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## The Spirit of Holiness: The Holiness of Man

William C. Weinrich

Two basic data of the evangelical narratives governed, directed, and finally determined the church's trinitarian and christological faith. First of all was the fact that the content of the gospels was the life, death, and resurrection of the man Jesus. Although confessed to have risen from the dead, to have ascended into heaven, and to have given forth the Spirit, the preaching and the worship of the earliest apostolic church was of the man Jesus, that is, of the son of Mary who precisely in his deepest humility was confessed to be God.<sup>1</sup> St. Paul gives expression to this foundational fact of early Christian conviction: "We preach Christ crucified . . . the power of God and the wisdom of God" (1 Cor 1:23–24). The second important datum of the gospel narratives is the fact that they conclude by noting the mission of the church under the aegis of the exalted Lord and through the power of the Holy Spirit. According to the Gospel of John, the resurrected Jesus spoke to his disciples, saying, "As the Father has sent me, so also I send you." And breathing upon them, he said, "Receive the Holy Spirit" (John 20:21–22). The sequence of narrative at the beginning of the Acts of the Apostles is also significant: first there is the ascension of Jesus, then the descent of the Holy Spirit, then the narrative of the church in its life, mission, and teaching.

The life of Jesus was not a self-enclosed story, a pure history so to speak. The life of Jesus was a life constituted in the Holy Spirit and for that reason it was a life that was itself the destiny of man.<sup>2</sup> In the life and death of this man, the destiny of humankind is given and secured. According to the Gospel of John, knowing that "all things were perfected" (ἤδη πάντα τετέλεσται), Jesus took drink to "complete the Scripture" and said, "It is accomplished" (τετέλεσται) and bowing his head, "he handed over the Spirit" (παρέδωκεν τὸ πνεῦμα; John 19:28–30). The finality of Christ, the life

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<sup>1</sup> See especially Larry Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2003).

<sup>2</sup> John Zizioulis, "Apostolic Continuity and Orthodox Theology: Towards a Synthesis of Two Perspectives," *Saint Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 19 (1975): 85: "The event of Christ must be understood as constituted pneumatologically . . . because Christ is not Christ unless he is an existence in the Spirit, which means an *eschatological existence*."

that he lived and completed in his crucifixion, is the basis and source for the handing over of the Spirit. That is to say, to use the words of the Nicene Creed, the mission of Christ was "for us and for our salvation." The life of Christ would remain in the past, as though locked there, were it not communicated to us. As Jesus himself said, "If I do not go away, the Paraclete will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you" (John 16:7). The significance of Christ for man and his salvation cannot be disassociated from the sending and reality of the Spirit.

Not surprisingly, therefore, Jaroslav Pelikan begins his summary of the discussion concerning the Holy Spirit leading to the Council of Constantinople in AD 381 by writing that "the issue that brought the homoousios to a head and thus helped to formulate the doctrine that Christ was divine was not so much the doctrine of Christ as the doctrine of the Holy Spirit."<sup>3</sup> The issue can be perceived already in the New Testament. A decisive passage occurs in Paul: "Any one who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you, although your bodies are dead because of sin, your spirits are alive because of righteousness. If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit which dwells in you" (Rom 8:9-11). Such an apostolic claim would be confessed by the Council of Constantinople in the words "I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of Life" (τὸ κύριον, τὸ ζωοποιόν). However, such a confession was now placed within a comprehensive understanding of the reality of that God who made himself known and communicated himself through the Son in the Holy Spirit. Who is that God who wills to make us alive by the communication to us of his own life? And in what manner does God exist so that he can and does bestow upon the creature, given over to sin and death, that life which is his own? These questions were implicit in the proclamation of Jesus as the Savior of the world.

At the end of Book 3 of his *Against the Heresies*, Irenaeus complains of the Gnostics who revive the *deus otiosus* of the Epicureans, the god who exercises no direction over earthly affairs, takes care of neither himself nor

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<sup>3</sup> Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), 1:211.

others, and is without providence.<sup>4</sup> The narrative of the Scriptures had instructed Irenaeus otherwise. This narrative begins with a Word that creates and in this creating there begins a story of a people whose story is nothing other than the story of the activity of God who in and through Israel (and the nations) is moving humankind toward its destiny of eternal life in communion with God. As the Wisdom of Solomon says, "God did not create death" but created man "unto incorruptibility" (Wis 1:13; 2:23: ἐπ' ἀφθαρσίᾳ). It was, however, in the man Jesus that the utter identity of the life of God and the life of man was perceived. In him the Word through whom all things were made was made one with flesh from the Virgin Mary. In the striking words of one fourth century document, "The Word of God is not called God by grace, but his flesh together with him is said to be God. He did not say that the Word became God, but 'the Word was God' . . . and that this God became flesh, so his flesh would become God the Word."<sup>5</sup> In other words, the life of the man Jesus is the perfect human form of the life of God, and this not by way of an external imitation, but by way of an intimate and intrinsic participation and unity.

This was the controlling point of Irenaeus' polemic against the spiritualizing of the second century Gnostics. Not unlike the philosophy of the Greeks, the Gnostics conceived of the divine transcendence as implying a fundamental dissimilarity, an absolute otherness to the reality of the created order. Irenaeus did not wholly disagree. But he located the otherness of God and the creature "within the context of the positive relation of creation, of God's granting creation its existence as a gift."<sup>6</sup> The distinction between God and the world of man is not one of sheer opposition and unlikeness, "but of the asymmetrical correlation brought

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<sup>4</sup> Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses* 3.24.2, in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers: The Writings of the Fathers Down to AD 325*, 10 vols., ed. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), 1:458-459.

