has it from himself, the other from another. This is sufficient diversity to forbid one person being called another'[34] would be contradicted, because the experience would be predicated of the three persons without distinction.

If the experience of forsakenness may be predicated of the Son apart from the incarnation in such a way that through the modal distinction the experience is predicated of the divine nature, a parallel predication must also be made that is unacceptable even to theologians who advocate divine passibility. The parallel predication concerns the doctrine of penal substitutionary atonement that I discuss further in Part III. If the guilt of sin is imputed to Christ at the cross,[35] the communication of idioms implies that the guilt of sin is imputed to the Son incarnate. My argument claims that the experience of the cross is experienced by the Son incarnate but only in the incarnation, but passibilist theologians attempt to attribute suffering to the divine nature, I suggest that they must therefore also attribute sin to the divine nature. I make this suggestion based on the same logic of the communication of idioms and the modal distinction between person and nature. If the guilt of sin is imputed to Christ in the incarnation, but the communication of idioms is considered to allow this imputation to be

[34] Bonaventure, *Disputed*, q. 3, a. 2.
[35] Cf. 1 Peter 2:24; 3:18.

understood of Christ beyond the incarnation, then through the modal distinction sin is imputed to the divine nature. The conclusion that sin is imputed to the divine nature is not only unacceptable to the passibilist, it is meaningless, and confuses all the biblical witness to the death of Christ. I argue that because of the unacceptable conclusion that sin is imputed to the divine nature, one must reject the possibility of experience 'escaping' the nature.[36] By this I mean that experience cannot be abstracted from a nature to the person without reference to the nature.

In the case of the fourth word uttered by God the Son incarnate to the Father, the experience of forsakenness by the Father is a genuine experience for God the Son, but it is experienced in the human nature, and not in the divine nature, nor is it experienced in the person of the Son apart from the human nature. Therefore one can say with Scripture and tradition, both that it is truly God the Son who truly suffered and died on the cross, and was forsaken by the Father, and that the divine nature is impassible, and cannot suffer or die or be forsaken.[37] Most pertinently, it can also be said that the person of the Son did not suffer apart from the human nature, not only with reference to Son qua the divine nature, but because the Son's experience of suffering did not 'escape'[38] from the human nature in the incarnation.

The maxim that persons experience according to natures must not be taken to imply either a Nestorian separation between Christ's person and his human nature; nor an abstract consideration of person apart from nature. I uphold the Chalcedonian unity of the hypostatic

[36] Furthermore, this argument against divine passibility also applies to the Lutheran *communicatio naturarem*, without reference to the modal distinction. If the guilt of sin is imputed to Christ's human nature at the cross, then according to the *communicatio naturarem* the guilt of sin ought also to be cross predicated of the divine nature in the hypostatic union. See Dennis Ngien, 'Chalcedonian Christology and Beyond: Luther's Understanding of the *Communicatio Idiomatum*.' *Heythrop Journal of Theology*, vol. XLV (2004), Blackwell, Oxford, 54-68.

[37] Karl Barth observes the theological significance of asserting that God the Son truly became truly man, 'The Son of God exists with man and as man in this fallen and perishing state. We should be explaining the incarnation docetically and therefore explaining it away if we did not put it like this, if we tried to limit any way the solidarity with the cosmos which God accepted in Jesus Christ.' Barth, *Dogmatics, IV.I*, 215.

[38] I am grateful for my discussion with Garry Williams, who helpfully used the word 'escape' to describe the link between persons, natures, and experience.

union but argue that natures do not have realist existence beyond person and that natures are only present in individuated form. My use of the word 'escape' does not imply separation of the natures; it is intended to describe the principle that events are experienced in natures and cannot be experienced in persons without reference to a nature.

My central thesis is also informed by the Trinitarian doctrine of perichoresis. I have defined perichoresis, following Muller[39] and Emery,[40] as the mutual indwelling of the three persons. The mutual indwelling is understood as perichoresis primarily because the persons who proceed eternally remain in the person from whom they proceed, and because of the inseparability of the three divine persons and their reciprocal relations. I have argued that the balancing concept of perichoresis describes the permanent intra-Trinitarian relations from eternity past to eternity future, including the incarnation, passion, death, and burial of Christ.

If the forsakenness of the Son at the fourth word is understood in such a way that the perichoresis in some sense ceases, the entailment is the cessation of the Trinitarian subsistent relations of the eternal processions, which are the core of the perichoresis. The result of the logical progression from the cessation of perichoresis is that the Trinitarian persons cease to exist. Therefore, at the fourth word, the perichoretic relations among the Triune persons continued as it had from eternity and will to eternity.

The balancing doctrine of perichoresis ensures a coherently Trinitarian framework for understanding the fourth word. Perichoresis leads to the question, what is the involvement of the Father and the Holy Spirit at the cross and at the fourth word? Fundamentally, the attempt to discern the involvement of the Father in terms of affection is asking a question to which the Scriptures do not provide a direct answer.[41] Therefore to state directly, as Moltmann does,

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[39] Muller, *Dictionary*, *Circumincessio*.

[40] Emery, *Church*, 146. I expanded Emery's definition with reference to Durand's comments. Emmanuel Durand, "Perichorsis: A Key Concept for Balancing Trinitarian Theology," in *Rethinking*, 181.

[41] Rob Lister makes the parallel point with reference to the experience of suffering and death in the 'two-natured Jesus.' Lister, *Impassioned*, 263.

that the Father feels the pain of forsaking his incarnate Son is going beyond the language and conceptual range of the Scriptures.

The Scriptures speak of the Father's involvement in the passion and death of Christ as an active and deliberate Trinitarian work in which the Father and the incarnate Son are volitionally united.[42] The Son was therefore a willing victim at the cross, both in the unity of the one divine will, and from the Gethsemane prayer, in the submission of his human will to the one divine will.[43] The Scriptures offer no suggestion that the Father experienced remorse or pain at the suffering and death of Christ.[44]

The Scriptures are clear that the Godhead is both impassible and also capable of affection. An analysis of passages in the Scriptures concerning divine emotion is beyond the scope and purpose of this work, but it must surely be agreed that the Scriptures do speak of God as a being who expresses emotion; although this is occasionally held to be anthropopassism or anthropomorphism, it is analogically a reflection of something, rather than nothing.[45]

The role of the Holy Spirit in the cross of Christ and the fourth word is more nuanced. The Creeds and Patristic tradition, following the Scriptures, are clear that the Holy Spirit is the divine third person of the Trinity.[46] Under the influence of Augustine, many theologians

[42] The unity is between the human will of Christ and the divine will. There is one divine will and therefore prior to the incarnation the Triune Godhead willed that the Son would become incarnate and be delivered over to suffering and death.

[43] For discussion of Christ's human submission to the divine will of the Father in the context of the assertion that will is a property of person as opposed to nature, see: Michael J. Ovey, *Your Will be Done: Exploring Divine Subordination, Divine Monarchy and Divine Humility* (London: The Latimer Trust, 2016).

[44] Several verses state elements of the Father's intention and purpose in the death of Christ. Cf. Psalm 22:15; Isaiah 53:4-5, 10; Romans 3:25; 8:32.

[45] 'To say that God does not suffer means not only that he does not feel any physical pain, since he is not corporeal, but also that he does not undergo some passible changes of state whereby he experiences some form of divine emotional agitation, anguish, agony, or distress. God is never in a state of inner *angst*.' Weinandy, *Suffer?* 153.

[46] In *De Trinitate*, Augustine writes that the Holy Spirit is 'Very God; and therefore, absolutely equal with the Father and the Son, and in the unity of the Trinity consubstantial and co-eternal.' Augustine, *Trinity*, 1.6. Augustine points to Galatians 4:6 and Romans 8:9-11 which speak of the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of God's Son and the Spirit of Christ.

have argued that the Holy Spirit is rightly called love, in a way that is particular to the Holy Spirit, but not in a way that excludes the Father and the Son.[47] Ayres clarifies Augustine's argument that the Spirit is the love or communion between the Father and the Son. 'If then, the Spirit is the love or communion of Father and Son, and "God is love" then the Spirit as love *must* be substantial, fully identical to all that we might name as the "qualities" of divinity, or the Spirit could not be termed "God."'[48] He continues in summary of his findings in Augustine's writings.

> The Spirit is the communion of Father and Son which, as we have seen, is a mutual act of adherence and love; the Spirit is the love and the fount of love between Father and Son who eternally gives himself; the Spirit, as also "God from God", shares in the simple mode of divine existence in which he is what he might be thought to possess. Thus in these mature texts, Augustine presents the Spirit as the agent identical to the act of communion between Father and Son.[49]

The Augustinian conception of the Spirit as the love or communion of the Father and the Son is inherited by and developed in Thomas Aquinas, who summarises the Trinitarian role of the Spirit as love in the *Compendium of Theology*. 'By positing in God the Spirit, who is God's love, we express the way in which God is in himself as the beloved object in the lover. And so the rule of the Catholic faith obliges us to believe in the Spirit.'[50]

Augustine's and Aquinas' argument is relevant to my interpretation of the fourth word because it affirms the continuing love between the persons of the Trinity at the cross. The role of the Spirit at the cross is seen in Hebrews 9:14 'How much more will the blood of

[47] Augustine, *Trinity,* 15-17. The argument is based on exegesis of 1 John 4:7-16. For further discussion see, Lewis Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 251. Ayres notes that in Augustine's discussion of the Spirit as gift and as a relative title in *De Trinitate* 5. 12. 13., one should not speak of 'the Father of the Spirit' least one be led to think of the Spirit as another Son. Ayres, *Augustine*, 252. Matthew Levering, *Engaging the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2016), 55-59.

[48] Ayres, *Augustine*, 253.

[49] Ayres, *Augustine*, 258.

[50] Aquinas, *Compendium*, I, 46.

Christ, who through the[51] eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God.' I have understood this verse as a scriptural summary of the Triune relations of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit at the cross of Christ.[52] A number of other New Testament epistles refer to the Spirit in connection with both the cross and the resurrection and exaltation of Christ.[53] The combination of these passages further demonstrates the scriptural basis for a pneumatological and Trinitarian understanding of the cross.

John Owen comments on the clause 'by the eternal Spirit.'

> "διᾳ" . . . denotes a concurrent operation, when one works with another. Nor doth it always denote a subservient, instrumental cause, but sometimes that which is principally efficient . . . So it doth here; the eternal Spirit was not an inferior instrument whereby Christ offered himself, but he was the principal efficient cause in the work.'[54]

Owen's assertion is more cautiously considered in some contemporary writings such as the notes in Attridge's commentary. Assuming, however, that the 'Eternal Spirit' is a reference to the Holy Spirit, Owen's comments are significant.

In my discussion of pro-Nicene theology inherited by Aquinas through Augustine, I have argued that the united way that the divine persons subsist in the divine nature *ad intra*

[51] A possible alternate and exegetically acceptable translation is 'who through his eternal Spirit.' By referring to the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of Christ, this alternate translation further emphasises the unity of the Triune persons. Other Scriptures refer to the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of Christ. Cf. Romans 8:2, 9; 1 Peter 1:11; Galatians 4:6. Therefore, even if the alternate translation is rejected, the conception of the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of Christ retains scriptural support. For a survey of the history of exegesis of the verse see John J. McGrath, S.J., *Through the Eternal Spirit: An Historical Study of the Exegesis of Hebrews 9:13-14* (Rome: Pontificia Universitas Gregoriana, 1961).

[52] My Trinitarian reading of the passage is supported in the Patristic tradition and by a number of contemporary commentators, however, is not universally affirmed. Harold W. Attridge claims 'Trinitarian speculation, advocated by Patristic and some modern interpreters, is too involved. Hebrews's references to the spirit are too diffuse and ill-focused to support a Trinitarian theology in this context.' Harold W. Attridge, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (U.S.A.: Fortress Press, 1989), 250. Attridge instead argues that the clause denotes that the offering was not a primarily physical affair to cleanse the flesh; and that it took place in the spiritual realm.

[53] Romans 1:4; 1 Corinthians 15:45; 1 Timothy 3:16; 1 Peter 3:18.

[54] Owen, *Hebrews, Vol. VI,* 303.

flows into the actions of the divine persons *ad extra*, which are therefore also united. Hebrews 9:14 summarises this Trinitarian claim and must not be jettisoned in the theology of the cross and the fourth word, because, as Stephen Wellum affirms in the context of the person of Christ rather than the cross, 'In the incarnate Son's actions, all of his actions are in filial relation to his Father, through the Spirit, and in such a way that all three divine persons are involved.'[55] To jettison the Triune unity *ad extra* in the theology of the cross without biblical and theological warrant would make the doctrine of God incoherent and chaotic.[56]

The possibility of a Pneumatology of the cross is unsurprising given the express statements of the Gospel authors concerning the role of the Spirit in all of Christ's ministry. The angel Gabriel reveals to the Virgin Mary that the holy child will be conceived in her by the Holy Spirit.[57] When Mary meets Elizabeth her cousin, Elizabeth is filled with the Holy Spirit[58] and praises God. When Christ is presented at the temple Luke states that Simeon is moved by the Holy Spirit[59] to prophecy concerning the child. The baptism of Christ by John the Baptist marks the beginning of Christ's ministry. The Gospels record that the Holy Spirit descended on Jesus like a dove.[60] The Trinitarian involvement at the beginning of Christ's ministry reflects the Trinitarian involvement at the cross outlined in Hebrew 9:14. Christ's

[55] Wellum, *Incarnate*, 410.

