

Master Thesis

A Critical Analysis of David Coffey's and Colin E. Gunton's
Treatment of Augustine's Mutual-love Theory

By

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The master thesis is carried out as part of the education at the University of Agder and is therefore approved as such. However, this does not imply that the University answers for the methods that are used or the conclusions that are drawn.

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UNIVERSITETET I AGDER

While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul took the road through the interior and arrived at Ephesus. There he found some disciples and asked them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" They answered, "No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit." So Paul asked, "Then what baptism did you receive?" "John's baptism," they replied. Paul said, "John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus." On hearing this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied.

Acts 19:1-6 (NIV)

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Introduction

“...In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit (Matt 28: 19).” The Holy Spirit is being increasingly mentioned and included in the world of Christian Ecclesiology, not only in baptism and the reciting of creeds, but through prayer, blessings and the gift of tongues, though dependent on to which kind of Christian tradition one belongs. How the church has understood the Holy Spirit has an effect on how Christians themselves understand the Holy Spirit. As Christians we are all part of a tradition, and we think, act and interpret certain ways on the basis to which Christian tradition we, more or less belong. Augustine is considered to be the theologian having most influence on Western Trinitarian tradition. His view on the Holy Spirit still stands as a subject for theological discourse today.

This thesis will be another contribution to the debate on the Spirit as part of the Trinity. Two major contributions to the doctrine of the Trinity will come forth in this thesis: the view of Catholic theologian David Coffey and the late Protestant theologian Colin E. Gunton. Both treat Augustine’s theory of The Holy Spirit as the mutual love between the Father and the Son, henceforth referred to as the mutual-love theory. Neither Coffey nor Gunton are typical spokesmen for their traditions, but both offer creative alternatives that emphasize the Holy Spirit as opposed to their traditions which tended to tone down the Holy Spirit.

The work of St. Augustine is far too extensive to study in a Master thesis and so is *De Trinitate* too. My approach will therefore focus on a theory, the mutual-love theory, found in Augustine’s book *De Trinitate*, but not through Augustine, but through the understanding and view made by Colin E. Gunton and David Coffey. This Master thesis will be a view on David Coffey and Colin E. Gunton’s respective standpoints in this particular theme. Further, I will compare, contrast and analyze the two standpoints, bringing forth both positive and criticizable parts with their stands and account for my own view.

In the thesis I will use words which speak of God as male; this is done deliberately since both Gunton and Coffey use words like ‘He’, ‘him’ in their discussion about God and ‘He’ or ‘him’ talking about Jesus due to his sonship to the Father. As for the passages I quote from scripture, I do use the New International Version.

I will start with the chapter, *Scripture*, where I will look upon Coffey and Gunton’s treatment of Augustine’s interpreting of scripture in developing the mutual-love theory. Further, I will let the two theologians show their treatment of Augustinian theology and whether they are aware of their own traditional backgrounds. This will be treated under the *Tradition* chapter. The third chapter is called *Reason*. Here I show Gunton and Coffey’s use

of the term 'immanent' and 'economic' Trinity and discuss the appropriateness of the terms. In the fourth chapter, *Experience* I will focus on the experience of the Holy Spirit. As in the foregoing chapters, this will also be treated through Coffey and Gunton. At the very end, my main conclusion, will illuminate the fruits of the discussion in this thesis. The thesis statement follows, then I introduce Augustine and his mutual-love theory.

Thesis statement

I will now specify the thesis statement beneath. This thesis will be approached hermeneutically. I will not engage the original works of Augustine, but I will look at Coffey and Gunton and how they treat Augustine. These two interpretations and understandings of Augustine will be the aim. I will organize the thesis with the four sources of Theology; Scripture, Tradition, Experience and Reason¹. How Coffey and Gunton make use of the four sources when treating Augustine's mutual-love theory. I will critically engage Coffey and Gunton's treatment of the mutual-love theory as developed by Augustine. The problem is therefore formulated this way:

- The differences between David Coffey's and Colin Gunton's critical interpretation of Augustine's pneumatological mutual-love theory are shaped by their use and balance of the four sources of theology.

I am structuring the thesis after the four sources of theology. In that way I will try to deduce how both Coffey and Gunton make use of the sources in their interpretation of Augustine's mutual-love theory. Christian theology draws upon four main sources: Scripture, Tradition, Experience and Reason. As the British theologian Alister E. McGrath says in his *Christian Theology*, the sources are "not regarded as being of equal importance."² I therefore find it interesting to see how Coffey and Gunton make use of the four sources in their interpretation of Augustine's mutual-love theory, and I will give room for a chapter on each of the four sources. This will be the main part of the Master thesis.

The way to treat the four sources has been different, due to which tradition one belongs. The order in which the sources are treated, shows what source is considered to be treated first, for example a Catholic might treat *tradition* first, while Lutherans *scripture*, and Pentecostals

¹ Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Theology: An Introduction* (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), 121.

² Ibid.

religious *experience*. I will use the following order on the four sources in my thesis: scripture, tradition, experience and reason. Augustine’s emphasis is strong on scripture, therefore I find it natural to start here. Second, I will engage tradition, which is strongly connected to scripture. The third source I will go into is reason and at last experience. Let it be said that the overall thesis will attempt to do all the sources justice no matter what order they are treated in or what status they have in Augustine, Coffey or Gunton.

Further I suggest that the sources have mutual influence on each other. How theologians think about scripture is shaped by the tradition and visa versa. This counts for all four sources reciprocally. Thus, how I interpret the Gospel of John will be affected by my view of tradition, experience and reason. Further this means that how I see experience is dependent on which tradition I come from, how I am used to reading scripture and the way in which I emphasize reason. This reciprocal structure is illustrated beneath in Figure1³.

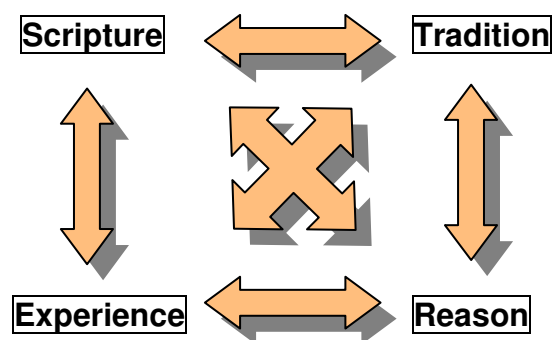


Figure 1

Augustine of Hippo

As I mentioned earlier in the introduction, I am not going to interpret Augustine directly, but through the works of Coffey and Gunton. Still Augustine is treated thoroughly by both and to be able get in depth of their interpretations, I feel it is necessary to treat Augustine’s background. Augustine’s treatise *De Trinitate* has had a major significance on Western Trinitarian theology as well as pneumatology. Though written in the fourth and fifth centuries, the work became an important contribution to the Filioque debates throughout the patristic period. *De Trinitate* is the work by Augustine where he deals with the Holy Spirit and the Trinity, and therefore this will be the work most relevant for my thesis.