<sup>5</sup> [Marcellus of Ancyra], *De incarnatione et contra Arianos* 3, in *Patrologia cursus completus: Series graeca*, 162 vols., ed. J.-P. Migne (Paris: Migne, 1857-1886), 26:984-1028. This work is often ascribed to Marcellus of Ancyra, but the attribution is uncertain. The Greek text of the quote is PG 26:989: καὶ οὐχ ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ κατὰ χάριν ἔλαβε τὸ καλεῖσθαι θεός, ἀλλ' ἡ σὰρξ αὐτοῦ σὺν αὐτῷ ἐθεολογήθη. Οὐ γὰρ εἶπεν ὅτι ὁ λόγος θεὸς γέγονεν, ἀλλὰ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος . . . καὶ οὗτος αὐτὸς ὁ θεὸς γέγονε σὰρξ, ἵνα ἡ σὰρξ αὐτοῦ γένηται θεὸς λόγος.

<sup>6</sup> Khaled Anatolios, *Athanasius: The Coherence of His Thought* (London/New York: Routledge, 1998), 19.

about by the act of creation.”<sup>7</sup> This “asymmetrical correlation” is given classic expression in Irenaeus’ programmatic claim that the essential difference between God and man is that “God makes; man is made” (*Deus facit; homo fit*).<sup>8</sup> The perfect and complete sufficiency of God, his possession of all things, is the divine ground for the activity of his creating, that is, for his giving and bestowal of life. To create is the distinctive mark of the reality of God in his relation to the world. God is revealed to be God in the fact that he gives life to that which in itself possesses no life.

On the other hand, the distinctive mark of the creature is that he receives life from God. The entire relationship of God with man is expressed by the dogmatic phrase “creation from nothing” (*creatio ex nihilo*). For Irenaeus the activity of God’s creating was by no means one of necessity. As Irenaeus put it, God made man in order that he might have someone upon whom to bestow his goodness. Indeed, God’s creating was an act of will rooted in the freedom of God to work as he is. The act of creation, that is, the granting of life to man was an act in which God made himself known precisely as the one who out of the freedom of love gives life. *Deus facit; homo fit*. The very relation of God to man was one marked by freedom, grace, love, and gift. These then are the marks of the reality of God; these demark who the God is who is the true God: “It is not possible to know God as far as his majesty is concerned. For it is impossible to measure the Father. But as to his love—for it is this which leads us to God by his Word—those who obey God always learn that there does exist so great a God, and that it is he who by himself has established and made and adorned and contains all things, including ourselves and our world.”<sup>9</sup>

As Khaled Anatolios has noted, if the transcendent otherness of God is conceived not only in terms of God’s greatness, his sheer otherness, but especially in terms of the granting of life and love, by God’s very intervention in the affairs of humankind, then “the positing of intermediaries between God and creation is no longer seen as safeguarding divine transcendence but even as threatening it.”<sup>10</sup> Therefore, Irenaeus repeatedly makes the point that any notion of God as one who is distant

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<sup>7</sup> Khaled Anatolios, *Athanasius*, 19; see George Florovsky, “The Concept of Creation in St. Athanasius,” *Studia Patristica* 6 and *Texte und Untersuchungen* 81 (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1962), 36-52.

<sup>8</sup> Irenaeus, *Haer.* 4.11.2; ANF 1:474.

<sup>9</sup> Irenaeus, *Haer.* 4.20.1; ANF 1:487.

<sup>10</sup> Anatolios, *Athanasius*, 21.

and himself uninvolved in creation compromises a fitting conception of God and dishonors him: "They blaspheme the creator, who is truly God."<sup>11</sup>

This distinction between God who is creator and man who is made finds its Nicene expression in the confession that the Son of God is "begotten not made" (γεννηθέντα οὐ ποιηθέντα) and in the expression that the Spirit is the "Giver of life" (ζωοποιόν). The argument for the deity of the Son and the argument for the deity of the Holy Spirit was an argument concerning whether the Son and the Spirit were intrinsic to that God who is the creator, the Giver of Life. Essentially the argument was a simple one: "Whereas men are capable of wisdom, God partakes of nothing, but is himself the Father of his own Wisdom, of which whoso partake are given the name of wise."<sup>12</sup> The words are those of Athanasius, but the thought is the same as we have noted in Irenaeus. There is nothing in common between the Creator and the creature. Therefore, what God has to give he has to give from himself (*ex substantia eius*, as Irenaeus has it). If the gift of the divine wisdom in Christ makes wise, and if the gift of the Spirit makes alive, then the Son and the Holy Spirit are within the identity of the one God and not extrinsic to it.<sup>13</sup> If, on the other hand, God's creative energy and instrumentality were external to his divine being, then God could not be said to be Creator. If God's creating, however, entailed the bestowal of

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<sup>11</sup> Irenaeus, *Haer.* 3.24.2; ANF 1:458.

<sup>12</sup> Athanasius, *Orationes contra Arianos* 1:28, in *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, Second Series, 14 vols., ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1952-1957), 4:323. Greek: ὁ θεὸς οὐδενὸς μετέχων, αὐτὸς τῆς ἑαυτοῦ σοφίας πατὴρ ἐστίν, ἧς οἱ μετέχοντες εἰῶθασι σοφοὶ καλεῖσθαι; PG 26:69.