[56] Moltmann and von Balthasar are examples of theologians who insufficiently emphasise the role of the Holy Spirit at the cross. Moltmann's *theologia crucis* lacks extensive pneumatalogical content in discussion of the cross. Dennis Jowers notes that his understanding of the cross does not appear to require that the Holy Spirit be a personal subject. Jowers, 'Theology,' 264. I argue that Moltmann's conspicuous failure to develop a pneumatology of the cross within his *theologia crucis* is in part because his exegetical emphasis is on the Gospels of Matthew and Mark, in such a way that often precludes Luke and John. Paul Fiddes comments on the absence of the Spirit's role in the cross in Moltmann's theology. 'The universal divine suffering in the person of the Spirit is curiously dissociated from the particular suffering of the Son. Fiddes, *Creative*, 11. Another example is von Balthasar's discussion of the Trinitarian aspect of the cross in his *Mysterium Paschale*. In the context of reconciliation, he refers to Galatians 6:14, 'the sign that this work of reconciliation succeeded in reaching its goal is the Holy Spirit who brings to those reconciled . . . life and peace.' Balthasar, *Mysterium*, 136-137. For von Balthasar, the Spirit's role is principally one of applying the work of the cross to believers as he is the Spirit of Christ. In this context he does not explore the pneumatalogical aspect of the cross.

[57] Πνεῦμα ἅγιον ἐπελεύσεται. Luke 1:35

[58] ἐπλήσθη πνεύματος ἁγίου. Luke 1:41. The aorist passive verb ἐπλήσθη is used eight times in Luke and Acts in connection with the Holy Spirit. On each occasion an individual is filled with the Spirit for a particular task which focuses on the proclamation of the word of God.

[59] και ἠλθεν ἐν τῳ πνεύματι εἰς τὸ ίερόν Luke 1:27

[60] καὶ καταβῆναι τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον σωματικῷ εἰδει ὡς περιστερὰν ἐπ' αὐτόν Luke 3:22

birth, baptism, resistance of temptation, preaching, and healing ministry are all empowered by the Holy Spirit. This continues in Christ's passion and death. After Christ's death and burial, he is raised to life again by the Holy Spirit.[61]

Owen cites Isaiah 61:1 in order to affirm that Christ was anointed by the Holy Spirit for the entirety of his earthly ministry. Owen argues that Christ was 'possessed of and furnished with all that fullness of spiritual gifts which were any way needful for him or useful unto him, or which human nature is capable of receiving.'[62] Owen also cites Luke 4:1, John 3:34, and Isaiah 48:16 as further scriptural evidence that Christ was filled with and anointed by the Spirit without measure in his ministry. Owen extends the benefits of the anointing by the Holy Spirit to the entirety of Christ's ministry. 'By him was he directed, strengthened, and comforted, in his whole course, - in all his temptations, troubles, and sufferings, from first to last.' Interestingly, Owen argues that the benefits and powers of the divine nature of Christ were communicated to Christ by the Holy Spirit. 'Now, all the voluntary communications of the divine nature unto the human were, as we have showed, by the Holy Spirit.'[63]

The empowering role of the Holy Spirit in the life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ is evidence of the Patristic and Reformation dictum *opera Trinitatis ad extra sunt indivisa*.[64] Muller argues that the works of the incarnation and mediation terminate on the Son, 'even though they are willed and effected by the Father, Son, and Spirit.'[65] The principle is developed in several of the Patristic, Scholastic and Reformed theologians. With reference to 1 Corinthians 12, Basil the Great (ca. 330-379) discusses the principle of the

[61] Romans 1:4; 8:11.
[62] Owen, *Works, Vol. III*, 172.
[63] Owen, *Works, Vol. III*, 175.
[64] 'Since the Godhead is one in essence, one in knowledge, and one in will, it would be impossible in any work *ad extra* for one of the divine persons to will and to do one thing and another of the divine persons to will and do another.' Muller, *Dictionary, Opera Trinitatis ad extra sunt indivisa*.
[65] Muller, *Dictionary, Opera Trinitatis ad extra sunt indivisa*.

external operations of the Triune Godhead. 'In everything the Holy Spirit is indivisible and inseparable from the Father and the Son.' Basil continues, 'When God works differences of operations, and the Lord works the differences of ministries, the Holy Spirit is present, freely arranging the distribution of gifts.'[66] Basil comments specifically on the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of Christ.

> Or whether you wish to consider the accommodations surrounding the Lord's presence in the flesh, all comes about through the Spirit. First, he is joined to the very flesh of the Lord at his anointing, and he is inseparably present to him, as it is written, "The one on whom you see the Sprit coming down and remaining on him, he is my Son, my beloved" (Jn 1:33; Lk 3:22). And, "Jesus of Nazareth, whom God anointed with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 10:38). Then, his every work was performed in the presence of the Spirit.[67]

Although Basil is eager to maintain the principle of the indivisibility of the actions of the Triune Godhead *ad extra*, he does not explicitly extend the principle to the death of Christ. I argue that Hebrews 9:14 makes explicit what Basil the Great leaves implicit, namely, the involvement of the Holy Spirit with the Father and the Son at the cross according to the principle of the unity of the external works of the Triune Godhead.

Hebrews 9:14 speaks of the Son incarnate offering himself to God the Father through the eternal Spirit. As I have previously argued, the Hebrews passage is significant in that it speaks of the Triune subsistences acting in perichoretic unity even at the cross. The Holy Spirit is the person of the Trinity spirated by the Father and the Son.[68] In line with the focus on the *communicatio idiomatum* and the use of subsistence language that I have developed,

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[66] Basil, *Spirit*, 16,37

[67] Basil, *Spirit*, 16,39

[68] Thomas Weinandy argues that the eternal generation of the Son by the Father eternally takes place in and by the Holy Spirit. Weinandy's thesis is intended further to unite the Triune persons and to attempt a rapprochement over the divisive issue of the double procession of the Holy Spirit. It is beyond the scope of this work to critically evaluate Weinandy's thesis beyond stating that Weinandy's thesis lacks sufficient Patristic support, it is simply mentioned at this point to highlight the historic orthodox conception of the unity of the divine nature in the Triune persons and the continuation of this conception of the Godhead in contemporary orthodox theology. Thomas Weinandy, *The Father's Spirit of Sonship: Reconceiving the Trinity* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 1995).

this verse can be expanded as follows. The divine nature as it subsists in the person of the Son hypostatically united to the human nature, sacrificially offered his human nature through the divine nature as it subsists in the eternal Holy Spirit, to the divine nature as it subsists in the Father.

I have outlined the Spirit's involvement at the cross of Christ in terms of the principle *opera Trinitatis ad extra sunt indivisa*. Extending the principle to the death of Christ aligns closely with Patristic and Reformation theology, although problems arise when the principle is applied to the fourth word in particular. I will argue that this further application to the fourth word is supported by Scripture only if the principle is taught in Scripture as a principle rather than merely found in examples.

The Scriptures support the principle of the unity of the external works of the Godhead in numerous instances. I argue that the principle is taught in the Scriptures as a principle, rather than merely in particular instances given in the Scriptures as examples. The principle *opera Trinitatis ad extra sunt indivisa* is a logical consequence and implication of the perichoretic unity of the Triune Godhead. Additionally, the principle of the unity of the external works of God supervenes[69] on the perichoretic unity of the Triune Godhead. The latter is taught as a principle in the Scriptures, therefore I assert that as the former supervenes upon and is an implication of the latter, the former is also a principle taught in the Scriptures apart from the particular examples in which it is instantiated.

A second parallel but distinct line of argument leads to the same conclusion. The *opera ad extra* of the Triune Godhead of necessity reflect the *opera ad intra* of the Triune Godhead. Concerning the Scholastic and Reformed sources, Muller comments

[69] James E. Dolezal discusses supervenience in the context of divine simplicity and the divine properties. Dolezal, *Parts*, 18-19. To define supervenience, Dolezal cites Thomas Morris, *Anselmian Explorations: Essays in Philosophical Theology* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1987), 76-97.

> Although the entire divine work *ad extra* is consistently defined as the common work of all three persons, it is nonetheless not a work that disobliges the distinction of persons – indeed, it follows out the manner of the working of the persons *ad intra*, where there are distinct personal operations even, according to some of the Reformed, in the unified *opera essentialia*, namely, in the decrees of God.[70]

The *opera dei ad extra* is the outworking of the *opera dei ad intra*. Therefore, the unity of the Triune persons in the one divine nature ensures that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are undivided throughout the incarnation, the death and the resurrection of Christ.

The above two lines of argument establish the scriptural principle that the external works of God are performed involving the three Triune persons. It is established as a principle rather than merely as particular instances. Therefore, the principle itself can legitimately be extended to instances of the works of God *ad extra* that are not specified by Scripture as instantiating the principle. The principle *opera Trinitatis ad extra sunt indivisa* is applicable to the passion and death of Christ and also to the fourth word itself. In order firmly to establish the principle of the unity of the works of God *ad extra* I have devoted considerable space to the argument. I also suggest that the presence of numerous examples of the Spirit's anointing of Christ in his ministry encourages the believer to speculate and extend the Spirit's anointing of Christ to the whole of Christ's ministry. Such a view expresses a particular understanding of the doctrine of Scripture and the ways in which the Scriptures are to be read.

Because the New Testament does not explicate the fourth word which is recorded only in the Gospels of Matthew and Mark, Hebrews 9:14 may be employed to shed light on the fourth word. As the scriptural witness to the event of the fourth word is minimal, discussion of the role of the Holy Spirit at this event is largely speculative and must reflect the Scriptures themselves. Rather than positing an active role of the Holy Spirit in the fourth word, it is perhaps most faithful to the Scriptures simply to assert the continuance of the

[70] Muller, *Dogmatics, Vol. 4*, 263.

perichoretic relations of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit throughout the crucifixion of Christ and particularly in the moment in which the cry is uttered. The simplicity of the assertion of the continuance of divine perichoresis at the fourth word does not appear to go beyond what is written in Scripture, furthermore, it allows Scripture that is clear to interpret what is unclear.

The doctrine of divine perichoresis is grounded upon the intra-Trinitarian relations. The Father is unbegotten, the Son is eternally begotten or generated by the Father, and the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son. I have argued that the cessation of perichoresis at the fourth word entails the cessation of the eternal generation of the Son by the Father and therefore the cessation of the existence of the Son. This argument can be repeated with reference to the procession of the Holy Spirit. Throughout the crucifixion of Christ and particularly at the moment of the utterance of the fourth word, the Son continues to be eternally generated by the Father, and the Father and the Son continue to spirate the Holy Spirit. I submit that the permanent continuation of these intra-Trinitarian relations at the cross is encapsulated in Hebrews 9:14.

Any argument that claims that the Son was forsaken by the Father without reference to the incarnation and in such a way that separates the Father and the Son will necessarily lead to the logical conclusion that the divine works *ad extra* are divided and therefore that the divine works *ad intra* are also divided, moreover, that the perichoretic divine unity is broken and that the eternal generation of the Son and the eternal spiration of the Holy Spirit is ended.

Redoublement in Theological Language: Further Aspects of the Proposed Solution to the Problem of the Modal Distinctions and the Communication of Idioms

The problem I have raised regarding the modal distinction and the *communicatio idiomatum* may perhaps prove to be located theologically at the limit of the believer's capacity to understand, and the point beyond which attempts at precision must give way to worshipful acknowledgement of the mystery of the Triune Godhead. This acknowledgement is not akin to admitting the presence of logical contradiction. Therefore, Trinitarian grammar must be employed in such a way that recognises the mystery and yet still continues to be scripturally and theologically faithful, and logically rigorous.

Aquinas'[71] use of language about God's nature and the Triune persons follows in the theological tradition of Augustine,[72] the Cappadocians, and John of Damascus. [73] Ghislain Lafont has called the dual method in theological speech and writing, '*redoublement,*' that is, repetition or reduplication.[74] Emery more fully discusses Lafont's notion of '*redoublement*' in Aquinas' work on the Trinity.[75] Aquinas use of '*redoublement*' in describing the Godhead follows Augustine's use of language concerning God's substance and language concerning relations in God. Augustine states, 'To be the Father and to be the Son is different, yet their substance is not different; because they are so called, not according to substance, but according to relation, which relation, however, is not accident, because it is not changeable.'[76] Augustine denies that there are accidents in God, but demonstrates from

[71] Katherine Sonderegger writes that Aquinas' *de deo uno* and *de deo trino* demonstrate his use of *redoublement.* Katherine Sonderegger, *Systematic Theology, Volume 2: The Doctrine of the Holy Trinity: Processions and Missions* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2020), 219.