³ I first met this figure in the introduction part of KR403 Tro og Etikk lectures, fall 2007.

Augustine was born in 354 AD and lived his whole life, except five years, in Northern Africa. He grew up in a Latin-speaking family in Thagaste (present Souk-Aras). His father Patricius, was a pagan, while his mother Monika was a Christian. Patricius was not a wealthy man, but owned land and was a member of the Town Council, a *Decurio*. One might think a *Decurio* would bring good wealth, but due to his position Patricius was supposed to contribute money to public projects and therefore this could have been the factor holding the family back in the middle class.⁴ Augustine went to school in Madaura outside Thagaste and was years later, with help from the family friend Romanianus, sent to Cartago for education in rhetoric.

During his early years in Cartago he was introduced to the writings of Cicero. Cicero's dialogue *Hortensius* and probably works in the same genre, awakened in him a burning desire to search for the wisdom.⁵ His search for wisdom brought him in contact with Manichaeism. He was an adherent of Manichaeism for a period of nine years, until he was twenty-eight years old. While being in Cartago, he took a concubine, Floria, with whom he had a son, Adeodatus. Augustine's rhetorical skills led him to Rome and later Milan. In Milan he opened a school of rhetoric. There he was influenced by the neoplatonic currents and began to read platonic writings such as Plotin. Augustine turned away from the Manichaeism he met through Cicero, and moved towards Christianity through reading Plotin and his expounders. Platonists viewed Christianity as being barbarian and vulgar, but by the conviction of Bishop Ambrose, Augustine learned to pursue wisdom another way, the Christian way, that could stand the platonic wisdom.⁶

In the year of 386 Augustine's conversion to Christianity took place. Together with his friend Alypius in the garden, discussing faith, he suddenly heard a voice as Bonner puts it.

In this mood, even the company of Alypius became intolerable, and Augustine left his side. He flung himself down under a fig-tree and wept bitterly, calling upon God. In an agony of the spirit he cried out: 'How long, how long, tomorrow? Why not now? Why should there not be at this hour an end to my baseness? As if in answer, there came from a neighbouring house the voice of a child, whether boy or girl he could not tell, repeating the words: 'Take and read! Take and read!'⁷

This childish voice meant that he should read the Bible. Augustine was baptised by Ambrose during Easter of 387. The following year his mother Monica died and Augustine, together

⁴ Mary T. Clark, *Augustine* (London: Continuum, 2000), 1.

⁵ Eugene TeSelle, *Augustine the Theologian* (London: Burns & Oates, 1970), 26.

⁶ Trond Berg Eriksen, *Augustin: Det Urolige Hjerte* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 2000), 86.

⁷ Gerald Bonner, *St Augustine of Hippo: Life and Controversies* (London: SCM Press, 1963), 91.

with his friends, founded a monastery in his former house in Tagaste. In 391 Augustine went to visit Hippo Regius (present Algeria) where he met Bishop Valerius. The Bishop was in need of an assistant priest, and the congregation in the local church proposed Augustine as a suitable candidate. Being allowed to live in the monastery near the Hippo church, Augustine agreed to be ordained.⁸ Four years later Augustine was consecrated as co-bishop next to Valerius to all the conservative Bishop's irritation; The senior Bishop of Numidia, Megalius of Calama accused him of being crypto-manichaen.⁹ In 396 Valerius died and Augustine succeeded him as Bishop of Hippo, where he remained for thirty-five years, until his death in 430.¹⁰

During the last forty years of his life, Augustine wrote a great number of articles, many of them with the purpose of attacking heresies and protecting Christianity, i.e. apologetic literature. In the years after his mother's death, he produced several documents with assaults on the Manichees. Now, why am I dealing with Augustine's apologetic works? Later in the thesis, I will, in chapter two (*Tradition*) I look upon Gunton's view on being and person which deals with Augustine's background in Manichees. In *On True Religion* Augustine had a triple objective towards the Manichees. First he demonstrated that God was the Creator of everything, thereby refuting dualism. God created everything, therefore all things must have been created good. So thereby, everything that exists contains some good. Secondly, he met the attacks made on scripture, the Bible. Third, Augustine had to respond to the argument set out by Manichees that the Catholic Church was a pure enemy of reason.¹¹ From around year 405, Augustine shifted focus from on Manicheism to Donatism, seeing the need for his help attacking them. Augustine thought the Donatists had a wrong view on the Church and a conception of sacraments that was incompatible with the Catholic view. He wrote his last book against the Donatists, *Against Gaudentius*, around 420.¹² The last main controversy Augustine fought was Pelagianism, which as Bonner puts it: "differed from both Manicheism and Donatism, in that these were religious groups clearly and deliberately outside Catholic communion the former by its doctrine, the latter by its own violation."¹³

For the purpose of this thesis I will only mention three works of Augustine. *The Confessions*, created as a prayer to God, is a rhetorical wonder that today is considered to be

⁸ Clark, *Augustine*, 11.

⁹ Peter Robert Lamont Brown, *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 2000), 198.

¹⁰ Clark, *Augustine*.

¹¹ Bonner, *St Augustine of Hippo: Life and Controversies*, 135-36.

¹² *Ibid.*, 136-38.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 138.

one of the first self-biographies ever written. Whereas the first nine books were autobiographic and written before Monika's death in 387, the last four books presented Augustine's present thoughts and concerns for the future in relation to his tasks as Bishop and expositor of scripture.¹⁴ The second major work I will mention is *City of God*. Augustine differentiates between the city of God and the city of the world. Chadwick emphasize that Augustine began to write *City of God* as a response to the antichristian reactions on the fall of Rome in 412. The book caters to polytheists, neoplatonic minds, stoics and stresses the good lies in eternal life in and with God.¹⁵

De Trinitate

The third and most relevant work for this thesis is Augustine's treatise *The Trinity (De Trinitate)*. In this work he explores the doctrine of the Trinity philosophically. As well as Augustine's most extensive treatment of God, this is, as Eriksen points out, also his most extensive on the human spirit. As well as a major doctrinal writing, *The Trinity* is a final attack on the heresies of Arian, Julian and Pelagius.¹⁶ As the work which says the most about God and the Trinity, it can be said to be deductive in that this is Augustine's most extensive work on the Holy Spirit as well. The work is divided in two parts: Book I-VII, which treats the mystery of Trinity, and book VIII-XV where he goes on about the Trinitarian image of God.¹⁷ In the latter part Augustine finds traces of the Trinity in several places, in love and in the human mind.¹⁸ As mentioned earlier, it is to *The Trinity* that Coffey and Gunton mostly refer when discussing the mutual-love theory of Augustine. Although written in the fourth and fifth centuries, *The Trinity* stands as a work of great significance due to the later Filioque debate in bringing forth the western viewpoint. *De Trinitate* is to be found in several translations. The one I am referring to in my thesis is the *translation of the 21th century* by Edmund Hill in the series of *The Works Of St. Augustine*.