<sup>13</sup> It is important to note that recent study of the New Testament has reexamined with benefit the relation of the person of Jesus to Jewish monotheism. Crucial is the question of the *identity* of God. Who is the one God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob? See especially Richard Bauckham, *God Crucified: Monotheism & Christology in the New Testament* (Cambridge/Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1998), and Larry Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ*. "The uniqueness of the divine identity was characterized [in the Old Testament] especially by two features: that the one God is sole Creator of all things and that the one God is sole Ruler of all things." Bauckham, *God Crucified*, 25. The New Testament application to Jesus of Old Testament texts (for example, Ps 110:1) that speak of God's creative activity and of his sovereignty over the world is the manner in which the New Testament identifies Jesus as being of the one true God. From this perspective, patristic argument that issued into the conciliar statements of faith represents a strong continuity with the apostolic witness.

life intended as an eternal communion with God who is life, then the creative energy of God must be internal to his divine being.

This is, of course, precisely what the Arians denied. The unipersonalism of Arian monotheism did not allow God to be conceived as a being capable of self-communication. For them the movement of God toward another was necessarily an act of will, and therefore that other toward whom God moves and gives his gifts must necessarily be a creature. For God "to beget" his Word and Son was for God "to create" his Word and Son. Therefore, according to the Arians, to confess God as "Creator" was to worship him rightly and sufficiently. To such a claim Athanasius responded that to speak of God as "Creator" is not to speak of God as he is according to his own nature. Rather it is to speak of God only as he is in relationship to his works. "What likeness is there between Son and work, that [the Arians] should parallel a father's with a maker's function? . . . A work is external to the nature, but a son is the proper offspring of the essence."<sup>14</sup> The phrase "proper offspring of the essence" is important. It is the central assertion in the language of Athanasius that apart from the Son there is none who is or can be called God. Proper to the identity of God is the existence of the Son. But this is simply to say that the Son is proper to the Fatherhood of God, for the name "Father" is a term correlative to that of "Son," and if the Son is intrinsic to the reality of God, then God is Father in a relation to that one who is his only Son. The Father-Son relation is constitutive to the reality of God.

Athanasius often accused the Arians of proclaiming a God who is as barren as a light that does not lighten and as a fountain that does not give forth water.<sup>15</sup> However, such a view, which again renders God's difference from the world in terms of utter opposition, blasphemes the God who is. The divine essence is itself fruitful and generative (γεννητική φύσις), and for that reason the communion and union of God and man that was intended from the beginning is a communion of divine persons in which man was created to partake. The argument of Athanasius is important: "If God creates things that are external to him and did not beforehand exist, by willing them to be and so become their Creator, much more will he first

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<sup>14</sup> Athanasius, *C. Ar.* 1.29; *NPNF*<sup>2</sup> 4:323. Greek: τὸ γὰρ ὁμοιον υἱὸς καὶ ποίημα, ἵνα τὰ ἐπὶ τοῦ πατρὸς ταῦτα καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν δημιουργῶν εἴπωσι . . . τὸ ποίημα ἔξωθεν τοῦ ποιούντος ἐστίν, ὁ δὲ υἱὸς ἴδιον τῆς οὐσίας γέννημα ἐστί; PG 26:72.

<sup>15</sup> Athanasius, *C. Ar.* 1.19, 2.2; *NPNF*<sup>2</sup> 4:317, 349.



be Father of an Offspring from his proper essence. If [the Arians] attribute to God the willing about things that are not, why do they not recognize *that in God* [italics added] that lies above the will? Now that which is by nature surpasses will and that he should be Father of his proper Word."<sup>16</sup> Again, the issue at stake was whether the man of the Gospel narratives was in fact the God who creates and whether, therefore, the gospel is, as Paul writes, "the power of God unto salvation for all who believe" (Rom 1:16). Who God is and how he is, that is, the nature of the reality of God is very much related to the destiny of man.

Athanasius will argue the case for the Son's natural yet distinct deity within the unity of the one God through a host of Biblical passages and images. For our purposes two will suffice, namely the two we briefly mentioned above, that of fountain and that of light. Quoting Jeremiah 2:13 and Baruch 3:10-12, Athanasius notes that God is called a "fountain" (πηγή), that is, a source of living water. Referring to 1 John 1:5 he notes that God is called "light" (φῶς). However the Son "in contrast with the fountain is called river" (ποταμός, quoting Ps 65:9),<sup>17</sup> and "in contrast with the light, he is called radiance" (ἀπαύγασμα, referring to Heb 1:3).<sup>18</sup> The theological deposit that Athanasius accrues from such Biblical imagery<sup>19</sup> can be seen in

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<sup>16</sup> Athanasius, *C. Ar.* 2.2; *NPNF*<sup>2</sup> 4:349. Greek: Εἰ δὲ τὰ ἐκτὸς καὶ οὐκ ὄντα πρότερον, βουλόμενος δὲ αὐτὰ εἶναι, δημιουργεῖ, καὶ γίνεται τούτων ποιητής, πολλῶ πρότερον εἴη ἂν πατὴρ γεννήματος ἐκ τῆς ἰδίας οὐσίας. Εἰ γὰρ τὸ βούλεσθαι περὶ τῶν μὴ ὄντων διδοῦσι τῷ θεῷ, διὰ τί μὴ τὸ ὑπερκείμενον τῆς βουλήσεως τοῦ ἐπιγινώσκουσι τοῦ θεοῦ Ὑπεραναβέβηκε δὲ τῆς βουλήσεως τὸ πεφυκέναι καὶ εἶναι αὐτὸν πατέρα τοῦ ἰδίου λόγου; PG 26:149.

<sup>17</sup> Ps 65:9 states: ὁ ποταμός τοῦ θεοῦ ἐπληρώθη ὑδάτων (LXX). A river is distinct from the fountain of the river, or the source of the river, yet is naturally bound to it by the unity of origin and the oneness of "nature" (*water from water*). As is common, the genitive form ὁ ποταμός τοῦ θεοῦ is understood to be equivalent to ὁ ποταμός ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ. "God" is the source out of which the river flows.