[72] Augustine, *De Trin*, 5. 1, 8.

[73] Cyril of Alexandria also employs a similar method in his Christology. Cyril, *Scholia*, in McGuckin, *Controversy*. Section 33 is entitled: 'On the Passion of Christ, and how it is useful to speak in two manners about one and the same person, but not to divide him into two.'

[74] Ghislain Lafont, *Peut-on Connaitre Dieu en Jesus-Christ?* (Paris: Cerf, 1969), 130.

[75] Gilles Emery, 'Essentialism or Personalism in the Treatise on God in Saint Thomas Aquinas?' *The Thomist, Vol.* 64, no. 4 (October 2000): 521-563. Emery finds evidence for the inchoate use of '*redoublement*' in Basil of Caesarea's defence against the Arianism of Eunomius. 533.

[76] Augustine, *De Trin*, 5. 6.

Scripture that some things are said of God that are not according to substance, and must therefore be said of the three divine persons according to relation.[77]

Aquinas use of '*redoublement*' is most apparent in questions two to forty-three, in the first two sections of the treatise on God. Aquinas argues that God can be understood in two aspects, that is, what is common to the persons (relation in), and what is proper to the persons (relation to). The two concepts signify two aspects of the same relation, the former (what is common to the persons) signifies relation in, while the latter (what is proper to or distinct in the persons), signifies relation to. These two aspects of theological consideration of the one undivided God are not reducible to either one. Human epistemology and logic tend to work by abstraction, this works well in creaturely knowledge of composite things,[78] but its failures become apparent in human knowledge of the simple God who exists in three persons, or subsistent relations.

Ayres emphasises that Lafont is not simply suggesting that theologians need to have language available for both levels of discussion of the Trinity.

> We need to understand how speaking about the divine three as "persons" involves showing that those "persons" each possess the divine essence in a particular mode, and how speaking about the divine essence involves showing that essence to exist through and as subsisting relations.[79]

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[77] Augustine writes that the names Father and Son signify relations; the Father is the Father of the Son, and the Son is the Son of the Father. The name Holy Spirit does not signify relation. The distinction in the procession of the Son and the double spiration of the Holy Spirit indicates that the Holy Spirit is not the Son of the Father nor the Father of the Son, but as Augustine argues, that the Holy Spirit is the gift given by the Father and the Son. Augustine, *De Trin*, 5. 12. Levering summarises Augustine's argument that the Holy Spirit is rightly called gift, and that this name signifies relation in that the Holy Spirit as gift is giveable prior to creation in which he is given. Levering, *Engaging*, 65-67.

[78] The epistemology in which the human knower proceeds by abstraction and classification of objects under similar concepts is broadly Kantian in its theoretical origin. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A84/BB116-A92/B124. Kant developed Aristotle's system of categories from the *Organon*. Aristotle, *Organon*, trans. Harold P. Cooke (London: William Heinemann, 1938). Many contemporary empiricists may disagree with this Kantian epistemology, however, this does not deleteriously affect the arguments I outline for the need for '*redoublement*' in theological method. Irrespective of epistemological commitments, it must be acknowledged by empiricists and transcendental idealists alike that the finite human mind cannot fully comprehend the creator.

[79] Ayres, *Augustine*, 260.

Ayres also notes that although there are many forms of reduplication, for Lafont and his recent adapters, Aquinas' *Treatise on the Most Holy Trinity* is the high point of the method in Trinitarian theology. In recent discussion of reduplication, Dolezal, [80] Emery,[81] and Matthew Levering[82] argue that because we as creatures are unable to say or think both according to substance and according to relationship simultaneously, one must proceed in theology by speaking of both alternately. It is vital to note that reduplication in theological language does not imply a dual ontology in God at two levels of person and substance. Instead it merely implies that there are severe limitations in human epistemology and human language labours 'under great poverty of speech.'[83]

The method of '*redoublement*' enables the theologian to speak of God in a way that does not unduly emphasise one aspect of the discussion. [84] For example, overemphasis on the doctrine of divine simplicity may lead to Unitarianism, whereas overemphasis on the distinct divine persons may lead to social Trinitarianism or even tritheism. '*Redoublement*' as a means of avoiding overemphasis on either the distinct persons or the one undivided essence also occurs in the logic of relative identity in Trinitarian theology. In the context of Trinitarian Christology and the logic of the incarnation, James Cain concludes that 'we will need an alternative account of the application of predicates to Christ as a human and as a divine person or as God.'[85] Cain refers to Aquinas in his paper, but not in the context of the

[80] Dolezal, *God*, 123. Dolezal affirms, 'We are forced to speak of God's essence under the rubric of substance terminology and relation terminology, which Augustine calls "substance-wise" and "relationship-wise."'

[81] Emery, *Trinity*, 133.

[82] Levering, *Metaphysics,* 214-216.

[83] Augustine, *De Trin*, 5. 10.

[84] The point is well illustrated by Robert Letham, who, with characteristic style compares the task of Trinitarian theology with climbing a dangerous path on Helvellyn, a mountain in the English Lake District. Letham, *Trinity*, 2.

[85] James Cain, 'The Doctrine of the Trinity and the Logic of Relative Identity,' *Religious Studies* 25 (1989): 152.

above assertion. The need for simultaneous logical[86] accounts of Christ's person and human and divine natures demonstrates the broad application of '*redoublement*' even where it is not deliberately discussed in the context of the tradition from Augustine and Aquinas.

[86] Cain summarises the logical problem in his paper. 'The problem of substitution becomes more complicated when we bring in the Trinity. A theory of relative identity must somehow allow us to pass from "Cicero denounced Catiline" and "Cicero is the same man as Tully" to "Tully denounced Catiline," but it must not – if the doctrine of the Trinity holds – allow a similar passage from "Jesus was crucified" and "Jesus is the same God as the Father" to "The Father was crucified." Our account of substitution should explain this apparent asymmetry.' Cain, 'Identity,' 145.

III. Responding to Further Objections

7. Does the Central Thesis that Persons Experience in Natures Entail Nestorianism?

In the final portion of this work I respond to more objections to my central argument. The first objection concerns Nestorianism. In the central thesis argument articulated in Part II, I drew a distinction between the person of the Son experiencing in the divine nature and in the human nature. I have also distinguished between God the Son and God the Son incarnate. It may be objected that the distinction between the experiences of the person of the Son in the two natures is open to the charge of Nestorianism.

Much of what is considered to be Nestorianism is due to the theological insights of Cyril of Alexandria about the implications of Nestorius' teaching. Cyril focused the issue on the single or double subjectivity of the Lord Jesus Christ. Writing three centuries later John of Damascus explains the Nestorian position.

> The Nestorians hold that God the Word exists by himself and separately, and that his humanity exists by itself. And the more humble of the Lord's actions during his sojourn among us they attribute to his humanity alone, whereas the more noble and those befitting the divinity they ascribe to God the Word alone. But they do not attribute the both to the person.[1]

This explanation focuses, as did Nestorius, on the Nestorian concern to separate the divine and human natures of Christ, it does not assume the double subjectivity of Christ drawn out as a logical consequence of this view by Cyril at the Council of Ephesus in 431.[2]

[1] John of Damascus, *On Heresies,* 81. In *Writings.*

[2] Nestorius' Christology must be reconstructed from primary sources including the Acts of the Council of Ephesus (431), Nestorius' correspondence with Cyril of Alexandria, and Nestorius' memoir, *The Book of Heraclides,* composed during his final exile to the island prison at the Great Oasis in Egypt. John A. McGuckin rightly affirms that as *The Book of Heraclides* was written some fifteen years after the events it describes, *The Book of Heraclides* is a product of hindsight, and therefore represents Nestorius' clarified understanding of the

Along with John of Antioch and Andrew of Samosata, Nestorius opposed Cyril's teaching about the title Theotokos.[3] It was for this doctrinal aberration that Nestorius was deposed and anathematized at the Council of Ephesus in 431.[4] In *On the Unity of Christ*, Cyril of Alexandria asserts the heterodoxy of Nestorius views.

> Not only does he not welcome the tradition of all the initiates throughout the world (or rather that of all the God-inspired Scriptures), but he even innovates as seems fit to him, and denies that the holy virgin is the Mother of God, and calls her Christ-Mother instead, or Mother-of-the-Man, not to mention the other shocking and absurd ideas he introduces to the orthodox and pure teachings of the catholic Church.[5]

McGuckin draws attention to Nestorius' rigid use of language with reference to the divine and human natures of Christ. 'Although it was not his explicit intention to say so, Nestorius' peculiarly rigid scheme of permissible language about Christology was popularly heard to be no less than a denial of the deity of Christ.'[6] Nestorius' linguistic Christological rigidity is in contradistinction to Cyril's Christological phraseology and is grounded in the double subject implications of Nestorius' Christology. Cyril discusses the *communicatio idiomatum* and the Chalcedonian adverbs with reference to Nestorius' double subject Christology and insists that divine and human attributes are predicated of the one subject, God the Son.[7] In his *Scholia on the Incarnation of the Only Begotten*, Cyril specifies that 'We refuse to divide Emmanuel into man by himself and into the Word by himself.'[8]

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events of 431 and the surrounding years. McGuckin, *Controversy*, 127; cf. 126-130 for a full list of sources for reconstructing Nestorius' Christology.

[3] McGuckin, *Controversy*, 20-28. McGuckin offers an extensive and detailed contextual history of the Council of Ephesus (431) and the Nestorian controversy.

[4] *The Synodical Deposition of Nestorius* concludes with the following statement. 'Know that because of your wicked preaching and your disobedience of the canons, on this 22nd day of the present month of June in accordance with the ecclesiastical prescripts you have been deposed by the holy synod and excluded from all ecclesiastical dignity.' In McGuckin, *Controversy*, 378.

[5] Cyril, *Unity*, 52. Cyril's interlocutor confirms that the referent is Nestorius.

[6] McGuckin, *Controversy*, 65.

[7] Cyril, *Unity*, 68.

[8] Cyril, *Scholia*, in McGuckin, *Controversy*, 332.

The particular charge of Nestorianism raised against the central thesis focuses on Cyril of Alexandria's understanding of the implications of Nestorius' thought, and thereby the modern conception of Nestorianism as advocating a two subject Christology.[9] This form of Nestorianism seeks to separate the hypostatic union in a manner contrary to the Chalcedonian adverbs.

Defending Against Nestorianism: The *Communicatio Idiomatum* and the Forsakenness of Christ

I have drawn a distinction between God the Son in his divine nature and God the Son incarnate. I have argued that it is orthodox and correct to state that the latter is forsaken at the cross, but that this is not the case with the former because the experience of forsakenness is confined to the human nature, though it is experienced by the divine person. It may be objected that the distinction I draw entails the Nestorianism opposed by Cyril that I have outlined above. In responding to this objection, it is helpful to mention a further complication concerning the *communicatio idiomatum* which demonstrates the need to safeguard against Nestorianism in the employment of the doctrine.

It is widely attested in the literature that I have reviewed, that the divine nature of Christ is not forsaken by the Father at the cross. If the divine nature were forsaken, the hypostatic union would be broken which directly contradicts the Scriptures and Patristic testimony encoded in the four Chalcedonian adverbs. The forsaken humanity of Christ remains unchangeably united to the un-forsaken divinity of Christ.[10] A number of the authors I have examined have emphasised the continuation of the hypostatic union even at the cross.

[9] Turretin summarises Nestorian Christology with reference to Mary. Turretin, *Elenctic, Volume 2*, Thirteenth Topic, Question seven, III.

[10] ἀτρεπρως. Tanner, *Decrees, Vol. 1, Council of Chalcedon – 451*, 88-89.