¹⁴ Henry Chadwick, *Augustine: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 106.

¹⁶ Eriksen, *Augustin: Det Urolige Hjerte*, 281-82.

¹⁷ Saint Augustine, *The Trinity*, ed. John E. Rotelle, trans. Edmund Hill, *The Works of Saint Augustine* (New York: New City Press, 1991), 21. Although the structure is more complex than this, with several themes and topics, Hill says this two part division is obvious.

¹⁸ Eriksen, *Augustin: Det Urolige Hjerte*, 283.

The Filioque Controversy

The revised creed from the council of Constantinople (381) states that the Spirit proceeds from the Father. This was a written agreement on the Christian belief, and was to be normative for all Christians. Filioque is a Latin term and means “and from the Son.”¹⁹

Augustine presented the double procession, emphasizing that the spirit proceeds not only from the Father, but also the Son:

But the Holy Spirit does not proceed from the Father into the Son. And then proceed from the Son to sanctify the creature. He proceeds simultaneously from them both, even though the Father gave the Son that the Spirit should proceed from him as he does from himself.²⁰

Through this quotation of Augustine, the core of the controversy comes clearly forth: whether the Spirit also proceeds from the Son in addition to the Father. This question caused the discussion through the patristic age until the split in 1054. The controversy went on between the East, mainly Greek-speaking, and the West, mainly Latin-speaking. Albeit it is more complex than this, there are some main contributors on both sides that need to be mentioned. In East, the Cappadocian Fathers, that is Basil the Great, Gregory of Nazianzus and Gregory of Nyssa; in the West, as mentioned, Augustine of Hippo. McGrath emphasize the West’s altering of the Creed as a major point for the dispute. The Western Church applied the Filioque so that the Spirit “proceeds from the Father and the Son.” For the East this became problematic on account of several matters. First of all, the Greek’s theology could not allow that there was more than one eternal source of being in the Godhead, meaning that the Son also was the eternal source of the Christian God, something traditionally only used on the Father. Second, it was problematic to tamper with the creed, the holy churchly agreement.²¹

Augustine refers to John 20:22, the Holy Spirit as the Son’s gift to the apostles, when he suggest that the Spirit proceeds from both Father and Son.²² The Eastern Church also referred to scripture. John 15:26 says that the Spirit comes from the father: “When the Counselor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me.” Throughout the centuries following Augustine’s *De Trinitate*, the debate was going back and forth between East and West, through the councils of

¹⁹ McGrath, *Christian Theology: An Introduction*, 268.

²⁰ Augustine, *The Trinity*, 433.

²¹ McGrath, *Christian Theology: An Introduction*, 268-69.

²² Henry Chadwick, *East and West: The Making of a Rift in the Church : From Apostolic Times until the Council of Florence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 25.

Florence in 431 and Toledo in 587. During the latter, Western theologians endorsed the filioque part into the creed and automatically sharpened the relationship to the East. In the ninth century the controversy was growing more intense and in 1054 the factions found themselves incapable of reconciling and subsequently came the splitting of the church.²³

The Holy Spirit as mutual love between the Father and the Son

In this section I will briefly describe Augustine's mutual-love theory. This theory will be treated later on by both Coffey and Gunton, and I therefore feel it is important to get some insight to the model's basis. Augustine stresses in his *De Trinitate* that The Holy Spirit is gift. The Holy Spirit was given by Jesus to the apostles during Pentecost. He refers to 1. John 4:7 where it says "God is love," and henceforth arguments that The Holy Spirit is also love, since the Spirit is God. In addition to being the Father's love for the Son and the Son's love for the Father, the Spirit is, emphasizes Augustine, also the loving bond between God and humans.²⁴

Augustine's mutual-love theory is interpreted through several Bible passages that attribute God as love, but also as charity and spirit:

But in this case it does not say "Lord my charity," or "You are my charity," or "God my charity," but it says *God is charity* (1 Jn 4:8.16) just as it says *God is Spirit* (Jn 4:24). Anyone who does not see this should ask the Lord for understanding, not me for an explanation; I could not put it any more plainly.²⁵

Thus Augustine reasons that since God is charity and love, the Son is also love and so is the Holy Spirit, that is due to God as triune. Further, the Holy Spirit is the most appropriate to be the charity and the gift of God:

So the love which is from God and is God is distinctively the Holy Spirit; through; through him the charity of God is poured out in our hearts, and through it the whole triad dwells in us. This is the reason why it is most apposite that the Holy Spirit, while being God, should also be called the gift of God. And this gift, surely, is distinctively to be understood as being the charity which brings us through to God, without which no other gift of God at all can bring us through to God.²⁶

The gift of God is further explained by Augustine as the gift of both Son and Father:

²³ F. LeRon Shults and Andrea Hollingsworth, *The Holy Spirit* (Eerdmans Publishing 2008), 31.

²⁴ McGrath, *Christian Theology: An Introduction*, 239-40.

²⁵ Augustine, *The Trinity*, 418.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 421.

He is the gift of the father and of the Son, because on the one hand he *proceeds from the father* (Jn. 15:26), as the Lord says; and on the other the apostle's words, *Whoever does not have the Spirit of Christ is not one of his* (Rom 8:9), are spoken of the Holy Spirit. So when we say "the gift of the giver" and "the giver of the gift," we say each with reference to the other. So the Holy Spirit is a kind of inexpressible communion or fellowship of father and Son. He is properly called what they are called in common, seeing that both Father and Son are holy and both Father and Son are spirit. So to signify the communion of them both by a name which applies to them both, the gift of both is called the Holy Spirit.²⁷

At the end of *The Trinity*, Augustine is discussing the Holy Spirit again, trying to clarify the Spirits "place" in the Godhead, as the reciprocal gift of love between Father and Son, and the gift of love towards humans.

Now we must discuss the Holy Spirit as far as it is granted us with God's help to see him. According to the holy scriptures this Holy Spirit is not just the Father's alone, nor the Son's alone, but the Spirit of them both, and thus he suggests to us the common charity by which the Father and the Son love each other.²⁸

This is a short overview of Augustine's mutual-love theory. More about his theory and work on the Holy Spirit will come forth during the treatment of Gunton and Coffey and their use of the four sources of theology.

I have chosen these two theologians for several reasons. First of all, both offer creative interpretations of the mutual-love theory. Secondly, they are both critical of their own tradition, and thirdly they have a different view on Augustine. Hopefully, this difference will lead to a fruitful discussion that will show results. Both Coffey and Gunton, we can say, are part of the 'Renewal of pneumatology'.