<sup>18</sup> Athanasius, *Epistulae ad Serapionem* 1.19, in C. R. B. Shapland, *Letters Concerning the Holy Spirit* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1951), 109-110; Greek: PG 26:573. Shapland is the standard English translation of the letters of Athanasius to Serapion of Thumis. As Shapland notes, this is the meaning of the Nicene phrase φῶς ἐκ φωτός, rather than as one light kindled from another, as had earlier been the case in Tatian (*adversus Graecos* 5) and Justin Martyr (*Dialogus cum Tryphone* 61; 128); see *Letters*, 109n8.

<sup>19</sup> We note here the understanding of Athanasius concerning why the Scriptures speak in terms of "illustrations" (τοιαῦτα τὰ παραδείγματα, *Ep. Serap.* 1.20). The Scriptures relieve "the impossibility of explaining and apprehending these matters in words." Athanasius speaks of "a pious and reverent use of reason" (εὐσεβεῖ λογισμῷ μετ' εὐλαβείας) and of "thinking legitimately" (μετὰ συγγνώμης νοεῖν, *Ep. Serap.* 1.20).

his development of these images in *Orations against the Arians* 3.3–6. Athanasius places his discussion of the images of the river and the radiance within an interpretation of Jesus' words that "I am in the Father and the Father is in me" (John 10:38; 14:11):

For the Son is in the Father, as it is allowed to know, because the whole being of the Son is proper to the Father's essence, as radiance from light and stream from fountain; so that whoso sees the Son, sees what is proper to the Father, and knows that the Son's being, because from the Father, is therefore in the Father. For the Father is in the Son, since the Son is what is from the Father and proper to him, as in the radiance is the sun and in the word the thought, and in the stream the fountain.<sup>20</sup>

And again:

[Christ said this] in order to show the identity of the Godhead and the unity of the essence. . . . They are two, because the Father is Father and is not also Son, and the Son is Son and not also the Father; but the nature is one, for the offspring is not unlike its parent, for it is his image, and all that is the Father's is the Son's. Therefore, neither is the Son another God, for he was not procured from without. . . . He and the Father are one in propriety and peculiarity of nature, and in the identity of the one Godhead. For the radiance also is light, not second to the sun, nor a different light, nor from participation in it, but a whole and proper offspring from it. And such an offspring is necessarily one light; and no one would say that they are two lights, but sun and radiance two, yet one the light from the sun enlightening in its radiance all things. So also the Godhead of the Son is the Father's; whence it is also indivisible; and thus there is one God and none other than he.<sup>21</sup>

No discussion could more clearly articulate the conviction that the divine unity is one that is constituted in a dynamic communication of self. The

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Shapland gives good commentary (*Letters*, 114n6): "To Athanasius the function of reason is not, as for Eunomius, the reduction of revelation to the level of a natural, rationalistic theology. Nor is it the construction of a basis of natural theology upon which a science of revealed truth can be developed. . . . It lies with the sphere of exposition, the co-ordination of the various testimonies of Scripture and the discovery of the ecclesiastical sense."

<sup>20</sup> Athanasius, *C. Ar.* 3.3; *NPNF*<sup>2</sup> 4:395; Greek: PG 26:328.

<sup>21</sup> Athanasius, *C. Ar.* 3.3–4; *NPNF*<sup>2</sup> 4:395; Greek: PG 26:328–329.

Father is known and given in the Son, for the Son is naturally from the Father as he who shares intrinsically the Father's essence.

The Father is present and active in the world precisely in the mediation of the Son, for the Son is not alien to the reality of the Father but "proper to the Father" (τὸ ἴδιον τοῦ πατρός). The argument of Athanasius for the deity of the Holy Spirit is a simple extension of this argument.<sup>22</sup> If the Holy Spirit is of Christ and from him, then the unity that the Spirit has with the Son cannot be through anything that is not intrinsic to the divine being.<sup>23</sup> In *Letters to Serapion concerning the Holy Spirit* 19, where Athanasius speaks of Christ as radiance and river, he extends the illustration: "As then the Father is light and the Son is his radiance, we may see in the Son the Spirit in whom we are enlightened."<sup>24</sup> He continues similarly with the illustration of the fountain and the river: "As the Father is fountain and the Son is called river, we are said to drink the Spirit."<sup>25</sup> There is, then, what Athanasius calls a "co-ordination" (συστοιχία) that is and constitutes the single and unique identity of the one God: "If there is such co-ordination and unity within the holy Triad, who can separate either the Son from the Father, or the Spirit from the Son or from the Father himself."<sup>26</sup> This συστοιχία constitutes the unity of the one God, and for that reason the work of the Triad from the Father through the Son and in the Holy Spirit is

<sup>22</sup> Athanasius, *Ep. Serap.* 1.21; Shapland, *Letters*, 118: "But if, in regard to order and nature, the Spirit bears the same relation to the Son as the Son to the Father, will not he who calls the Spirit a creature necessarily hold the same to be true also of the Son?" To blaspheme the Spirit is also to blaspheme the Son. But then to blaspheme the Son is to blaspheme the Father himself. The formula of the Nicene Creed comes to mind: "who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified."

<sup>23</sup> Athanasius, *Ep. Serap.* 1.25; Shapland, *Letters*, 128: "The Spirit, therefore, is distinct from the creatures, and is shown rather to be proper to the Son and not alien from God." Greek: Ἄλλο ἄρα τῶν κτισμάτων ἐστὶ τὸ Πνεῦμα καὶ δέδεικται μᾶλλον ἴδιον εἶναι τοῦ υἱοῦ καὶ οὐ ξένον τοῦ θεοῦ; PG 26:588. Also, *Ep. Serap.* 1.25: Εἰ δὲ ὁ υἱός, ἐπειδὴ ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς ἐστίν, ἴδιος τῆς οὐσίας αὐτοῦ ἐστίν, ἀνάγκη καὶ τὸ Πνεῦμα, ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ λεγόμενον, ἴδιον εἶναι κατ' οὐσίαν τοῦ υἱοῦ; PG 26:588-89.