According to the *communicatio idiomatum* one cannot say that God the Son was forsaken according to the divine nature. Therefore, God the Son according to the human nature is forsaken by God the Father, but God the Son according to the divine nature is not forsaken by God the Father. Stated in the simpler context of the death of Christ, it is correct to say that the humanity of Christ died on the cross, but it is incorrect to say that the divinity of Christ died on the cross. This statement is potentially subject to the charge of Nestorianism, in the same way that in my thesis one can say that the Son incarnate is forsaken by the Father, but one cannot say that the Son qua his divine nature is forsaken by the Father, is potentially subject to the charge of Nestorianism. Therefore, if the former thesis can be cleared of the charge of Nestorianism, so too can the latter. I preface the discussion with the statement that it must be confessed that the humanity of Christ is the Word's own flesh. The mystery attendant on such articulations, based on the Scriptures, is vital for a balanced scriptural orthodoxy. The nature of the supposed Nestorianism in both theses is argued to be present because of the use of the doctrine of the *communicatio idiomatum*. I have demonstrated that the understanding of the *communicatio idiomatum* that I have employed is deliberately in line with Patristic and Reformed theology; it is therefore a concern of great significance.[11]

Before attempting to refute the charge of Nestorianism against my thesis, two points must be noted. First, Nestorius expressly rejected the *communicatio idiomatum* doctrine[12] so central to Cyril's refutation of the heresy of the Patriarch of Constantinople.[13] Therefore the characteristics of the alleged Nestorianism must be carefully understood. Secondly, the argument that Chalcedon has intrinsically Nestorian tendencies is raised in contemporary

[11] The Lutheran development of the communication of attributes, in which predicates are applied across the natures, appears to resolve this problem, in that it leads to the conclusion that because the human nature of Christ was forsaken, therefore so too was the divine nature of Christ. This development is central to Moltmann's thesis in *The Crucified God*. I have argued against this position from Scripture, a number of the Church Fathers and Reformers; particularly Calvin and later Turretin. I have also argued that the Lutheran view leads to logical contradictions, as does the view espoused by Moltmann.

[12] Cyril, *Unity*, 20.

[13] Nestorius sat on the ecclesiastical throne of Constantinople from 428-431.

theology. This means that the defence of the *communicatio idiomatum* against the charge of Nestorianism lies within the broader concern of defending Chalcedonian Christology against the same charge.[14]

The two most significant aspects of my response to the objection that my thesis tends towards Nestorianism relate to Cyril's opposition to Nestorius, and his use of the *communicatio idiomatum*. In his third letter to Nestorius, Cyril makes the following affirmation.

> We understand that there is One Christ Jesus, the Only Begotten Son, honoured together with his flesh in a single worship, and we confess that the same Son and Only Begotten God, born from God the Father, suffered in the flesh for our sake, in accordance with the scripture even though he is impassible in his own nature. In the crucified body he impassibly appropriated the suffering of his own flesh.[15]

Cyril explicitly states the suffering of the Only Begotten Son in his flesh but his impassibility according to his own nature. Cyril's statement is in response to Nestorius' response to his second letter. Nestorius had opposed Cyril's use of the concept of appropriation in connection with the *communicatio idiomatum*. 'For those who allow themselves to be carried away by this notion of "appropriation" must of necessity admit that because of this appropriation God the Word was involved in sucking at the breast, and in a gradual growth, and in trepidation at the time of the passion.'[16] Underlying Nestorius' argument is his rejection of Cyril's use of the *communicatio idiomatum* whereby the experience of the assumed humanity of Christ is the experience of God the Word. McGuckin comments that Cyril's use of the *communicatio idiomatum* involves mysterious language, and that the apparent contradiction of the Cyrilline affirmation that 'God suffered' is resolved when the inherent content of the phrase is

[14] The Christology of the fourth Ecumenical Council and its links with Nestorianism are beyond the scope of this study. For a brief outline of the central importance of the theology of Cyril of Alexandria for the Chalcedonian Creed see McGuckin, *Controversy*, 227-243.

[15] Cyril, *The Third Letter of Cyril to Nestorius*, in McGuckin, *Controversy*, 270.

[16] *Nestorius' Reply to Cyril's Second Letter*, in McGuckin, *Controversy*, 367.

analysed. 'Because the word "God" is being used in a different way to normal. In fact in all incarnational language Cyril says that it is being used as a synonym for "God-in-the-flesh," and this crucial qualification is given in the very paradox itself.' McGuckin states that the inherent meaning of the terms necessitates the understanding that God in his nature is impassible, but that God incarnate involves the suffering and sorrow of the human condition.[17] I submit that if my assertion that the Son was forsaken according to his assumed humanity but not according to his own divine nature, is subject to the charge of Nestorianism, then so too is the assertion of Cyril of Alexandria quoted above from his correspondence with Nestorius. Such an assertion is clearly unfounded, and therefore my central thesis is not Nestorian.[18]

[17] McGuckin, *Controversy*, 191.

[18] As discussed above, Siddals analyses Cyril as distinguishing 'between what can be predicated of the Word with reference to what the Word is by nature and substance, and what can be predicated of him as regards what he has become.' Siddals, 'Logic,' 360. It cannot be the case that the Son both is and is not forsaken by the Father in the same way and at the same time. Such a conclusion would necessitate Nestorianism and would lead to logical contradiction. The forsaking is of the Son in his personal assumption of humanity, that is, 'καθό γέγονεν ἄνθρωπος.' Similarly, the Son was not forsaken by the Father in the fourth word by virtue of the communication of idioms and according to his own divine nature. This un-forsakenness is of the Son because of his divine nature which is his by nature and substance, that is, 'κατ' ούσίαν.'

8. Doctrine of Penal Substitution: Definition, Development, Opposition, and the Question of Centralisation

In the second objection I ask if the fourth word and the doctrine of penal substitution indicate forsakenness, or being subject to divine wrath, in the divine nature itself? My definition of ἐγκατέλιπές in Mark 15:34 as Christ being left undefended initially appears to lessen the impact of the implications of the *communicatio idiomatum* for the fourth word. When it is appreciated that part of Christ's forsakenness was being undefended by God against the wrath of God at sin, the problematic implications of the *communicatio idiomatum* reappear. This is because Christ being undefended by God against human insults and physical pain does not necessarily and directly imply, through the *communicatio idiomatum*, any Trinitarian lack of intimacy; whereas the implication may be present in Christ being undefended against the wrath of God at sin. The implications lead to the need for further discussion of penal substitutionary atonement in Reformed theology.

Within the Reformed tradition, in *Pierced for our Transgressions* the authors define penal substitution as the doctrine that 'God gave himself in the person of his Son to suffer instead of us the death, punishment and curse due to fallen humanity as the penalty for sin.'[1] The qualification needs to be added, in line with my thesis, that God gave himself in the person of his Son incarnate.[2]

In what follows I outline the key aspects of the historical development of the doctrine of penal substitutionary atonement and note some of the criticisms of the doctrine. I then turn to explore the relationship of the doctrine to the fourth word from the cross; and in particular my definition of ἐγκατέλιπές.

[1] Jeffery, *Pierced*, 21.
[2] Cf. 2 Corinthians 5:18-21.

Historical Development of the Doctrine of the Atonement before the Reformation

In the Patristic era Trinitarian theology and Christology were heavily challenged by many heresies which caused the church strongly to defend these doctrines and set out the church's accepted definitions in creeds and the acts and judgements of the early councils. This process did not occur with the doctrine of redemption during the Patristic era. There is therefore no universally acceptable statement on what Christ achieved on the cross beyond the basic statements of the Nicene Creed developed at Constantinople in 381.[3] Because the Patristic authors did not co-ordinate their main theories on the doctrine of redemption,[4] the later divisions in the church removed the possibility of a detailed and universally accepted doctrine of redemption parallel to the early church's creedal statements on the Trinity and Christology.

Although universal agreement on the doctrine of redemption is missing, there are basic lines of agreement running throughout the Patristic writings. Irenaeus (c. 130-202) developed the doctrine that Christ, as the second Adam, represents those for whom he died in the way that Adam represented humanity descended from him. Kelly argues that elements of this theory of recapitulation run through almost all the Church Fathers who discuss

[3] J. N. D. Kelly notes that the situation continues to the present. Kelly, *Early*, 163. Eleonore Stump acknowledges that the problem is also present for the philosopher of religion. She suggests the strangeness of this situation in light of the central importance of the doctrine of the atonement. Eleonore Stump, 'Atonement According to Aquinas,' in *Philosophy and the Christian Faith*, ed. Thomas V. Morris (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988), 267. Richard Cross observes that the doctrine of redemption only began to be more fully discussed in the twelfth century with the appearance of Anselm's *Cur Deus Homo* (c. 1097). Kelly, *Early*, 375. See also, Richard Cross, 'Atonement without Satisfaction' *Religious Studies* 37, no. 4 (December 2001): 397-416. Cross argues that because of Christ's meritorious life, his death merits God's forgiveness of the sins for which humans have made satisfaction by repentance and apology. Cross' arguments are based in part on insights from Richard Swinburne and criticisms of his satisfaction theory of atonement. Richard Swinburne, *Responsibility and Atonement* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989). Cross' paper draws attention to the broad variety of theories of the atonement, many of which are mutually exclusive. This is most obviously the case in Cross' paper which claims that the satisfaction theory of the atonement is 'otiose.' Cf. Cross, 'Satisfaction,' 397.

[4] Donald Fairbairn argues for a consensus in the fifth century on aspects of salvation, despite wide ranging controversy at the time. Fairbairn's analysis focuses on the nature of grace rather than penal substitutionary atonement. Donald Fairbairn, *Grace and Christology in the Early Church* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

redemption at length.[5] Further details are often set within the broader framework of recapitulation. The doctrine of penal substitution is only possible if Christ is able to act on behalf of those he represents.[6] A number of the Church Fathers spoke of the death of Christ in terms of sacrifice, substitution, and vicarious action.[7] Particularly Justin Martyr (c. 100-165) in his *Dialogue with Trypho*;[8] Irenaeus (c. 130-202) in his *Adversus Haereses*;[9] and Clement of Alexandria (Titus Flavius Clemens, 150-215). Much of the discussion of Christ as the substitute who propitiates God is with reference to Isaiah's prophecy[10] about the suffering servant.[11]

The Centralisation of the Doctrine of Penal Substitutionary Atonement in the Reformed Tradition

The doctrine of penal substitutionary atonement is most closely associated with the Reformed tradition and is often opposed by theologians outside that tradition on biblical, historical, and theological grounds. Opposition to the doctrine of penal substitution is frequently an

[5] Kelly, *Early*, 376-377.

[6] Kelly discusses the links between physical, sacrificial, and devil's rights theories of the atonement to the theory of recapitulation, which he argues unites the Patristic understanding of the saving work of Christ. Kelly, *Early*, 377.

[7] Scripture also uses the language of redemption in terms of purchase. Cf. Acts 20:28.

[8] Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho, a Jew*, in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1969).

[9] Irenaeus, Adversus Haereses, in Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1969). Justin Martyr (Kelly, 170) Dialogue with Trypho 95, 2 f. Irenaeus (Kelly, 174) Adversus Haereses (3, 16, 9: 5, 17, I; 4, 5, 4.) – cf. Isaiah 53:5. Clement of Alexandria (Kelly, Early, 164) (Titus Flavius Clements, 21, 6; 49, 6.

[10] Isaiah's fourth servant song runs from Isaiah 52:13 to 53:12. These verses prophetically describe the suffering servant which is Christ. Isaiah 53:4-6; 8; 10-12 refer to the servant as suffering in the place of others and bearing God's punishment of sin.

[11] Steve Jeffery, Mike Ovey, and Andrew Sach, in their work, *Pierced for our Transgressions: Rediscovering the Glory of Penal Substitution*, also find evidence for Patristic teaching on penal substitution in Eusebius of Caesarea (c. 275-339), Hilary of Poitiers (c. 300-368), Athanasius (c. 300-373), Gregory Nazianzus (c. 330-390), Ambrose of Milan (339-397), John Chrysostom (c. 350-407), Augustine of Hippo (354-430), Cyril of Alexandria (375-444), Gelasius of Cyzicus (fifth century), and Gregory the Great (c. 540-604). The evidence for a doctrine of penal substitution that they find in later Reformed theologians is admittedly much stronger. Jeffery, *Pierced*, 164-183.

opposition to the centralisation of the doctrine rather than to the doctrine itself.[12] For example, Aquinas freely speaks of Christ's death in the language of redemption, satisfaction, and substitution;[13] but his understanding of redemption is not dominated by these concepts.[14] Aquinas gives three reasons why it was fitting that God the Son assumed a human nature subject to human infirmities and defects.[15] The first reason is as follows.

> It was in order to satisfy for the sin of the human race that the Son of God, having taken flesh, came into the world. Now one satisfies for another's sin by taking on himself the punishment due to the sin of the other.[16]

Aquinas' comments make it clear that he considers penal substitution to be an appropriate description of the atonement. Other models such as meritorious sacrifice, corporate representation, charity, and the opening of heaven's gate, are incorporated into Aquinas' understanding of redemption.[17] The many models used by Aquinas and other Scholastic and Patristic theologians to describe the atonement make it clear that penal substitution is not considered to be the central model of the atonement.

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[12] Cf. Cross, 'Atonement without Satisfaction.' It is clear that Cross opposes the doctrine of penal substitution itself, not just the doctrine's central importance in Reformed thought.

[13] *ST* III, q. 48; q. 49, a. 4; q. 50, a. 1, 6. In q. 50, a. 1, Aquinas cites 1 Peter 3:18 which explicitly describes Christ's suffering and death as a substitution to bear the penalty for sin.