David Coffey

Getting interested in the doctrine of the Trinity during his under-graduate studies, he followed this major doctrine in his scholarship. While holding courses in Christology and grace at the Catholic Institute of Sydney, he found challenge in approaching especially the Western view of the Trinity.²⁹ He is at present professor Emeritus at the Catholic Institute of Sydney. His most extensive work is *Deus Trinitas: The doctrine of the triune God*, which was published in 1999. There he tries to outline a model of the Immanent Trinity other than the procession

²⁷ Ibid., 197.

²⁸ Ibid., 418.

²⁹ David Coffey, *Deus Trinitas: The Doctrine of the Triune God* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 3-8. These pages are the introduction part of the book where Coffey spell out his own background and scholarship.

model, i.e. the return model, trying to find a road between the East and Filioque, reconciling Eastern and Western Trinitarian theology. Although I will refer to more work by Coffey, *Deus Trinitas* will, together with the article *The Holy Spirit as the mutual love of the Father and the Son*, be the main target for analysing Coffey's treatment of Augustine.

Colin E. Gunton

Before his sudden death in 2003 Gunton was professor of Christian Doctrine at King's College, University of London. From his work, *The promise of Trinitarian theology* will be most relevant, i.e. where he spell out his thoughts about Augustine. I will also look into *Father, Son and Holy Spirit: Essays Toward a Fully Trinitarian Theology* and his *The Christian Faith: An Introduction to Christian Doctrine*. Through the latter, I will also involve Gunton's pneumatologic aspects in entering his treatment of the Spirit as a person of the Trinity of love. Together with Ralph Del Colle and John Webster Gunton founded the International Journal of Systematic Theology in 1999. Before his death he was awarded the D.D.³⁰ at Oxford University and left an unfinished draft of a three volume book in systematic theology. Gunton was made a fellow of King's College after he passed away.³¹

³⁰Doctor of Divinity is the highest degree possible in United Kingdom.

³¹Robert W. Jenson, "Gunton, Colin E, 1941-2003," *Theology Today* 61, no. 1 (2004). A fellow is the highest honour one can get at King's College.

Scripture

Scripture as a term refers to both the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament. The former is named by the language it was first written in, and is also known as the Old Testament.

Augustine's work on the Holy Spirit in *De Trinitate* mainly makes use of New Testament with support in the Old Testament. I will therefore mainly be using the New Testament in treating Coffey and Gunton. My reason for structuring this chapter on Scripture is the following: How David Coffey and Colin Gunton treat Augustine's use of scripture in developing the mutual-love theory. They offer, as we will see, different approaches to Augustine's use of scripture, although both are critical to his exegesis. I will begin with Coffey's contribution.

Coffey's contribution.

The main treatment of Augustine's scriptural foundation is found in Coffey's article *The Holy Spirit as The Mutual Love of The Father and The Son*. His book *Deus Trinitas: The Doctrine Of The Triune God*,³² also touches on the topic, but in a more general level. I will return to *Deus Trinitas* in the chapter on Reason. I will begin with the article where Coffey asks the question whether the viewpoint in Augustine's theory is methodologically valid. If this is not the case, Coffey wonders if anything can be done to make it valid.³³ He goes through Augustine's theory in detail and comes with his own version of the theory. A threefold structure is presented by Coffey. He shows that Augustine starts with the filioque, goes through communion before ending up at the mutual-love theory. Coffey states early that Augustine's methodology does not hold compared to modern standards. Augustine concludes that the Spirit must also come from the Son as well as from the Father because of Jesus' saying to the apostles when breathing the Holy Spirit on them. This conclusion comes from Jesus' saying found in the Gospel of John 20: 22 to the idea that something can be said about

³² Coffey, *Deus Trinitas: The Doctrine of the Triune God*.

³³ David Coffey, "The Holy Spirit as the Mutual Love of the Father and the Son," *Theological Studies* 51, no. 2 (1990): 193.

the relation between the Trinitarian persons, the nature of the trinity.

All with the exception of few lines in *De fide et symbolo*, Coffey argues that Augustine lacks scriptural proofs for his theory. Albeit his “proof” is “For the love of God is shed in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who has been given to us” (Rom 5: 5), which Coffey argues hardly can be any proof of the Holy Spirit as mutual love. Further Coffey says that Augustine, if we disregard this one example, only argues from filioque. This comes forth through the idea of the Holy Spirit as “gift”, which is common to Father and Son. The Spirit comes from both Father and Son, and is therefore the gift of both, i.e. their common gift and communion. Coffey though points out that there are no grounds in scripture for calling the Holy Spirit Christ’s gift. This is because there is no place in scripture where Christ clearly gives the spirit. The Spirit must ultimately originate from the Father, so only the Father *gives* the Spirit.³⁴

Further Coffey agrees with Augustine on the Holy Spirit being the communion of the Father and the Son, though he stresses that he does not agree “that The Holy Spirit is the common gift in the immanent Trinity.”³⁵ This, Coffey implies, is because a gift should be given gratuitously and that is not the case in immanent Trinity where everything that happens is by nature necessary.³⁶ Augustine does not differentiate much between mutual love and communion. He goes from communion to mutual love as if it is a most natural transition. Coffey clearly states that there is no reference to this in scripture either.

The mutual-love theory is, the way Coffey sees it, not provided with enough scriptural basis. In the end of *De Trinitate* , Augustine goes directly from the Filioque to the mutual-love theory. In this case Augustine skipped communion and saw the two ideas as almost identical. Coffey states that Augustine indeed has a lack of scriptural foundation for the mutual-love theory, and therefore his theory should not be approved.

In the course of this brief examination we have seen a number of shortcomings in Augustine’s theological methodology, some of which are quite serious by present-day standards. However, as it would be both pedantic and unjust to judge him in general by these standards, I shall here concern myself only with the question of whether in his presentation of the mutual-love theory all that is necessary is correction and updating, or whether in his thought the theory lacks all proper foundation and so should be judged to be not proven. It is my contention that the latter alternative is the case.³⁷

³⁴ Ibid.: 195-97.

³⁵ Ibid.: 198.

³⁶ Ibid.: 197.

³⁷ Ibid.: 199.

Augustine is also treating communion and mutual love as equal, something Coffey does not think is right. Augustine has failed in trying to show mutual love. He has used texts that might have another purpose than showing mutual love, for example divine love.