<sup>24</sup> Athanasius, *Ep. Serap.* 1.19; Shapland, *Letters*, 110-111. Greek: Τοῦ τοίνυν πατρὸς φωτὸς ὄντος, τοῦ δὲ υἱοῦ ἀπαυγασματος αὐτοῦ, ἔξεστιν ὄραν καὶ ἐν τῷ υἱῷ τὸ Πνεῦμα, ἐν ᾧ φωτιζόμεθα; PG 26:573. Athanasius quotes Eph 1:17-18: "that he may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him, having the eyes of your heart enlightened."

<sup>25</sup> Athanasius, *Ep. Serap.* 1.19; Shapland, *Letters*, 111-112. Greek: Πάλιν τε τοῦ πατρὸς ὄντος πηγῆς, τοῦ δὲ υἱοῦ ποταμοῦ λεγομένου, πίνειν λεγόμεθα τὸ Πνεῦμα; PG 26:573. Athanasius quotes 1 Cor 12:13: "We are all made to drink of one Spirit."

<sup>26</sup> Athanasius, *Ep. Serap.* 1.20; Shapland, *Letters*, 113.

a work of a singular energy that brings the work of God to its completion and consummation: "As the Son is an only-begotten offspring, so also the Spirit, being given and sent from the Son, is himself one and not many . . . but only Spirit. As the Son, the living Word, is one, so must the living activity and gift whereby he sanctifies and enlightens be one perfect and complete."<sup>27</sup> There is, therefore, "one sanctification that is derived from the Father, through the Son, in the Holy Spirit."<sup>28</sup>

There is, therefore, "a Triad, holy and complete," and this is none other than "the very tradition, teaching, and faith of the Catholic Church from the beginning, which the Lord gave, the Apostles preached and the Fathers kept."<sup>29</sup> Upon this confession of the one, true God, manifested in Christ and given in the Holy Spirit, "the Church is founded."<sup>30</sup> Shapland makes the crucial observation that "whenever the titles and figures which express the reality and character of the divine Son are correlated with the particular *operation* of divine power which gives them . . . we find Scriptures testifying that it is the Spirit who works."<sup>31</sup> We find the same manner of argumentation in the work of Athanasius.

As we have noted, true deity gives, bestows, and communicates. True deity does not itself partake in anything else, for it is itself sufficient, whole, and perfect. Athanasius makes this claim also of the Holy Spirit: "He, therefore, who is not sanctified by another, nor a partaker of sanctification, but who is himself partaken, and in whom all the creatures are sanctified, how can he be one from among all things or pertain to those who partake of him?"<sup>32</sup> Athanasius illustrates the point through a number of claims:

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<sup>27</sup> Athanasius, *Ep. Serap.* 1.20; Shapland, *Letters*, 116-117. Greek: Καὶ γὰρ ὡσπερ μονογενῆς ὁ υἱὸς ἐστίν, οὕτως καὶ τὸ Πνεῦμα παρὰ τοῦ υἱοῦ διδόμενον καὶ πεμπόμενον, καὶ αὐτὸ ἐν ἐστὶ καὶ οὐ πολλὰ ... ἀλλὰ μόνον αὐτὸ Πνεῦμα. Ἐνὸς γὰρ ὄντος τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ ζῶντος λόγου, μίαν εἶναι δεῖ τελείαν καὶ πλήρη τὴν ἁγιαστικὴν καὶ φωτιστικὴν ζῶσαν ἐνέργειαν αὐτοῦ καὶ δωρεάν; PG 26:580. Also *Ep. Serap.* 1.30; Shapland, *Letters*, 135.

<sup>28</sup> Athanasius, *Ep. Serap.* 1.20; Shapland, *Letters*, 116. Greek: [We are to believe that] ἐν εἶναι τὸν ἁγιασμόν, τὸν ἐκ πατρὸς δι' υἱοῦ ἐν Πνεύματι ἁγίῳ γινόμενον; PG 26:577.

<sup>29</sup> Athanasius, *Ep. Serap.* 1.28; Shapland, *Letters*, 133-134. Greek: Τριὰς τοίνυν ἁγία καὶ τελεία ἐστίν, ἐν πατρὶ καὶ υἱῷ καὶ ἁγίῳ Πνεύματι θεολογουμένη; PG 26:596.

<sup>30</sup> Athanasius, *Ep. Serap.* 1.28; Shapland, *Letters*, 133-134.

<sup>31</sup> Shapland, *Letters*, 110 n. 11. Emphasis mine.