[14] An impassibilist theodicy can also be drawn from the fourth word. In discussing Cyril I noted John Owen's biblical argument that when the words 'My God' are used in Scripture a covenant is often connoted. If Christ is acting in a representative capacity, it follows that the fourth word provides an exemplar of faith in the face of suffering. Therefore, the fourth word provides a biblical articulation of faith when the believer is confronted by circumstances that cannot be understood. The fourth word therefore provides something of a theodicy. I am grateful to Mark Thomas for drawing my attention to this approach to the fourth word.

[15] Corey L. Barnes writes, 'Thomas grounds the fittingness of the Word's assumption of human nature in humanity's ability to approach God through intellect and will and in human nature's need for salvation. Corey L. Barnes, *Christ's Two Wills in Scholastic Though: The Christology of Aquinas and its Historical Contexts* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Meiaeval Studies, 2012), 204.

[16] *ST* III, q. 14, a. 1.

[17] *ST* III, q. 49, a. 5; q. 50, a. 6. Aquinas' understanding of the cross of Christ is frequently expressed in corporate language; in this way Aquinas is similar to Augustine. The theory of recapitulation: in which Christ represents those for whom he dies, demonstrates this corporate understanding of Christ's death clearly. The corporate aspect of the death of Christ enables Catholic theologians to understand the Trinitarian dimensions of Christ's death in a way that emphasises the words from the cross found in Luke and John, and underlines the importance of the beatific vision in Christ's soul even in the fourth word. White, *Incarnate*, 308-339.The chapter is called 'Did God Abandon Jesus?' In the present study, my emphasis on Christ as an individual being left undefended by God is not opposed to the corporate understanding which is vital to the doctrine of penal substitution and the doctrine of union with Christ.

In contrast to the citations from Aquinas above, Eleonore Stump suggests that Aquinas has no equivalent of what she calls 'Luther's idea' that Christ bears human sins in his suffering on the cross. Stump argues that the absence of this notion of atonement in Aquinas' theology is a serious flaw, and that such a notion is not incompatible with the language and structure of Aquinas' theology of the atonement.[18] Stump bases her argument on a number of citations from the *Summa Theologiae,* but Romanus Cessario draws attention to Aquinas' commentary on Romans in which his doctrine of satisfaction comes closer to a Reformed understanding of the death of Christ.

> It is as if someone, having committed some fault, became indebted to the king and was obliged to pay a fine. One who paid the fine for him would have been said to have redeemed him. Such a debt was owed by the whole human race because of the sin of the first parents. So it was that no other one apart from Christ was able to satisfy for the sin of the whole human race.[19]

The implications of Aquinas' comments on Romans 3:22-26 align closely with the Reformed view of Christ's death when Aquinas' debt illustration is understood in terms of the suffering of Christ. According to Aquinas' comment, Christ bears both the guilt and the penalty of the debt as a substitute for sinners. Cessario writes, 'The term "*propitiatio*" of Thomas' Latin Vulgate Bible provides the definitive clue for interpreting this and other texts concerning satisfaction: "Christ satisfies for us" means that he makes amends for or propitiates for our

[18] Eleonore Stump, Atonement According to Aquinas in Thomas V. Morris ed., *Philosophy and the Christian Faith* (University of Notre Dame Press, 1988), 291-292. Stump's acknowledgement of the compatibility of Aquinas and the Reformed view of the atonement demonstrates my contention that the centrality of the penal substitutionary theory of the atonement is centralised in Reformed theology, but is not necessarily opposed by other traditions. Stump opposes Aquinas' doctrine to a caricature of an evangelical position. The caricature is a straw man, but it is unfortunately an accurate articulation of the simplistic gospel believed by many evangelical Christians. Stump's caricature does not take into account the doctrine of the believer's union with Christ. This doctrine successfully counters Stump's argument that the suffering of the innocent Christ as a substitute for sinful humans is unjust. Stump rightly points to the inconsistency of the broad evangelical belief that Christ's death was as a substitute for all of humanity, but she does not mention the Reformed doctrine of limited atonement clearly taught by Calvin and developed in the later Reformed tradition. For a contemporary defence of the doctrine see David Gibson and Jonathan Gibson ed., *From Heaven He came and Sought Her: Definite Atonement in Historical, Biblical, Theological, and Pastoral Perspective* (Illinois: Crossway, 2013).

[19] *Super ad Romanos,* c. 3, 1. 3. In his comments on Romans 5 Aquinas begins to emphasise the love of God displayed in the cross of Christ. This is closer to Aquinas' doctrine in the *Summa Theologiae.*

sins.'[20] Cessario's remarks on the redemption brought about by Christ's death are more nuanced than those of Thomas Joseph White, who concludes that Christ's fourth word is a 'cry of both desire and agony, and that this cry is compatible with the simultaneous presence in Christ's soul of both extraordinary knowledge and intense suffering.'[21]

When Aquinas' doctrine in the *Summa Theologiae* is also taken into account, the particular manner in which Christ pays the debt in the illustration is explained differently in the Reformed tradition. The Romans comment provides further evidence that the concept of penal substitution is not entirely alien to Aquinas.

Discussing Christ's priesthood in Question 22 of the *Tertia Pars,* Aquinas cites Romans 3:24-25 and comments, 'He satisfied for us fully, inasmuch as "He hath borne our infirmities and carried our sorrows" (Is 53:4). Wherefore it is clear that the priesthood of Christ has full power to expiate sins.'[22] In light of Aquinas' assertions in the *Summa Theologiae* and the Romans commentary I suggest that Stump does not accurately represent Aquinas' view of what she calls 'Luther's idea.' Although the significance of penal substitutionary atonement is not central as a model of the atonement in Aquinas' theology, it is by no means absent.

I argue that my discussion of penal substitutionary atonement is in line with historic orthodoxy, although my centralisation of the doctrine is less common, as are a number of the explicitly Reformed emphases. The centralisation of the doctrine is not, however, the cause of the theological problem about the fourth word. The problem arises with any concept of penal

[20] Romanus Cessario, *The Godly Image: Christ and Salvation in Catholic Though from Anselm to Aquinas* (Petersham, MA: St. Bede's Publications, 1990), 34-35. Cessario also states, 'Thomas comments that on the altar of the cross Christ satisfied for the punishment ("*reactus poenae*") incumbent upon the human race due to sin.' Cessario frequently translates the Latin term *propitiatio* as expiation. This trend is also seen in broad evangelical theology at least partly following the influence of C. H. Dodd's writings.

[21] White, *Incarnate,* 338.

[22] *ST* III, q. 22, a. 3. *Unde patet quod Christi sacerdotium habet vim plenam expiandi peccata*.

substitution whether it is central to the matrix of the understanding of redemption or simply one of many models of redemption. The problem raised by my definition of forsaken and the doctrine of penal substitutionary atonement obtains in any understanding of redemption in which God's wrath at sin is poured out on Christ at the cross.[23]

The Meaning of ἐγκατέλιπές, Penal Substitution, and the Theological Context of the Fourth Word

At the fourth word, Christ is left undefended by God against the mocking, the physical pain, and the spiritual pain resulting from Christ bearing the wrath of God at the sin of those for whom he is the substitute. This statement combines my definition of ἐγκατέλιπές in the fourth word with the Reformed doctrine of penal substitutionary atonement. It is at this point that the doctrines of the *communicatio idiomatum* and the modal distinction between person and nature may be raised again.

In the above discussion I have simply referred to the object of the verb ἐγκατέλιπές as Christ and the subject as God, however, the doctrine of the communication of idioms states that therefore God the Son incarnate was left undefended by God the Father at the fourth word. Furthermore, the Reformed understanding of the distinction between person and nature

[23] Opposition to the Reformed doctrine of penal substitutionary atonement is found within contemporary evangelicalism. See Steve Chalke and Alan Mann, *The Lost Message of Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), 182. The opposition in this work echoes many of the criticisms first levelled by Gustaf Aulen in 1931. Gustaf Aulen, *Christus Victor: An Historical Study of the Three Main Types of the Idea of the Atonement*, trans. A. G. Hebert (London: SPCK, 1965). A further precedent for the current rejection of penal substitution is found in C. H.Dodd, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1932). Dodd argues that the wrath of God is not God's divine response to evil, but 'some process or effect in the realm of objective facts. Dodd, *Romans*, 20-23. This reading of Romans 1-3 is not sustainable in the light of systematic exegesis of the text. See particularly Romans 1:26; 2:5-12. 3:21-26 clearly demonstrate the centrality of the doctrine of penal substitution and propitiation for the redemption accomplished by Christ's work on the cross. I suggest that Scripture is replete with testimony to the penal substitutionary death of Christ on the cross. For a fuller contemporary defence of penal substitutionary atonement from a conservative evangelical perspective see Jeffery, *Pierced.*

inherited from the Scholastic tradition through Aquinas,[24] and found perhaps most clearly in Turretin,[25] raises difficulties when considering my definition of ἐγκατέλιπές. The combination of these doctrines with my definition of forsaken, seems to entail that God the Son incarnate[26] was left undefended against the wrath of God the Father. The person of the Father and the person of the Son are really distinct hypostatic relations in the Trinity, and yet the persons are only modally distinct from the divine essence. Does this suggest that in some sense the divine essence bore the wrath of God? A number of recent and contemporary theologians would answer positively. Most notably and influentially Moltmann, who argues persistently that at the cross we see 'God against God.'[27] Biblically and in light of historic classical Christian theism, this positive answer cannot be given to the question, did the divine essence bare the wrath of God at the cross?

Theological Language, the Fourth Word, and Divine Impassibility

In order to defend the orthodox doctrine of the divine essence in this context, I will draw a parallel between ἐγκατέλιπές in the fourth word, and the more general notion of the suffering of Christ in the passion and crucifixion. The parallel I draw will be resourced by Cyril of Alexandria's understanding of the *communicatio idiomatum* and his statements concerning the suffering of Christ. Cyril's fourth anathema serves as an introduction to the parallel I intend to draw.

> If anyone interprets the sayings in the Gospels and apostolic writings, or the things said about Christ by the saints, or the things he says about himself, to two prosopa or

[24] *ST* I, q. 39, a. 1. *Respondeo dicendum quod considerantibus divinam simplicitatem, quaestio ista in manifesto habet veritatem.*

[25] Turretin, *Elenctic, Vol. 1*, Third Topic, Twenty-Seventh Question, IV.

[26] I include the word incarnate because it is only in the incarnation that it is possible for Christ to bear the wrath of the Father at sin. Without the incarnation of the Son penal substitution is impossible. Cf. Hebrews 2:9-18.

[27] Moltmann, *Crucified*, 154; 197.

> hypostases, attributing some of them to a man conceived of as separate from the Word of God, and attributing others (as divine) exclusively to the Word of God the Father, let him be anathema.[28]

Cyril's anathemas emphasise the union of the Word of God the Father with the assumed human nature. Cyril's emphasis is taken into historic orthodox Christological articulation of the hypostatic union at the Councils of Ephesius (431) and Chalcedon (451). In the *Scholia on the Incarnation* Cyril asks, 'Since we believe that our Lord Jesus Christ is one, that is God the word seen in human form, or made man like us, then how can we both attribute suffering to him and yet still hold him impassible as God?'[29] Cyril answers his question in response to his interlocutor in *On the Unity of Christ*. 'To say that he suffered does no disgrace to him, for he did not suffer in the nature of the godhead, but in his own flesh.'[30] As the argument develops, Cyril adds, in writing about the 'Spirit-bearer' author of 1 Peter 3:18, 'He knew he was speaking about God, and so he attributed impassibility to him insofar as he is understood as God, adding on, most skilfully, "in the flesh," which is, of course, where the suffering occurs.'[31] It is clear that Cyril's response to his question about the attribution of suffering and impassibility of the one Son, concerns the *communicatio idiomatum*. He adds the closing vital remark from 1 Peter 2:24 and 3:18 that human suffering is located in the flesh, that is, in the human nature, not in the divine nature of Christ. Cyril uses language in accordance with the *communicatio idiomatum* in a way that seeks to reflect the strength of the language of Scripture. In the *Scholia on the Incarnation* Cyril emphasises the physical suffering of Christ who is God the Son incarnate. He further emphasises the unity of the hypostatic union as taught in the Nicene Creed, against those who would 'separate off the man Emmanuel as

[28] Cyril, *Chapters*, McGuckin, *Controversy*, 286.
[29] Cyril, *Scholia*, Section 33.
[30] Cyril, *Unity*, 107.
[31] Cyril, *Unity*, 117. Cyril's argument at this point parallels the argument of the writer to the Hebrews in Hebrews 2:10, 14, 17. The Lord can only suffer in the condition of the incarnation as a human. Cyril constantly reminds the reader that full comprehension of the mystery of the incarnation and the communication of idioms is beyond human intellectual limits. Cyril, *Unity*, 130.

distinct from the Word.' Cyril carefully avoids the pitfalls of Nestorianisn and confesses with Scripture the profound truth of the incarnation.