David Coffey is critical of Augustine's approach to the mutual-love theory and tries himself to uncover the foundation in scripture. First he deals with the Holy Spirit as the Father's love for the Son. Coffey refers to a few significant parts in scripture where the Father's love for the Son is clearly shown. He first mentions the bestowal³⁸ of the Holy Spirit on Jesus by the Father, which brings Jesus into human life as the Son of God. The baptismal text in the Gospel of Mark, where God sends the Spirit down on Jesus, calling him "beloved Son," clearly shows God giving the Holy Spirit as love to the Son. Coffey mentions three texts in OT which is to be seen as allusions to the baptismal in Mark. The Old Testament lines most relevant for the text in Mark are Isaiah 42:1: "Here is my servant whom I support, my chosen one in whom I take pleasure. I have placed my spirit on him; he will make just decrees." Due to the fact the servant text is the best background to identify Jesus, Coffey stresses that these two texts needs comparing.³⁹ The servant in Old Testament and the Son as mentioned in New Testament both shows the bestowal of the Spirit and the obedience expected of the servant/Son. The New Testament text though stands out on account of the Fatherly love towards a Son compared to the love of a master towards his servant. Coffey concludes the part on Holy Spirit as the Father's love for the Son with the Son as denotaion of love, that is Christ as Son of God constitutes the Father's love:

Thus we are entitled to conclude that the NT justifies the statement that, while the Holy Spirit has other functions leading up to Christ and deriving from him, He (It) stands essentially revealed as the love of God the Father for Jesus, a love that calls the latter into human existence, and so sanctifies him that he comes into being as his beloved Son.⁴⁰

The Holy Spirit as the Son's love for the Father requires additional effort to show, and Coffey uses much more space in this part, claiming this structure, though, is to be found in scripture. Coffey structures this section in three parts. First he deals with implications, then he pursues these implications with the help of two New Testament texts and thirdly he shows how Jesus' relationship to followers in the Spirit are presented in the New Testament. Christ's life and work in the Holy Spirit is emphasized by Coffey on the Sons' love and obedience for the

³⁸ Bestowal - the act of conferring an honor or presenting a gift.

³⁹ Coffey, "The Holy Spirit as the Mutual Love of the Father and the Son," 204.

⁴⁰ Ibid.: 205.

Father, that is Jesus' love towards the Father was the Holy Spirits' work, the power of the Spirit in him.⁴¹

The first text Coffey brings up is John 19:30: "When Jesus had received the vinegar, he said, "It is finished"; and he bowed his head and gave up the spirit." Further, he stresses that St. John's theology differs from Mark's in that John believed that Jesus was there from "the beginning" as the Word in eternity. Thus Jesus did become the Son of God through bestowal of the Spirit. The Son or the Word has always been there by the Fathers side in eternity. Coffey then argues that John does not think relationship depends on the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is by John seen as God's action in the world. Seeing Jesus this way, as already pre-existed in eternity, does bring a view where the Spirit is not needed to create communion between the Father and Jesus. But to bring humans into relationship with the Father, Jesus needs the Holy Spirit, whom he "belonged by right to the sphere of the Spirit."⁴² Coffey stresses that John retained the baptism scene from the Synoptic tradition. Thus he acknowledged the Spirit's descent.

Yet if the visible descent of the Spirit on Jesus at the baptism did not make him Son of God, it was what enabled John to recognize him as God's Servant, His "chosen one" (1:31, 33, 34), who is also His Son. In John's version of the baptism, Jesus, the incarnate Word who by his words and deeds reveals God to the world, is the Servant of God, as he is also in the Synoptic versions.⁴³

The theologian Raymond Brown is being referred to when summing up the points of John 19:30. The Servant's soul is in John handed over to death, while Jesus hands over his spirit to the Father. This is in some way similar to what is written in Luke, where Jesus *commits* his Spirit (Lk 23:46). Christ's final words on the cross state the Son's fulfilling of the saviours work, which can be seen as carrying out the Father's will through obedience and love. When dying on the cross, Jesus handed over the spirit to God.⁴⁴ At the end of the view of this text, Coffey sums up that Jesus is presented as Son and Servant of God who surrenders his life in love and obedience. Through this, Jesus shows the "eternal loving communion that exists between the Father and the Son."⁴⁵

The second text Coffey consider is Hebrews 9:13-14:

⁴¹ Ibid.: 206.

⁴² Ibid.: 207.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.: 208.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

For if the sprinkling of defiled persons with the blood of goats and bulls and with the ashes of a heifer sanctifies for the purification of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify your conscience from dead works to serve the living God.

Coffey states that the text refers to Christ's death as self-offering to the Father. Further, he mentions the eternal spirit and wonders what is meant by that. To clarify this, Coffey refers to Philip Edgcumbe Hughes, who emphasizes that the spirit actually is the Holy Spirit. There are other interpretations, such as the spirit is referring to Christ's human spirit. This latter proposal Coffey strongly argues against and brings forth several objections to it. First of all, the text does emphasize actions of Jesus' earthly life and not as in a heavenly sphere. Secondly the occurrence of the word "spirit" would together with the adjective "eternal" suggest divine and not human spirit. Thirdly, Coffey wonder why the text does not say "his" eternal spirit, if it is Jesus' human spirit that is meant. Fourthly, since the flesh mentioned in the text is not Jesus' then it would not be likely that the Spirit is meant as his either. Fifthly, Coffey suggests that the word "through" would, in this context, mean distinction between Jesus and the Spirit rather than an identity. The last objection Coffey states is that all the other times that spirit occur in Hebrews, the Holy Spirit is meant, and this with only one exception. Thus it is most likely that it is in this case also the Holy Spirit that is meant.⁴⁶ On account of these objections Coffey concludes that the first interpretation is the most relevant, i.e. Jesus and the Holy Spirit and not the human spirit of Christ. Therefore Christ is equipped with the Holy Spirit.

This does not mean, however, that we are thrown back on the "Catholic" interpretation, at least as formulated by Hughes. It is not possible for any part of the Bible to present the same doctrine of the Holy Spirit as that of the First Council of Constantinople. But it does mean that Jesus is equipped with the Holy Spirit (in the biblical sense of the term) and that this is the explanation of his ability to offer a spiritual sacrifice and secure an eternal redemption.⁴⁷

The evaluation of the second text is summed up by saying that, in his self-offering on the cross to the Father, Jesus showed his obedience and love, which also can be considered to be the main characterization of his life, in the power of the Holy Spirit.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Ibid.: 210.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.: 209-11.

The third part of this examining is “Jesus’ relationship to his followers in the Spirit”⁴⁹ Coffey refers to Paul (2. Cor 5:16) when mentioning that the Jesus human they once knew in flesh is now only known in Spirit. This again he underlines with Jesus’ sending of the Holy Spirit upon his disciples, and by sending the Spirit, it becomes the Spirit of Christ. Coffey stresses that the Holy Spirit is Jesus’; his to give and “the vehicle of his unique personality.”⁵⁰ Further Coffey uses material from Karl Barth on the love, love of God and neighbor and emphasize that it is not two kinds of love, but two dimensions of the one same love.