<sup>32</sup> Athanasius, *Ep. Serap.* 1.223; Shapland, *Letters*, 123. Greek: Τὸ τοίνυν μὴ ἁγιαζόμενον παρ' ἑτέρου, μηδὲ μετέχον ἁγιασμοῦ, ἀλλ' αὐτὸ μεθεκτὸν ὄν, ἐν ᾧ καὶ τὰ

- "Through the Spirit we are all said to be partakers of God."<sup>33</sup>
- "The Spirit is, and is called, Spirit of holiness and renewal."<sup>34</sup> In him we are sanctified and renewed.
- The Spirit is called "a life-giving Spirit."<sup>35</sup> Through him we are made alive and quickened.
- "The Spirit is called unction and seal."<sup>36</sup> Through him we are sealed in baptism and anointed.
- The Spirit is proper to the Son, and therefore the Spirit is the Spirit of sonship through whom we are made to be children of God.<sup>37</sup>

This suffices to illustrate the argument of Athanasius that "whenever the titles and figures which express the reality and character of the divine Son are correlated with the particular operation of divine power which gives them," it is the Holy Spirit who is this operative power. "The Triad is [in the Holy Spirit] complete. In him the Word makes glorious the creation, and by bestowing upon it divine life and sonship, draws it to the Father. . . . The Spirit, therefore, does not belong to things originated; he pertains to the Godhead of the Father, and in him the Word makes things originated

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κτίσματα πάντα ἀγιάζεται, πῶς ἂν εἶη ἐν τῶν πάντων, ἴδιον τῶν μετεχόντων αὐτοῦ; PG 26:584. Also *ad Serapionem* 1.27; Shapland, *Letters*, 132: "The Spirit is always the same; he does not belong to those who partake, but all things partake of him."

<sup>33</sup> Athanasius, *Ep. Serap.* 1.24; Shapland, *Letters*, 125. Greek: Καὶ διὰ τοῦ Πνεύματος λεγόμεθα πάντες μέτοχοι τοῦ θεοῦ; PG 26:585.

<sup>34</sup> Athanasius, *Ep. Serap.* 1.22; Shapland, *Letters*, 122. Greek: Πάλιν τε Πνεῦμα ἀγιοσύνης καὶ ἀνακαινώσεώς ἐστὶ τε καὶ λέγεται τὸ Πνεῦμα; PG 26:581. He quotes Paul in Rom 1:4; 1 Cor 6:11; and Titus 3:4-7.

<sup>35</sup> Athanasius, *Ep. Serap.* 1.23; Shapland, *Letters*, 123. Greek: Πνεῦμα ζωοποιὸν λέγεται; PG 26:584. He quotes Rom 8:11; Acts 3:15; John 4:14; 7:39.

<sup>36</sup> Athanasius, *Ep. Serap.* 1.23; Shapland, *Letters*, 124-125. Greek: χρίσμα λέγεται τὸ Πνεῦμα, καὶ ἐστὶ σφραγίς; PG 26:584. He quotes 1 John 2:27; Isa 61:3; Eph 1:13; 2 Cor 2:15; Gal 4:19; 2 Pet 1:4. "Being thus sealed, we are duly made, as Peter put it, 'sharers in the divine nature'; and thus all creation partakes of the Word in the Spirit." Shapland, *Letters*, 123.

<sup>37</sup> Athanasius, *Ep. Serap.* 1.25; Shapland, *Letters*, 128-129: "If the Son, because he is of the Father, is proper to his essence, it must be that the Spirit, who is said to be from God (ἐκ θεοῦ), is in essence proper to the Son. And so, as the Lord is Son, the Spirit is called Spirit of sonship. Again, as the Son is Wisdom and Truth, the Spirit is described as Spirit of Wisdom and Truth. Again the Son is the Power of God and Lord of Glory, and the Spirit is called Spirit of Power and of Glory." In each instance the reality of Christ is communicated to the Christian through the instrumentality of the Spirit.

divine. But he in whom creation is made divine cannot be outside the Godhead of the Father."<sup>38</sup>

However, we might ask, just where is the operative power of the Holy Spirit located? In his book on *Byzantine Theology*, John Meyendorf speaks of the personal reality of the Spirit remaining hidden. The Holy Spirit possesses a certain "kenotic" existence whose fulfillment consists in revealing the Son of the Father.<sup>39</sup> This certainly corresponds to the testimony of the Gospels. Through the instrumentality of the Spirit, the Word took flesh of the Virgin Mary and was made man (Luke 1:35; John 1:14). According to the Gospel of John, when the Paraclete comes, whom Jesus will send from the Father, "he will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you" (John 16:14-15). First of all, therefore, the kenotic character of the Holy Spirit exists in the fact that he is hidden in the person and reality of Christ himself. However, in the operation of the Son "for us and for our salvation," that is, in the communication of the reality of Christ to the Christian believer, the kenotic character of the Holy Spirit exists in the preaching and sacramental administrations of the church. The Holy Spirit wears a christological face which is to say an ecclesial/sacramental face. For Athanasius, this is perhaps especially the case concerning baptism.

On any number of occasions Athanasius speaks of the Triad being "complete" (τελεία) in the Holy Spirit.<sup>40</sup> The unity of the divine reality is itself disposed into a Triad of communication and co-inherence that finds its perfection in the Holy Spirit: from the Father through the Son in the Holy Spirit. A baptism that is true and efficacious must be, therefore, into the fullness of God, that is, into the three-fold name of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. In *Orations against the Arians* 2.41-42 Athanasius argues that

<sup>38</sup> Athanasius, *Ep. Serap.* 1.25; Shapland, *Letters*, 129. Greek: "Σπιριτ ισ της Σπιριτ οφ Τρυτη ανδ Παραχλετε εξ ου δεικνυται τελειαν ειναι εν τούτω την Τριάδα. Εν τούτω γ' ουν ο λόγος την κτίσιν δοξάζει, θεοποιών δε και υιοποιών προσάγει τω πατρι . . . Ουκ αρατ των γενητων εστι το Πνευμα, αλλ' ιδιον της του πατρος θεότητος, εν ψ και τα γενητα ο λόγος θεοποιεί. Εν ψ δε θεοποιείται η κτίσις, ουκ αν ειη εκτος αυτο της του πατρος θεότητος; PG 26:589.

<sup>39</sup> John Meyendorf, *Byzantine Theology: Historical Trends and Doctrinal Themes*, 2nd ed. (New York: Fordham University Press, 1983), 168-169.