> He suffered impassibly, because he did not humble himself in such a way as to be merely like us, rather, as I have said before, he reserved to his own nature its superiority over all these things. But if we say that he passed over into the nature of the flesh by some change or transformation of his own nature, then we cannot possibly avoid confessing, even if we wanted to, that this ineffable and divine nature was passible.[32]

Cyril deploys his understanding of the Word of God the Father suffering impassibly with deliberate care. The term is conditioned in such a way that indicates the need to think carefully about how it is used. Cyril argues in this passage that if the passibility of Christ's human nature is attributed to Christ's divine nature one is forced to conclude that the divine nature is passible. This conclusion is clearly rejected by Cyril although he makes statements such as 'he suffered impassibly.'[33]

I suggest that a parallel may be drawn between Cyril's[34] language and the interpretation of the fourth word that I have put forward. I have defined ἐγκατέλιπές in the fourth word as Christ being left undefended on the cross. I also discussed my definition of ἐγκατέλιπές in terms of penal substitution and the doctrine of the modal distinction between person and essence. Cyril argues that God the Son 'suffered impassibly.'[35] I suggest that parallel to this statement, it may be said that at the fourth word God the Son incarnate was

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[32] Cyril, *Scholia*, Section 35. Cf. Cyril, *The Second Letter of Cyril to Nestorius*, in McGuckin, *Controversy*, 265.

[33] See also Gregory of Nazianzus, *God, Oration* 30. 5.

[34] Cyril is not unique is his use of this kind of language. For example, Hilary of Poitiers, *Trinitate*, 1.13, but the strength of Cyril's language and its systematic deployment makes Cyril a useful representative of this kind of theological language.

[35] Another parallel arises concerning the worship of Christ in terms of his divine and human natures. In his eighth anathema, adopted by the Council of Ephesus (431), Cyril states 'If anyone should dare to say that the assumed man ought to be worshipped along with God the Word and co-glorified and called'God' as if he were one alongside another . . . and does not rather worship the Emmanuel with a single veneration and render him a single doxology since the Word became flesh, let him be anathema.' Cyril, *Twelve Chapters*, Anathema 8, in McGuckin, *Controversy*, 265. The Cyrilline thinking expressed in this anathema demonstrates Cyril's desire to understand the communication of idioms in a way that does full justice to the language of Scripture.

'intimately forsaken.' To reflect Cyril's argument in section 35 of the *Scholia on the Incarnation* this may be worked out as follows. God the Son incarnate was left undefended by the Father and bore the Father's wrath at sin in his body.[36] This does not mean that God the Son was left undefended in his own divine nature, or that in his divine nature he bore the wrath of God at sin, because the divinity is impassible and immutable. But in so far as that which had become his own human nature was forsaken and bore the wrath of God at sin, then he himself is said to suffer these things. Cyril's language and my language are attempts at the method of 'redoublement,' in a way that defeats human intellect because of our inability to grasp different sets of Trinitarian concepts (person language and essence language) simultaneously.

Cyril emphasises in accordance with Scripture that Christ's physical suffering and being subject to the wrath of God at sin occurred in his human nature, because the divine nature is impassible and immutable. There is no soteriological need for the divine nature to suffer because Christ died for sinners, not for himself,[37] nor for the divine nature. Therefore, the statement that by the communication of idioms, God the Son suffered must always be qualified. The statement must be understood with the qualification that God the Son incarnate suffered the wrath of God at sin in his human body.

[36] Cf. 1 Peter 2:24. 'He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross.' Although Aquinas refers to this verse, Eleonore Stump suggests that his unsatisfying treatment of this and other similar verses that speak of substitution, is unfortunate in light of the Reformed emphasis on penal substitutionary atonement, and the capacity of this theory to account for verses like the fourth word which speak of Christ as bearing God's wrath at sin. Stump asserts that 'The cry of dereliction from the cross is certainly easier to explain on Luther's idea than on Aquinas' account. So is Christ's agony in the garden of Gethsemane. For Aquinas it is difficult to explain why the incarnate deity should have been in such torment over his death when so many of the merely human martyrs went gladly, even cheerfully, to death by tortures worse than crucifixion. Aquinas' interpretation of the relevant New Testament passages seems to me to eviscerate the text. Given that he is trying to provide a theory of the atonement, his failure to do justice to these passages is a major fault.' Stump, 'Atonement,' 291. Stump's argument is further evidence for my claim that the doctrine of penal substitutionary atonement (whether central of one of many models), is in line with historic orthodoxy.

[37] Cf. Hebrews 5:3.

I argue that the biblical witness to the wrath of God poured on Christ in his body removes the problem raised by the communication of idioms and the modal distinction between person and nature in the Godhead. The important issue then becomes accurately describing the relationship between Christ's natures according to Scripture and Chalcedon's Christology. This helps refocus the problem on the fourth word from the cross which I have described as Christ being intimately forsaken.

9. Is a Three-Self Social Trinitarianism Compatible with Historic Orthodoxy and the Central Thesis?

The third objection is from Social Trinitarianism. My response to the objection will focus on the question, can Social Trinitarianism talk about the event of the cross, and specifically the fourth word, in a way that is theologically useful, and in a way that accords with a speculative orthodox understanding of the fourth word?

My critique of Social Trinitarianism will be twofold. First, I critique the modes of argument and theological methodology used by Social Trinitarians. Secondly, I argue that Social Trinitarianisms cannot account for the issues raised by Scripture and tradition that surround the fourth word as I interpret it in the present work.

An Overview of Social Trinitarianism

Social Trinitarianism is the approach to the doctrine of the Trinity according to the analogy of a family or community or society of three persons. The social analogy, in distinction from Augustine's psychological analogy,[1] has given strength to many attempts to call for social and political change.[2] Social Trinitarians often claim historical precedent for their views in the Cappadocian fathers. I will later argue that this historical claim depends on faulty and unbalanced exegesis of Patristic writers.

[1] The modern trend towards a social analogy for the Trinity up to the middle of the twentieth century is treated in C. Welch, *In this Name: The Doctrine of the Trinity in Contemporary Theology* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1952).

[2] See particularly, Zizioulas, *Being*; and Moltmann, *Kingdom*. Moltmann argues that orthodox Trinitarian theology tends towards modalism. C. LaCunga, *God for us* (New York: Harper Collins, 1991). For works from analytic theology see, Richard Swinburne, The Christian God (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994). Other significant monographs and works defending Social Trinitarianism within analytic theology include, David Brown, *The Divine Trinity* (Illinois: Open Court, 1985); Thomas V. Morris, *The Logic of God Incarnate* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1986); J. P. Moreland and William Lane Craig, *Philosophical Foundations for a Christian Worldview* (Illinois: IVP, 2003).

Social Trinitarianism is often characterised as beginning from divine plurality and then attempting to account for divine oneness. Cornelius Plantinga argues that Social Trinitarian thought seeks to satisfy two conditions. First, the theory must describe the Triune persons as distinct centres of consciousness. Secondly, the theory must relate the persons together enough to uphold monotheism.[3] According to Plantinga, these criteria must be upheld in order for a theory to count as Social Trinitarianism. Although Plantinga's criteria are helpful in delimiting Social Trinitarianism, it is more a collection of perspectives[4] that share certain broad characteristics, rather than a singular unified Trinitarian theory.

Social Trinitarianism often rejects divine simplicity and instead attempts to use the doctrine of perichoresis to hold the Triune persons together as one being. When divine simplicity is rejected and composition is accepted in the Godhead, the doctrine of the Trinity as expressed in classical theistic orthodoxy is made redundant.[5] William Hasker outlines some objections to Social Trinitarianism. He asserts that according to Social Trinitarianism, divine persons are defined as 'individual centres of consciousness and will, capable of entering into personal relationships both with one another and with created persons.'[6] Hasker's characterisation accords with Dale Tuggy's discussion of one-self and three-self theories of the Trinity, in which a 'self' is defined as 'a being which is in principle capable of knowledge, intentional action, and interpersonal relationships.'[7] For the Social Trinitarian, the interpersonal relationships among the divine persons are foundational.

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[3] Cornelius Plantinga, Jr., 'Social Trinity and Tritheism,' in *Trinity, Incarnation, and Atonement: Philosophical and Theological Essays*, ed. Ronald K. Feenstra and Cornelius Plantinga, Jr. (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1989), 22.

[4] Moltmann expresses Plantinga's criteria for divine perichoresis. Moltmann, *Trinity*, 175. Moltmann appears to disagree with the modal distinction between person and nature. The rejection of the modal distinction is central to the counterargument I discuss in this section.

[5] See, for example, Scott R. Swain, 'Divine Trinity,' in *Christian Dogmatics: Reformed Theology for the Church Catholic*, ed. Michael Allen and Scott R. Swain (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2016), 102-103.

[6] William Hasker, Objections to Social Trinitarianism, *Religious Studies*, Vol. 46, No. 4 (2010), 421-439.

[7] Dale Tuggy, 'Trinity', The Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy (2013), ed. Edward N. Zalta. Tuggy, as a Unitarian, argues that there are logical problems in the Classical doctrine of the Trinity.

Social Trinitarianisms try to attenuate the divine unity in order to avoid the supposed contradiction between divine simplicity and the real distinctions among the persons that result in I-Thou relationships. Opposition to the orthodox Patristic doctrine of the Trinity and divine simplicity is frequently made in the context of analytic theology and the philosophical objections to relative identity theories of the Trinity.[8]

Jeffrey E. Brower and Michael C. Rea[9] put forward a version of the relative identity theory that is less philosophically objectionable. They suggest a constitution model of the Trinity which attempts to avoid such philosophical difficulties by the use of an analogy with material substance and form in a statue of Athena and the material of the statue. In this analogy, the statue of Athena can be destroyed without destroying the material. Brower and Rea's analogy results in a situation in which a (the material) is identical to b (the statue). Rea and Brower's material constitution analogy for being and person in the Trinity highlights the analogous relationship between material existence and Trinitarian theology. It is this analogous relationship that the Social Trinitarian frequently fails to consider fully in light of scriptural and Patristic witness to the Trinity.[10]

The theological method involved in the rejection of divine simplicity is a serious and recent departure from the classical theistic conception of God. Therefore any objections to and from Social Trinitarian doctrine must be framed in terms of theological method, not just doctrinal distinctive.

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[8] Tuggy, 'Trinity.' For a fuller explanation see McCall, *Monotheism*, 39-49; and Jeffrey E. Brower and Michael C. Rea, 'Material Constitution and the Trinity,' *Faith and Philosophy*, 22 (2005); 57.

[9] Brower and Rea, 'Constitution,' *Faith and Philosophy*.

[10] Cf. Tuggy, 'Trinity.' He is correct to point out difficulties in relative identity theories, but he is incorrect to claim that this is what is attempted when it is said that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are one God, and yet they are distinct from each other. See James Cain's account of relative identity theory, which emphasises the way in which one individuates a subject and the corresponding indeterminacy or determinacy of the truth conditions for the sentence in which one individuates. Cain discusses an illustration similar to the material constitution illustration of the Athena statue. He also speaks of individuation in a way that parallels the importance of *redoublement* in language about the Trinity. Cain, 'Relative,' 141-152.

An Objection to my Central Thesis from Social Trinitarianism

The breadth of Social Trinitarian thought and the corresponding number of possible counterarguments to my thesis are subjects that are beyond the scope of this work to explore fully. I will therefore focus discussion on Social Trinitarianism as it opposes the modal distinction between person and nature in Trinitarian thought. The modal distinction is vital to my argument because it qualifies the way in which the *communicatio idiomatum* is applied to the fourth word. Therefore a Social Trinitarian critique of this element will be most relevant. Such a critique will also highlight the distinction between the adherence of Social Trinitarinism to multiple centres of consciousness or three-self theories in the Trinity, and the historic orthodox position that will is an aspect of nature, not of person. I will explore the possibility of multiple centres of consciousness and three-self theories as related to the fourth word.

As seen in the above quotation from Moltmann, Social Trinitarianism opposes the modal distinction between person and nature on the grounds that a modal distinction is contrary to real distinctions among the persons. Moltmann's articulation of perichoresis is typical of the Social understanding of the Trinity. He maintains that perichoresis is sufficient to secure divine unity in Trinity, and that a modal distinction between person and nature would negate the central significant of perichoresis in his theological system.

It is argued that it is only in Social Trinitarian thought that the real distinctions among the Triune persons are appreciated; while claiming to uphold monotheism. The real personal distinctions and the rejection of the doctrine of divine simplicity supposedly allow for greater 'separation' of the persons in a theology of the fourth word. A Social Trinitarian understanding of the 'separation' of persons at the fourth word is thought to do greater justice

to the language of the fourth word in the text of Scripture. For example, Moltmann argues that at the cross we see God against God in the fourth word.