To sum up the arguments presented by David Coffey, he first goes through Augustine’s use of scripture in developing the mutual-love theory, emphasizing Augustine’s lack of proper foundation in scripture. Further, he stresses that Augustine argues from Filioque to mutual love. Coffey means the mutual-love theory can be justified through a closer examination of scripture. God’s love for Jesus he shows by referring to the bestowal of the Holy Spirit in the baptismal text in Mark and the servant passage in Isaiah 42. It is Christ himself who constitutes the Father’s love, through being His Son. Coffey argues that the Son’s love for the Father comes forth through Christ’s death on the cross in John 19:30, the eternal spirit in Hebrews 9:13-14 and the love for the church through Christ’s sending of the Spirit in 2 Corinthians 5:16. Thus Jesus, by living his life and giving his life to God in obedience and love, shows his love to the Father. Before I turn to Gunton’s approach, I will conclude Coffey’s argumentation on the theory by using his own words:

The character of Jesus’ loving self-giving to the Church illuminates that of his self-giving to God, and so enables us to understand that the way in which he gives himself to the Father in death is that he there definitively returns the Spirit as his own to the Father in love. Further, the idea of Jesus returning the Spirit to the Father only becomes meaningful when it is seen as Jesus’ total *self*-giving to Him. Hence the Spirit is not only the Father’s love for Jesus, but is revealed, admittedly in a way that needs to be clarified, as also Jesus’ love for the Father. Thus the Spirit is the mutual love of the Father and Jesus His Son. And thus we apprehend the mutual-love theory in its scriptural foundation.⁵¹

Gunton’s contribution

Colin E. Gunton has devoted a whole chapter on Augustine in his book *The Promise of Trinitarian Theology*.⁵² Here in this chapter I am dealing only with his view on the mutual-

⁴⁹ Ibid.: 211.

⁵⁰ Ibid.: 214.

⁵¹ Ibid.: 218.

⁵² Colin E. Gunton, *The Promise of Trinitarian Theology*, 2 ed. (London: T&T Clark, 2003), 30-55.

love theory and Augustine's use of scripture. Gunton states Augustine's concept of Holy Spirit as the uniting love between Father and Son, has been controversial because of the derivation and lack of correspondence with the economy.⁵³ This I will return to later, but now let us look at Augustine's use of scripture through Gunton's eyes.

He first states Augustine's concept of the Spirit as the mutual love between Father and Son has been problematic partly because it does not correspond with certain parts of the economy. Gunton does mention that the Holy Spirit is, in several passages, described as the giver of community as in the Acts. Then he asks the question why this communion cannot be transferred to inner trinitarian relations. From this point Gunton begins his critique. He first argues the mutual-love theory is rather shallow in referring to scripture. The Holy Spirit can be thought of as Gift, in the way we see that the Holy Spirit is God's Gift to us which brings us into union with God. But he finds it difficult to differentiate between Son and Spirit in comparison to this role of sacrifice. Gunton refers to the Son as Gift from God to us in Romans 8:32: "Indeed, he who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all – how will he not also, along with him, freely give us all things?" Further, Gunton points out the lack of direct scriptural foundation for saying that the Holy Spirit is love or charity.⁵⁴ He quotes Augustine on the good reason for calling it the gift of the Spirit rather than the Gift of God, and asks what the reason might be. From here Gunton comes to two aspects argued by Augustine: the spirit is the common gift of Father and Son, and secondly that "the Holy Spirit is the God who is love."⁵⁵ This again, says Gunton, are thin arguments. There is something in what Augustine says, but not enough and this is certainly not a justifiable way of arguing deductive. Further he argues that Augustine is trying to "Fit the Spirit into his scheme,"⁵⁶ on account of more significant features of the economy. Gunton means there are three missing features in Augustine's treatment of the Holy Spirit as love.

The first one is that of eschatology, which he means to be central in the work of the Spirit. In the economy Gunton says, the Spirit's task is not only to relate us to God, but also "realise in time the conditions of the age to come."⁵⁷ To go deeper into this, I turn to *Father, Son and Holy Spirit – Toward a Fully Trinitarian Theology*, where Gunton argues that Jesus is raised up through the power of the Holy Spirit, and in that way the Spirit sets the conditions

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ This, as Gunton mentions, Augustine says himself: "The scripture has not said: The Holy Spirit is charity" Augustine, *The Trinity*.

⁵⁵ Gunton, *The Promise of Trinitarian Theology*, 50.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 50.

for immortality in the ages to come.

The first missing feature is the eschatological dimension to the work of the Spirit that is so prominent in the New Testament, and whose virtual absence from Augustine must be said to have been one of his worst legacies to the Western tradition. In the economy it is the action of the Spirit not simply to relate the individual to God, but to realize in time the conditions of the age to come. Augustine's discussion tends to lack this dimension, because it is essentially dualistic, tending to require a choice between this world and the next, rather than seeking a realization of the next in the materiality of the present. One dimension of Augustine's shortcoming here is that although he affirms the doctrine, the resurrection of the body plays no constitutive in his theology.⁵⁸

Thus Gunton stresses Augustine's inadequacy when it comes to seeing the whole picture of the Spirit's work as it comes forth in the NT. This again is a consequence of Augustine's tendency not to see the Spirit as working here and now, due to his view that one day the bodies will resurrect. Further comes point number two, with emphasis on the Christian community.

The second missing feature is a conception of the Spirit as realising the conditions of the age to come particularly through the creation of community. In Augustine we are near the beginning of the era in which the church is conceived essentially as an institution mediating grace to the individual rather than of the community formed on the analogy of the Trinity's *interpersonal* relationships.⁵⁹

This non-contributing of the Spirit's eschatological work by Augustine, is by Gunton the far worst contribution to the Western tradition. The second point that Augustine should include in his dealing with the Spirit in the economy, is the "conception of the Spirit as realizing the conditions of the age to come, particularly through the creation of community,"⁶⁰ as through sending the Spirit upon the twelve apostles and forming a church for the future.

The third missing feature is that by mediating weight on the Holy Spirit as love between Father and Son, Augustine turn focus away from the love in the economy of incarnation, that is the love meditated by Jesus through the atonement.

And there is a third missing feature, which is to be found in connection with the concept of love which is operative in the discussion. Because the notion of love centres on the unitive function of love in relating Father and Son and believer to God – a function that does not need to be denied – there seems to be little

⁵⁸ Colin E. Gunton, *Father, Son and Holy Spirit: Essays toward a Fully Trinitarian Theology* (London: T&T Clark, 2003), 50-51.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 51.