<sup>40</sup> Athanasius, *Ep. Serap.* 1.25; Shapland, *Letters*, 129: "The Triad is in him [i.e. the Spirit] complete." *Ep. Serap.* 1.28; Shapland, *Letters*, 134: "There is, then, a Triad holy and complete, confessed to be God in Father, Son, and Holy Spirit."

the baptism of the Arians is other than real and true because they do not confess a "true Father, because they deny what is from him and like his essence." The baptismal consecration of the Arians is, therefore, "altogether empty and unprofitable, making a show, but in reality being no help towards religion."<sup>41</sup> In like fashion Athanasius extends this argument to the Tropici. Thinking the Holy Spirit to be a creature, "the rite of initiation which you claim to perform is not entirely into the Godhead."<sup>42</sup> Whoever is baptized in the name of the Father alone, or in the name of the Son alone, or in the Father and the Son without the Holy Spirit, "receives nothing, but remains ineffective and uninitiated . . . for the rite of initiation is in the Triad."<sup>43</sup>

Since the Holy Spirit "completes" the reality of the one God, only faith in the Trinity unites and binds one to God. Repeatedly Athanasius asserts that unless the Spirit is divine, proper to the divine Son, then those who receive the Spirit are not bound to God. Commenting on 1 John 4:13, which speaks of God being in us and we in God, Athanasius argues that the Spirit does not unite the Son to the Father, for the Son is proper to the being of the Father as the Father's own Word and radiance. Rather, the Spirit receives from the Word. "But we, apart from the Spirit, are strange and distant from God, and by the participation of the Spirit we are knit into the Godhead."<sup>44</sup> What the Son possesses by nature, "that he wishes to be given to us through the Spirit irrevocably."<sup>45</sup> In and through the Spirit, who is proper to the Son, that which is true of the Son is given by grace and

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<sup>41</sup> Athanasius, *C. Ar.* 2:42; *NPNF*<sup>2</sup> 4:371. Greek: πῶς οὐ παντελῶς κενὸν καὶ ἀλυσιτελὲς τὸ παρ' αὐτῶν διδόμενον ἔστι, προσποίησιν μὲν ἔχον, τῇ δὲ ἀληθείᾳ μηδὲν ἔχον πρὸς εὐσέβειαν βοήθημα; PG 26:236-237.

<sup>42</sup> Athanasius, *Ep. Serap.* 1.29; Shapland, *Letters*, 137. Greek: καὶ ἡ τελείωσις δὲ ὑμῶν, ἣν νομίζετε ποιεῖν, οὕτω φρονούντες, οὐκ ἔστιν ὁλόκληρος εἰς θεότητα γινομένη; PG 26:596. Shapland consistently translates τελείωσις as "rite of initiation." Certainly the Greek indicates the administration of baptism, but it entails the idea that the efficacy and reality of the baptism given and received exists only if the perfection of the Triad is that reality into which one is baptized. That the Triad is "complete" (τελεία) in the Holy Spirit is not apart from the τελείωσις of baptism, that is, its proper form and the proper faith associated with it. Only in this way is the one baptized perfected by union with the one, true God.

<sup>43</sup> Athanasius, *Ep. Serap.* 1.30; Shapland, *Letters*, 140.

<sup>44</sup> Athanasius, *C. Ar.* 3.24; *NPNF*<sup>2</sup> 4:407. Greek: ἡμεῖς δὲ χωρὶς μὲν τοῦ Πνεύματος ἔξοι καὶ μακρὰν ἔσμεν τοῦ θεοῦ. τῇ δὲ τοῦ Πνεύματος μετοχῇ συναπτόμεθα τῇ θεότητι; PG 26:373.

<sup>45</sup> Athanasius, *C. Ar.* 3.25; *NPNF*<sup>2</sup> 4:407.

adoption to those who believe.<sup>46</sup> And in this gift of the Spirit in whom the Son is given, we become children of God and he becomes our Father.<sup>47</sup> Referring to baptism, Athanasius asks those who deny the deity of the Spirit, if this is your belief, "who will unite you to God?"<sup>48</sup>

However, it is important to note that through the Holy Spirit the person of faith is not united or knit to the deity of the Son directly. Rather, faith unites with the humanity of Christ that in union with the Word has become the "flesh of the Word." When Athanasius says that the Word is "the expression of the Father's person,"<sup>49</sup> he is referring to Jesus Christ, not the λόγος ἄσαρκος. As we noted above, the life of Christ as narrated in the Gospels is understood to be the human form of the life of God. Born of the Spirit and flesh from the Virgin Mary, Jesus is "true man" and "true God," and this in identity of person.<sup>50</sup> "Whoever sees me, sees the Father" (John 14:9). As Athanasius puts it, "What things the Son does are the Father's works, for the Son is the form (τὸ εἶδος) of the Godhead of the Father who did the works."<sup>51</sup> In this context we must note that, extending the image,

<sup>46</sup> Athanasius, *C. Ar.* 3.25; *NPNF*<sup>2</sup> 4:407: "that the Spirit should be freely given (χαρίζεται) through him to those who believe, through whom we are found to be in God, and in this respect to be conjoined (συνάπτεσθαι) in him."

<sup>47</sup> Athanasius, *C. Ar.* 3.25; *NPNF*<sup>2</sup> 4:407: "For since the Word is in the Father, and the Spirit is given from the Word, he wills that we should receive the Spirit, that, when we receive it, thus having the Spirit of the Word which is in the Father, we too may be found on account of the Spirit to become one in the Word, and through him in the Father."