Therefore, in order to respond to the Social Trinitarian counterargument, two responses must be adequately made. The first concerns the possibility of propitiation given the Social model of the Trinity; the second concerns the modal distinction and the communication of idioms.

First, if the doctrine of divine simplicity is rejected, as it is in a social understanding of the Trinity, it becomes difficult truly to state that God the Son is fully God. Following this, it becomes difficult to understand the Pauline statements that all the divine fullness dwells bodily in Christ. Given these obstacles, the Reformed doctrine of penal substitutionary atonement, which depends upon the full divinity of Christ to enable Christ to propitiate the wrath of God, becomes fraught with problems. I have discussed aspects of the argument in this work previously, but in this context, Social Trinitarianism is shown to be unable to articulate the doctrine of the cross in historic orthodox and Trinitarian terms;

Secondly, if the modal distinction between person and nature is rejected in a social understanding of the Trinity, I argue that the communication of idioms must also be altered in a way that no longer interprets the Gospel narratives in a meaningful way. I argue that the *communicatio idiomatum* is only possible (in the non-Lutheran sense) because of the modal distinction between person and nature. It is granted by both Social Trinitarians and historically orthodox Trinitarian theologians that a distinction must be made between person and nature. I have argued that a non modal distinction would treat nature and person as two things, rather than a thing and the mode of the thing. Therefore, a non modal distinction in Trinitarian theology would translate into Christology as the treatment of the person of Christ and the divinity of Christ as distinct things, rather than as a thing (the divinity) and the mode

of the thing (the person). I suggest that the separation of the person and natures of Christ in this way would result in confused application of the *communicatio idiomatum*. The predication of attributes of a nature to the person, if the distinction between nature and person is not modal, is like predicating the attributes of one nature to the person of another separate nature, which is clearly illogical.

My argument that the *communicatio idiomatum* is based on the modal distinction between person and nature may be countered with reference to Cyril of Alexandria's principle that the incarnate Christ is one composite Christ.[11] Cyril's argument is quoted and developed by Justinian in his work *Against the Monophysites.*[12] If Cyril and Justinian are correct, it may be suggested by the Social Trinitarian, that a composite Christology is sufficient to ground the *communicatio idiomatum.* Such an argument would not, however, counter my suggestion that the *communicatio idiomatum* is grounded on the modal distinction; instead I suggest that it would support a more Lutheran form of the *communicatio idiomatum*. The counterargument would also limit understanding of the fourth word.

Is the Methodology of Social Trinitarianism Orthodox?

I affirm that the basic premises of Social Trinitarianism depart from historic Trinitarian orthodoxy, particularly the rejection of divine simplicity.[13] The Fourth Lateran Council affirmed the doctrine of divine simplicity as Catholic orthodoxy in 1215 during the

[11] Cyril, *Tomes*.
[12] Justinian, *Person*, 52.
[13] Mathias Hassenfratz-Coffinet argues that another area of influence on Social Trinitarianism is the metaphysics of Alfred North Whitehead, the father of process theology, who emphasises the dynamic nature of reality. See Alfred North Whitehead, *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology*, ed. David R. Griffin and Sherburne Donald (New York: Free Press, 1985). Whitehead influenced Joseph Bracken, a recent advocate of Social Trinitarianism. See Joseph Bracken, *The One in the Many: A Contemporary Reconstruction of the God-World Relationship* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001). For a discussion of the influence of Whitehead on Bracken, and the Social Trinitarianism of Bracken, see Mathias Hassenfratz-Coffinet, 'Social Trinity: Theological Doctrine as a Foundation for Metaphysics.' *Developments*, 153-165.

pontificate of Innocent III (1198-1216). But as I have argued, the councillor stamp on the doctrine in the thirteenth century was by no means its first affirmation. There is clear evidence of the doctrine in the Arian controversy in the Patristic era, of the confession of God as simple and Triune. Athanasius, in his writing on the Council of Nicaea, states that God is 'without parts . . . since his nature is simple.' He exegetically establishes the doctrine on God's self revelation in Exodus 3:14.[14] The doctrine of divine simplicity is confessed by the church in creeds and confessions in many traditions.[15] Therefore, the rejection of the doctrine is not merely a narrow issue focused on theology proper, the move also indicates the rejection of a significant element of the understanding of the Church of the doctrine of God as expressed in creeds and confessions.

I suggest that the primary theological error of Social Trinitarian perspectives is methodological, particularly the univocal understanding of the doctrine of analogy. Bound up with the methodological error is the wider issue of the nature and limits of theological discourse. Social Trinitarianism from the stable of analytic theology often attempts to minimise theological mystery in an effort to be philosophically precise.

Many versions of Social Trinitarianism reject divine simplicity because it raises seemingly intractable philosophical questions concerning relative identity and Leibniz's law of the identity of indiscernibles. I suggest that the root of the intractability of these philosophical questions for the Social Trinitarian is not a logical problem in the Trinity. Instead I suggest that it is a failure on the part of the Social Trinitarian theologian clearly to distinguish between human persons and divine persons by analogy. The failure to appreciate

[14] Anatolios, *Athanasius*, *De Decretis*, 11, 22.
[15] Cf. Belgic Confession Article 1.

the analogical relationship is seen in Tuggy's example of the two dogs; an example Tuggy uses in his attempt to demonstrate the difficulties faced by relative identity theories.

Social Trinitarianism jettisons divine simplicity and presents perichoresis as a community of the three divine persons. In this way the Trinitarian doctrine of analytic theology runs the risk of departing from early creedal statements of the Church on the Trinity. Social Trinitarianism is often defended by saying that it finds historical precedence in the Cappadocian fathers, particularly Gregory of Nyssa in his work *Ad Ablabium*. It would not be appropriate in the present work to provide a full range of evidence against the historical claim made by Social Trinitarian theologians. It is useful though to highlight a few counterexamples, and to reference arguments against the historical claim.

Sarah Coakley critiques three presentations of Social Trinitarianism from Peter van Inwagen,[16] Richard Swinburne,[17] and David Brown.[18] Coakley regards these three versions to be among 'the more sophisticated analytic defences of the "social" Trinity.'[19] Coakley's main criticism is that the three versions discussed employ an explicitly modern notion of person,[20] and assume that such a notion of person is present in the Patristic sources. Coakley commends Brown for a more careful reading, particularly of Gregory of Nyssa.

Coakley's criticism frequently applies to analytic theologians who present a social doctrine of the Trinity. The emphasis on logical analysis in analytic theology and its often brief discussion of person is also criticised by Coakley, particularly concerning van

[16] Peter van Inwagen, 'And yet They are not Three Gods but one God,' in *Philosophy and the Christian Faith*, ed. Thomas V. Morris (Notre Dame, University of Notre Dame Press, 1988), 247-272.

[17] Richard Swinburne, *The Christian God* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994).

[18] David Brown, *The Divine Trinity* (London: Duckworth, 1985).

[19] Sarah Coakley, '"Persons" in the "Social" Doctrine of the Trinity: A Critique of Current Analytic Discussion,' in *Trinity,*126-130.

[20] The criticism Social Trinitarianism in its use of the modern understanding of person is articulated well by Karen Kilby who also resists the univocity of person language in Social Trinitarian theology. Kilby, 'Perichoresis.'

Inwagen's writing. 'The upshot of this (theologically unsatisfactory) section on the notion of "person" is that van Inwagen never clearly tells us what sort of entities are at stake in his calculus; and since logic – however sophisticated – can only formalise pre-logical intuitions, we are left with a fundamental hiatus in the argument.'[21] The concept of person must be clearly delimited if Trinitarian theology is to be made clear. Coakley's argument demonstrates that Social Trinitarianism often does not clearly define person, and when it does, tries to conflate scriptural, Patristic, and modern notions of person. William P. Alston helpfully asserts, 'There are, no doubt, connotations and associations that have accrued to the word "person" in the last few centuries that are not applicable to the persons of the Trinity, such as *autonomy* and extreme *self-enclosedness*. The fact that the persons of the Trinity all together constitute one God inhibits our thinking of them in those terms.'[22] Alston shows preference to Boethius' definition of person in Trinitarian theology. His analogical understanding of the Triune persons, and his commitment to divine unity and simplicity are based on the Church Fathers and again show the lack of historical precedent for a social understanding of the Trinity.

Coakley[23] criticises Social Trinitarian theologians for giving too much theological weight to Gregory of Nyssa's comments in *Ad Ablabium*. Furthermore, Coakley argues that such theologians fail to consider Gregory's other Trinitarian works such as *Ad Graecos*, which clearly emphasise divine unity, and the communion of the persons, rather than the preferred Social Trinitarian concept of community.[24]

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[21] Coakley, 'Persons,' 127.

[22] William P. Alston, 'Substance and the Trinity,' in *The Trinity*, ed. Davis, et al. 189. Alston discusses the Aristotelian conception of substance and personhood that was philosophically prevalent in the early Patristic era. He uses this historical issue to attempt to clear up the confusing use of οὐσία in the Patristic era as based on Aristotle's discussion of first and second οὐσία.

[23] Coakley's arguments are in general agreement with the comments of Ayres, that reading contemporary Social Trinitarian doctrine into Gregory of Nyssa would be anachronistic and misleading. See, Ayres, *Nicaea*, 361-363.

[24] Coakley, 'Persons,' 131-137.

Gregory of Nyssa begins his *The Great Catechism* by discussing the doctrine of the Holy Trinity. His initial assertion after the introductory prologue seeks to balance the doctrine of the Trinity against Jewish monotheism and Greek polytheism.[25] Gregory's insistence on the unity of the divine nature is clear throughout his *Catechism*. Epistle 38 which is attributed to the Cappadocian theologians also emphasises the vital importance of the analogous use of Trinitarian language, and the clear oneness of the divine simple nature.[26]

I argue that the evidence from the Cappadocian Fathers refutes the Social Trinitarian claim that it is grounded in Cappadocian theology. If Coakley's arguments are correct, the historical precedent claimed by Social Trinitarians is removed. Again, this places the doctrine at serious risk as a departure from the Church's teaching on the Trinity.

In discussing the theological method of Social Trinitarianism I have focused on willingness of Social Trinitarians to use theological language in a way that departs from classical theistic theological language found in Patristic theology. The use of analogy in theological descriptions of the Godhead is another vital aspect of much Patristic theology, and indeed to the way the Scriptures speak of God. Social Trinitarianism reduces the analogical distance between divine persons and human persons, the Social Trinitarian runs the risk of blurring the theological separation between divine creator and human creature.

Social Trinitarianisms and Three Self Theories of the Trinity

[25] Saint Gregory of Nyssa, *Collection*, trans. Philip Schaff (New York: Aeterna Press, 2016), 741.

[26] Saint Basil of Caesarea (often attributed to Gregory of Nyssa), To his Brother Gregory, Concerning the Difference Between οὐσία and ὑποστάσις, 5. In section 4 he states, 'the continuity of nature being never rent asunder by the distinction of the hypostases, nor the notes of proper distinction confounded in the community of essence.'

If Social Trinitarianism is correct in asserting three selves in the Godhead, the problems surrounding the fourth word from the cross quickly resolve, only to create more serious problems. A three-self social model of the Trinity that is not unified by divine simplicity has no motive to uphold the full unity of the persons at the fourth word. It may be argued that such a reading of the fourth word would do more obvious justice to the exegesis of the cry, but it would fail to adequately explain the full-orbed description of the event of the cross in the New Testament. I therefore assert that Social Trinitarianism is unable to account for my thesis concerning the Trinitarian reading of the fourth word.

Some forms of Social Trinitarianism advance the theory that each divine person is a distinct self. I have argued from Maximus the Confessor that there is one divine will and not three, because will is a function of nature, not person. The concept of self appears initially to be more closely tied to personhood than nature; could it therefore be argued that there are three selves in the Triune God? It must be affirmed that within the Trinity there is the possibility of an I-Thou relationship because of the real distinctions among the persons. With this I-Thou relationship love is received and love is given. Could it be argued that the persons are three selves? In response to this question the definition of self is vital. In the context of Trinitarian theology does self mean or imply self-consciousness, self-awareness, self-existence, self-determination? Whatever the responses to these questions are, the orthodox doctrine that there is one simple God must be upheld.