⁶⁰ Gunton, *The Promise of Trinitarian Theology*, 51.

weight given in Augustine's treatment of the Trinity to a notion of love derived from the economy of the incarnation. There, the essence of the love of God is its outgoingness: its dynamic seeking of the other. One does not have to accept in its entirety the schematism of love adopted by Nygren to believe that a concept of love centred on its unitive rather than its agapeistic functions is likely to owe more to the platonic love of the Symposium than to the concrete economy of incarnation, cross and resurrection. By attributing to the Spirit the kind of love that he does, Augustine thus attracts attention away from the economy of salvation in two major ways: he minimises the part played in the development of the doctrine of the Trinity by the incarnation – for an incarnational conception of love is scarcely to be found – and he obscures the specific hypostatic uniqueness of the Holy Spirit. Because we might also say, he has adequate conception of love as love for the other as other, he is unable to conceive true otherness in the Trinity, another feature which can be seen to be a function of too strong an emphasis on the unity of God.⁶¹

Gunton argues that Augustine scarcely mentions love through incarnation at all. He states that Augustine draws attention away from it in the two following ways: “Minimizing the role of incarnation in Trinity” and “obscuring the “hypostatic⁶² uniqueness of the Holy Spirit.”⁶³ Colin Gunton stresses that because Augustine did not give much weight economically and hypostatically or managed to give the Holy Spirit its inner Trinitarian personal distinctiveness. To get a better grip of what Gunton means, I will turn to his *Father, Son and Holy Spirit – Toward a Fully Trinitarian Theology*.⁶⁴ In dealing with God's being Gunton refers both to Basil of Caesarea and Richard of St. Viktor:

The Spirit, we might say, is the motor of that divine movement outwards, just as the Son is its focus and model (*eikôn*). Augustine called the Spirit the bond of love between the Father and the Son, but this is in danger of leading us to think of God as a kind of self-enclosed circle. The medieval, Richard of St Victor, provided the basis of a correction by making it possible to suggest that the Spirit is the focus of a love beyond the duality of Father and Son, of a love outwards to the other. The Spirit's distinctive inner-trinitarian being is oriented not on inwardness, but on otherness: as perfecter both of the eternal divine communion – in which there is real distinction, otherness – and of God's love for the *other* in creation and redemption.⁶⁵

As for Gunton, the Spirit is distinctive in the way it is oriented towards otherness: Otherness within the persons of Trinity and otherness towards humans. This orientation towards humans through the economy, that is the creation and redemption, where the latter involves Christ as

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² *Hypostatic* comes from *Hypostasis* that means the essential person of Jesus in which his human and divine natures are united.

⁶³ Gunton, *The Promise of Trinitarian Theology*, 51.

⁶⁴ ———, *Father, Son and Holy Spirit: Essays toward a Fully Trinitarian Theology*.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 86.

incarnation of God, God sent his Son as atonement for the humans, so that they might live. This act of love deserves more attention than the love for which Augustine argues. Another level up Gunton indicates for the Trinitarian love structure found between the three persons of trinity, an absolute loving God which can be met in Christ through the Spirit.⁶⁶

Further, Gunton mentions Augustine's description of the Holy Spirit as the bond of love. Emphasizing the Spirit this way makes an eternal inward turning circle between the three persons of Trinity, instead of an eternal orientation towards the other. Therefore, he states, a different use of love might do more justice. This love is a love between all three persons which we can take part in, by saying yes to the invitation of the eternal love.

On this account, the being of God is describable as love, but love of a particular kind. To say that God is love means, first, that God is constituted, made up without remainder, of a personal structure of giving and receiving. Internally, God is a fellowship of *persons* whose orientation is entirely to the other. The notion of there being three persons in God is problematic for us, because we think that person means individual in the modern sense of one whose being defined over against, even in opposition to, other individuals. (Hence, of course, the essentially competitive ideology of much modern social order.) The trinitarian notion of person does incorporate one aspect of the notion of individuality, because it holds that each person is unique and irreplaceable. The Father is not the Son, the Son is not the Spirit, and all three of them are essential to God's being as God. On the other hand, these three are, while distinct from one another, not in competition, as in modern individualism, but entirely for and from one another. There is accordingly an orientation to the other within the eternal structure of God's being. That is our first account of what it means to say that God is love. The second is that the orientation of this God, his inner drive, we might say, is not to remain content with his eternal ordering as eternal love, but to move outwards to create a world which he loves and wishes to bring into relation with himself⁶⁷

The critique of Augustine's mutual-love theory, is supported by Gunton's evaluation of the persons of Trinity, which is to be found in *Father, Son & Holy Spirit*. He refers to Basil and argues that the Holy Spirit works through Jesus. Further, Gunton mentions the Spirit's action as self-effacing, that is "the Spirit is the one who enables people and things to be themselves through Jesus Christ."⁶⁸

To sum up Colin Gunton's view on Augustine's applying to scripture when developing his theory, we can say that he is not impressed. There is no place in scripture where it says that the Holy Spirit is charity. Gunton further criticizes Augustine for his focus merely on the Spirit when arguing for God as love. The love through Christ's atonement does not show here.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 31.

⁶⁷ Colin E. Gunton, *The Christian Faith: An Introduction to Christian Doctrine* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), 187.

⁶⁸ Gunton, *Father, Son and Holy Spirit: Essays toward a Fully Trinitarian Theology*, 80-81.

Gunton means Augustine is too focused on the Spirit in a way that begets a view of an inward turning circle. In this sense, Augustine misses the Spirit's role in economy and the orientation towards otherness.

I have now given an overview of Coffey and Gunton's treatment of Augustine's use of scripture in developing his mutual-love theory. Further comes a critical evaluation which includes other theologians' critique as well as mine. I will again start with David Coffey's contribution.

Evaluation

Coffey is both thorough and just in his treatment of Augustine on scripture. He starts with a critical examination of Augustine theory developing from scripture, and early on states that our Latin Church Father does take a few shortcuts. Coffey, first of all, stresses that Augustine's methodology is not good enough compared to our modern standards. This might be expected due to the age of fourth and fifth century theology, when Augustine grew up. Further Coffey emphasizes there is nowhere to be found in scripture that the Holy Spirit is Christ's gift. Augustine, says Coffey, treats communion and mutual love as the same, and does go from Filioque to mutual-love, occurring to have already made up his mind, that the Holy Spirit is the mutual love between Father and Son. Coffey therefore, and this is the way I see it too, says that Augustine "lacks all proper foundation and so should be judged to be not proven."⁶⁹ Further Coffey believes that there is foundation in scripture to be found in favor of the mutual-love theory. He attempts to justify from scripture that the Holy Spirit is the mutual love. I believe he does not manage to do so successfully. On which I shall now elaborate.

First of all, I must mention that the Father's love for Jesus, I do mean is to be found in scripture as showed by Coffey through the Baptismal text in the Gospel of Mark (1:10-12: "And just as Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens splitting apart and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: "You are my one dear Son; in you I take great delight." The Spirit immediately drove him into the wilderness.", though this is not the same as saying that the Father's love equals the Holy Spirit. Coffey uses as mentioned much more space on trying to justify the Holy Spirit as Jesus' love for the Father. This is understandable, because the scripture is not speaking clearly about this. I will treat the two passages separately.