<sup>48</sup> Athanasius, *Ep. Serap.* 1.29; Shapland, *Letters*, 138. Also: "The faith in the Triad, which has been delivered to us, joins us to God." Shapland, *Letters*, 139. For discussion of this entire issue, see the little-known study of Karl Bornhäuser, *Die Vergottungslehre des Athanasius und Johannes Damascenus*, Beiträge zur Förderung christlicher Theologie 7 (Gütersloh: 'Der Rufer' Evangelischer Verlag, 1903), 13–48.

<sup>49</sup> Athanasius, *C. Ar.* 1.9; *NPNF*<sup>2</sup> 4:311. Greek: χαρακτηρ γὰρ ἐστὶ τῆς τοῦ πατρὸς ὑποστάσεως; PG 26:29. Also, *C. Ar.* 3.6; *NPNF*<sup>2</sup> 4:396: "the fullness of the Father's Godhead is the being of the Son, and the Son is whole God." Already in Irenaeus, *Haer.* 4.6.6, 4.20.7; *ANF* 1:469, 490: "the Father is the invisible of the Son, but the Son is the visible of the Father" and "the glory of God is a living man, and the life of man is the vision of God."

<sup>50</sup> Note this important claim: *Ep. Serap.* 1.31; Shapland, *Letters*, 145–146: "When the Word visited the holy Virgin Mary, the Spirit came to her with him, and the Word in the Spirit moulded (ἐπλαττε) the body and conformed (ἠρμοξευ) it to himself, desiring to join (συνάψαι) and present all creation to the Father through himself, and in it (i.e., the body) 'to reconcile all things.'" Greek: PG 26:605.

<sup>51</sup> Athanasius, *C. Ar.* 3.6; *NPNF*<sup>2</sup> 4:396. Greek: PG 26:332.



Athanasius can also say that the Spirit is the perfect image of the Son. "The Son is in the Spirit as in his own image."<sup>52</sup> Similarly, the Spirit is said to be the "unction" and the "seal" of Christ.<sup>53</sup> For the baptismal thinking of Athanasius these are important claims concerning the Holy Spirit and the life of the Christian. Through the instrumentality of the Spirit, who is the "image" and the "seal" of Christ, those who are baptized into the "perfection" of the Triad receive the form of Christ. "The seal has the form of Christ who seals, and those who are sealed partake of it, being conformed to it."<sup>54</sup> Those who partake of the Spirit receive in the Spirit the form of Christ, that is, the life he lived according to the flesh. The canonical narrative is the literary form of the life of Christ and, for that reason, also of the life of the one "in Christ."

In his treatise on the Lord's Supper against Ulrich Zwingli, Martin Luther adds his so-called "Great Confession" (1528). He orders the confession by way of a trinitarian economy in which life and righteousness is restored to the sinner. To be noted is Luther's insistence on the self-communication of the persons of the Trinity. In this Luther is at one with Athanasius and the central tradition of the early Fathers. Salvation consists in the participation of man with God and this by way of God's granting himself in the three-fold economy of the Spirit through the ministry of the church, of the Son in and through the Spirit, and of the Father in and through the Son. The "Great Confession" is as follows:

These are the three persons and one God, who has given himself to us wholly and completely, with all that he is and has. The Father gives himself to us, with heaven and earth and all the creatures, in order that they may serve us and benefit us. But this gift has become obscured and useless through Adam's fall. Therefore the Son himself subsequently gave himself and bestowed all his works, sufferings, wisdom, and righteousness, and reconciled us to the Father, in order that restored to life and righteousness, we might also know and have the Father and his gifts. But because this grace would benefit no one if it remained so

<sup>52</sup> Athanasius, *Ep. Serap.* 1.20; Shapland, *Letters*, 115. Greek: Ὡς γὰρ ἐν ἰδίᾳ εἰκόνι ἐστὶν ὁ υἱὸς ἐν τῷ Πνεύματι. οὕτω καὶ ὁ πατὴρ ἐν τῷ υἱῷ; PG 26:577.

<sup>53</sup> Athanasius, *Ep. Serap.* 1.23; Shapland, *Letters*, 124. Athanasius, *C. Ar.* 1.47; NPNF<sup>2</sup> 4:334.

<sup>54</sup> Athanasius, *Ep. Serap.* 1.23; Shapland, *Letters*, 124. Greek: ἡ δὲ σφραγὶς τὴν μορφήν Χριστοῦ τοῦ σφραγιζοῦτος ἔχει. καὶ ταύτης οἱ σφραγιζόμενοι μετέχουσι, μορφοῦμενοι κατ' αὐτήν; PG 26:585.

profoundly hidden and could not come to us, the Holy Spirit comes and gives himself to us also, wholly and completely. He teaches us to understand this deed of Christ which has been manifested to us, helps us to receive and preserve it, use it to our advantage and impart it to others, increase and extend it. He does this both inwardly and outwardly—inwardly by means of faith and other Spiritual gifts, outwardly through the gospel [i.e. preaching], baptism and the sacrament of the altar, through which as through three means or methods he comes to us and inculcates the sufferings of Christ for the benefit of our salvation.<sup>55</sup>

In this summary statement of the trinitarian reality of the justification of the sinner, Luther speaks in a manner not foreign to Athanasius and the Greek Fathers. Justification consists in the self-communication of the Triune God who in the ecclesial operation of the Holy Spirit makes the sufferings of Christ our own and so gives us salvation and knowledge of the Father. In the work of the Spirit who is the image of the Son we become conformed to Christ by receiving all that he is and has, and so in the Spirit we become sons of God. Δικαιοποίησις = υἱοποίησις = θεοποίησις.

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<sup>55</sup> Martin Luther, *Luther's Works*, American Edition, 55 vols., ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann (Philadelphia: Fortress Press; St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1955-1986), 37:366.