In order to be self-aware a subject must be aware of themselves as themselves. A direct consequence of self-awareness is the capacity for self designation as I; this language is clearly used by the divine persons of the Godhead in Scripture.[27] From the scriptural witness it may be argued that the Triune persons are distinct subjects and therefore that each person is

[27] Matthew 3:17; John 8:58

self aware and therefore that there are three selves in the one Godhead. Dale Tuggy defines a self as a 'being which is in principle capable of knowledge, intentional action, and interpersonal relationships.'[28] He adds that a self is a centre of individual consciousness. Tuggy's definition first appears to work well with the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity, as long as the unity of the one divine being is maintained. Francis J. Hall discusses the balance between divine unity and a three self understanding of the Trinity. 'To assert the existence of three persons in God means merely to say that there are three egos in Him, the distinction being such as to warrant the use of distinguishing names and of plural personal pronouns and being involved in the very essence of God, so as to have eternal validity. But it does not mean that these three egos are separate beings, or that they are to be regarded as mutually independent individuals.'[29]

If it is correct that the three divine persons are three selves, may it then be asserted that three selves allow for the possibility of further 'separation' among the persons than would be allowed were there only one divine self in three persons? By this I mean that the real distinctions among the persons may be considered in terms of one self-determined, self-aware, individual self 'forsaking' another such individual self at the cross.

Rather than arguing at this point against the details of the different interpretations of the fourth word, I will argue against the root issue of asserting that in the Godhead there are three selves. My objections to the use of the term self as a referent for persons in the Trinity are methodological and historical.

[28] Dale Tuggy, 'Trinity,' *The Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2016 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.).

[29] Francis J. Hall, *Dogmatic Theology IV* (USA: American Church Union: 1966), 105.

In the Latin Patristic tradition there is no equivalent of the English word for self.[30] Similarly in the Greek Patristic writers, ψυχέ is often translated as self, but is equally well translated soul, depending on the context. The semantic range of ψυχέ means that we cannot simply give the translation as self. Because of the Latin and Greek linguistic background, I argue that the use of the English word self in Trinitarian theology is anachronistic, simplistic, and theologically dangerous. Following Patristic tradition, the word self should not be applied to the three Triune persons, anymore than one should say that in the Trinity there are three souls. Social Trinitarian theology, with its analytic theological pedigree, tends to use theological language about the Trinity univocally, rather than analogously.

Three-self theories of the Trinity are a departure from scriptural language and the language venerated in the Church Councils in an attempt to reject divine simplicity. The Scriptures do not use the language of three selves with reference to God. The linguistic and methodological opposition to three-self models of the Trinity may be objected to by pointing out that much technical language used in the creeds to describe the Trinity is also not found in the Scriptures. In response to this objection it must be noted that the typical examples of οὐσία and ὑποστάσεις language clearly attempt to capture the emphasis of Scripture, and this language is agreed to have done so within orthodoxy for centuries.

A Response to the Social Trinitarian Counterargument

I have argued from the Church Fathers and Aquinas that what allows for real distinctions among the Triune persons are the real relations of paternity, filiation, and common spiration.

[30] John C. Cavadini, 'The Darkest Enigma: Reconsidering the Self in Augustine's Thought,' *Augustinian Studies* 38:1 (2007): 119. 'So firmly is it entrenched in our contemporary understanding of Augustine that one of his most characteristic accomplishments was his pioneering exploration of something called the "self" . . . that we may actually forget that Augustine does not treat this topic at all, and that the English phrase "the self" has no equivalent in Latin.'

Therefore, everything else, such as self or will, must be understood as a function of nature, not of persons, because volition and self are not real relations but are natural faculties.

If sense is to be made of the I-Thou relationships among the Triune persons described in the Scriptures, elements of the three-self theory of the Trinity can be helpful. If one defines a self as the referent of the indexicals 'me' or 'I' some concept of self in connection with persons may be of theological benefit. Bathrellos notes a distinction in Maximus' theology that clarifies the parallel between self and will as functions of nature not persons.

> Maximus drew an all-important distinction, without which the question of the wills of Christ cannot be properly approached. This distinction is between the will as a faculty, integral to all rational beings, in virtue of which they are capable of willing, and the object of willing; namely, that which is willed by the being possessing this faculty. . . The former is a permanent, indispensible part of the ontological constitution of both God and man, whereas the latter is not more than its external object.[31]

The one divine will is common to the three Triune persons, but it is exercised and directed to its objects according to the persons in distinct ways. John Owen followed Maximus' teaching that will is 'a natural property, and where there is but one nature there is but one will.'[32] Owen applies his doctrine of the one will of God in the theological context of the *pactum salutis* by addressing the difficulty of discerning the possibility of an intra-Trinitarian covenant given the existence of only one divine will.

> In respect of their distinct personal actings, this will is appropriated to them respectively, so that the will of the Father and the will of the Son may be considered in this business; which though essentially one and the same, yet in their distinct personality it is distinctly considered, as the will of the Father and the will of the Son. Notwithstanding the unity of essence that is between the Father and the Son, yet is the work distinctly carried on by them; so that the same God judges and becomes surety, satisfieth and is satisfied, in these distinct persons.[33]

[31] Bathrellos, *Byzantine*, 119.
[32] Owen, *Works, Vol. XII*, 497.
[33] Owen, *Works, Vol. XII*, 497.

Owen's teaching is commented on by John Fesko who explains, 'The Godhead shares the same substance but subsists as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. And though the Godhead acts in concert, each person has a distinct function in the plan of redemption.[34]

Parallel to the argument of a threefold execution of the one divine will, it may be argued that the one divine self, as a natural property may be understood in a threefold manner that clearly interprets the I-Thou language used in Scripture of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.[35]

It may be suggested that, like Maximus the Confessor's teaching on the unity of the divine will, the notion of self is correctly understood to be a property of nature rather than persons,[36] and that there is therefore one divine self. One result of my argument that any concept of self must be understood as a natural property is that the strength of the Social understanding of the Trinity and the fourth word from the cross is further diminished.

My explanation in these terms must be understood extremely tentatively with the previously made qualification that the language of self is not found explicitly in the Greek or Latin Patristic texts. Moreover, because the contemporary philosophical concept of self carries so many additional notions not discussed in the Patristic era, applying self language to the Trinity is fraught with difficulty. If the contemporary concept of self is applied to Trinitarian theology, it most naturally acts as a synonym for person or hypostasis, therefore one is forced to concede that there are three selves, and Social Trinitarianism obtains. Because the language of self maps so easily onto Social Trinitarinism, I argue that in order to maintain Trinitarian orthodoxy, one must reject self language because it is not used in

[34] J. V. Fesko, *The Trinity and the Covenant of Redemption* (Great Britain: Mentor, 2016), 19.

[35] See *ST* I, q. 30, A. 3, where Aquinas discusses numeral terms predicated of God's nature and persons. Aquinas consistently emphasises the unity and simplicity of the one divine nature existing in three really distinct persons.

[36] Maxumus, *Cosmic, Opusculum 6.*

Scripture or tradition. Therefore I assert that it is not meaningful to speak of God as either one self or three selves, this assertion forms a methodological counterbalance to the methodological shortcomings of Social Trinitarianism that I have identified.

I have set out significant counterarguments to my central thesis concerning the fourth word from three-self Social Trinitarian theories of the Trinity. In response to these counterarguments I have argued that three-self language does not find historic precedent in the Church Fathers, and that it is a departure from historic Trinitarian orthodoxy, particularly with regard to the rejection of the doctrine of divine simplicity. I have also argued that three-self theories cannot adequately employ the *communicatio idiomatum* because of the rejection of the modal distinction between person and nature. These departures from orthodoxy mean that Social Trinitarianism is not able to make sense of the fourth word from the cross in a way that is consistent with the Trinitarian statements of the New Testament Scriptures. I have also argued against the use of self language in order to counterbalance the tendency to Social Trinitarianism that is methodologically latent in self language about the Trinity.

Conclusions

Summary of Findings

Ὁ Θεός μου ὁ Θεός μου, εἰς τί ἐγκατέλιπές με;

Christ's fourth word from the cross has been the focus of the present work. I have offered an interpretation based on the *communicatio idiomatum* in Christology and the modal distinction between person and nature in Trinitarian theology. The combination of these elements has been the framework for the argument and question that this work seeks to answer. In order to set out and answer this question I have drawn on Patristic, Scholastic, Reformed, and contemporary theological and philosophical resources. I have argued that the experiences of the person who is God the Son incarnate are restricted to the natures; in other words, the experience of suffering for the person of the Son can only be experienced in the human nature, and cannot 'escape' from the human nature. I have also sought to balance such statements with the Cyrilline affirmation that on the cross God the Son incarnate 'suffered impassibly.'[1]

In Part I I presented an exegesis of the fourth word and its context in the crucifixion narratives in the Gospels of Matthew and Mark. I offered a definition of forsaken as left undefended. I then surveyed and traced the development of the *communicatio idiomatum* and interpretations of the fourth word. Part II introduced elements of Trinitarian theology that led towards my articulation of the modal distinction between person and nature in the Trinity

[1] Cyril, *Scholia*, Section 35. Cf. Cyril, *The Second Letter of Cyril to Nestorius*, in McGuckin, *Controversy*, 265.

which set the scene for the central question that this work attempts to answer. I then explored my response further through interaction with four main counterarguments in Part III.

Theological Method I: The Inseparability of the Person and Work of Christ

I have identified two primary methodological issues that often inhibit Trinitarian investigation into the death of Christ and the fourth word: the methodological divisions between the person and work of Christ, and between Christology and Trinitarian theology. In many systematic treatments of doctrine the person of Christ and the work of Christ are discussed under separate heads.[2] The separation of these doctrines often means that treatment of the work of Christ is discussed with Christ as the subject, without specifying that the one who died on the cross is God the Son incarnate. The absence of this specification immediately sequestrates Christology from Trinitarian theology. It may be argued that the division of theology in this way follows the sequence of the creeds which is beneficial, but the divisions must not be allowed to limit theological work.

Theological Method II: Why Christology Must be Trinitarian

The second methodological division that impedes theological progress in discussion of the death of Christ and the fourth word is the systematic division between Christology and Trinitarian theology.[3] This division means that treatment of the person of Christ may be

[2] Turretin's *Institutes of Elenctic Theology* is a notable exception. In the Catholic tradition the tendency is less problematic and there are more exceptions such as Matthias Joseph Scheeben who discusses the person of Christ and the incarnation and the cross in an interconnected way. 'The interrelationship between the mystery of the Incarnation and the mystery of the Trinity is obviously very close. The former has its explanation and its source in the later, while the later has its external prolongation and its highest meaning for the outer world in the former.' Scheeben, *Mysteries*, 359.

[3] A notable recent evangelical attempt to counter the tendency to separate Christology from Trinitarian theology is Fred Sanders and Klaus Issler, ed., *Jesus in Trinitarian Perspective* (Nashville: Broadman and

discussed in terms of his mediatorial office, his high priestly office, his office as prophet, or his Kingdom, rather than his place as the second person of the Trinity. Christology must be fully Trinitarian; just as the doctrine of the work of Christ must be rooted in the doctrine of the person of Christ. When Christology is discussed it must constantly be borne in mind that the subject is God the Son incarnate. The breaking down of artificially imposed doctrinal separations will inevitably increase theological knowledge and accuracy. It is my hope that the present work, in which the Christological and Trinitarian aspects of the cross and the fourth word are explored together, may serve in some measure to redress this shortcoming in contemporary evangelical and Reformed theology.

The Significance of the Central Thesis for Contemporary Evangelical and Reformed Theology

The question at the heart of this work and my response to it have not previously been asked or articulated, this work therefore builds on the Church's theological understanding of the cross of Christ in a way that is in line with historic orthodoxy. The central thesis is at odds with contemporary trends in evangelical theology. As I have demonstrated in this work, a wide range of evangelical contributions to Christology and the work of Christ argue that the cross reveals the suffering of the divine nature. It is my hope that this treatise will prove to be a corrective to current trends in my tradition, partly by demonstrating that the fourth word is not the primary lens through which the New Testament understands the cross of Christ, but

Holman, 2007). Bruce A. Ware argues that the efficacy of the atonement 'depends on the identity of Christ as the theanthropic person, the one who is both fully God and fully man in the incarnation.' Bruce A. Ware, 'Christ's Atonement a Work of the Trinity,' in Sanders, *Perspective*, 156. Again, Turretin and Scheeben are examples in the Reformed and Catholic traditions of treating Christology and Trinitarian theology together.

mainly by demonstrating the eternal perichoretic unity of the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

The writings of the Church Fathers and a number of Scholastic theologians have significantly formed my arguments and methodological approach to the questions discussed in this work. Such interaction with the Patristic and Scholastic traditions is not common in evangelical and Reformed theology. I therefore hope that the richness these historical writings have brought to my own thinking and argument will demonstrate the crucial importance of deeper interaction with these traditions.

For Reformed theology in particular, there is need for a richer engagement with the doctrine of the Trinity, particularly the issues surrounding the modal distinction between person and nature. The modal distinction is rarely touched on in contemporary evangelical or Reformed theology. Without the distinction, confusing definitions of person and nature are inevitable; and a separation between Cappadocian and Augustinian conceptions of the Trinity are exaggerated.

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