First, he refers to Jesus on the cross in Matt 27:50: "...and gave up his spirit". Then, as

⁶⁹ Coffey, "The Holy Spirit as the Mutual Love of the Father and the Son," 199.

Luke says it in 23:46: “Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!” And after he said this he breathed his last.” Coffey also refers to John. Here the Son orients himself towards the Father and says he will give Him his spirit. It does not say the ‘Holy Spirit’ or ‘Spirit’, but ‘my spirit’. Let us consider that it is the Holy Spirit that is meant. Do we get the impression of this as love being given from Jesus to the Father? This could definitely be seen more as obedience than love.

Secondly, Coffey refers to Hebrews 9.14, where the eternal spirit is mentioned: “...who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God...” This is for me a weak scriptural reference. A blurry passage, which by my opinion hardly should be used as prime-passage in support of the mutual-love theory. Surely there are other passages that shows the Spirit as active another way⁷⁰ than as the mutual love. As for these two texts referred to by Coffey, it is my view that they do not give a good support to the idea of the Son’s love for the Father as the Holy Spirit.

Colin Gunton is also critical to Augustine’s use of scripture. He is overall critical to Augustine’s contribution to the western tradition. In chapter 3 of his *Promise of Trinitarian Theology*, called *Augustine, the Trinity and the Theological Crisis of West*, he states scripture says nothing about the Holy Spirit as Love or Charity. He also goes through Augustine’s argumentation on the Holy Spirit as charity, to which I must agree, is very thin. Therefore Gunton stress Augustine’s attempt to fit the Spirit into his own scheme does rule out the other features that might be easier deduced. As for me, I do agree that the Spirit does have essential attributes which Augustine disregards. Gunton argues that Augustine is not giving the Holy Spirit its rightfully distinctiveness. In that the Holy Spirit is the mutual love of the Father and Son, Gunton means it is a focus that ignores the Holy Spirit’s outwardness. For Gunton, the Holy Spirit is to be understood as outwards orientating, towards us humans, as he himself emphasizes:

Worship is not activity in which we contemplate or observe a being who is over against us – though in a sense God is that also – but it is relational, something that happens between persons is worship in the Son and through the Spirit.⁷¹

Having a view on worship as the foundation of theology does the way I see it crash

⁷⁰ Rom 5:5, , Eph 2:18, Gal 5:5. These and more passages do stress the Holy Spirit as something which we experience love through.

⁷¹ Gunton, *The Promise of Trinitarian Theology*, 5.

with strong emphasis on the Holy Spirit as mutual love. As I will emphasize more in the chapter on *experience*, the Holy Spirit is in my view more served with the role as both mediator of relations and the way we meet and get to know the Trinitarian God.

In Romans 5 Paul speaks of the expectation of the justification:

Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us. You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly.⁷²

Further we can read in 1st Colossians where Paul speaks of spiritual gifts:

There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men. Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines.⁷³

From the epistle to Corinthians, Paul describes the Spirit as sent upon us, so that we may know God. This happens to the believer through spirituality:

We do, however, speak a message of wisdom among the mature, but not the wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. No, we speak of God's secret wisdom, a wisdom that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began. None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. However, as it is written: "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him"—but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man's spirit within him? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us. This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual

⁷² Rom 5:1-6

⁷³ 1Col 12:4-11

truths in spiritual words. The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned. The spiritual man makes judgments about all things, but he himself is not subject to any man's judgment: "For who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ.⁷⁴

The fourth passage I am exemplifying with is from the Epistle to Ephesians:

For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.⁷⁵

These passages speak of the Holy Spirit, and emphasize a view in which the Spirit is appropriated as a way of knowing God, i.e. through the Holy Spirit we know Father and Son. The first quotation from Colossians stress how the Spirit is understood as the distributor of gifts, i.e. gifts are given through the Holy Spirit. The passage from Ephesians emphasizes how we can know God the Father, through Christ, in the Spirit. As a fifth example I want to mention a passage from Paul's epistle to Galatians:

It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery. Mark my words! I, Paul, tell you that if you let yourselves be circumcised, Christ will be of no value to you at all. Again I declare to every man who lets himself be circumcised that he is obligated to obey the whole law. You who are trying to be justified by law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from grace. But by faith we eagerly await through the Spirit the righteousness for which we hope. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value. The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.⁷⁶

The last passage is written on account of circumcision and whether it shall be accepted by Christians. Paul stresses the importance of faith, which is through the Spirit and our way to experience God's love. The last passage I will refer to is from Philippians, where we find Paul's prayer for the church:

⁷⁴ 1Cor 2:6-16

⁷⁵ Eph 2:14-18

⁷⁶ Gal 5:1-6

Yes, and I will continue to rejoice, for I know that through your prayers and the help given by the Spirit of Jesus Christ, what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance. I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body. Convinced of this, I know that I will remain, and I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith, so that through my being with you again your joy in Christ Jesus will overflow on account of me.⁷⁷

As I have now shown, there are a considerable amount of passages which emphasize the Spirit as the mediator of the Trinity to us, through inviting us into relationship with Father and Son. This does not show that the mutual-love theory is not to be found in scripture, but it shows that there is another way of understanding the Holy Spirit which is stressed in scripture.

Another point I would like to make, is that by arguing for a mutual-love theory, Coffey draws weight away from God's love towards us humans. Throughout the New Testament and the Gospels God's love is clearly shown through Jesus' life and ministry. Therefore, not taking this aspect into consideration when talking about the Holy Spirit as God's love, is by my view a problematic focus. As I hope will come forth through this thesis, my view encompass love of God, as shown by Jesus and received by the Holy Spirit, as e.g. written in Joh 14:6: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me," and in John 15:26: "When the Advocate comes, whom I will send you from the Father – the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father – he will testify about me."

In treating the mutual-love theory in Augustine, Coffey mainly emphasizes scriptural critique, while Gunton stress Augustine's disregarding of the love through the incarnation. Said another way, Coffey makes more use of scripture, while Gunton brings in human reason and experience in emphasizing love through Jesus' death and resurrection. If we go up one level and see the two theologians more generally, it seems like they have already have their presuppositions about Augustine's theology, or at least they do not argue about the parts of Augustine that they like (Gunton) or dislike (Coffey). Coffey criticize in a soft way, while Gunton sees Augustine as the developer of a tradition gone bad. Of course there is nothing wrong in these views, but they do, in little sense, give a nuanced approach to Augustine and to pneumatology in general. This I will come back to in chapter two. Coffey has already decided

⁷⁷ Phi 1:19-26

that there is something in what Augustine talks about, that there is something called mutual love, although the proper foundation is not made in scripture:

In my own work on the Trinity as both immanent and economic the mutual-love theory has figured prominently. In my view it provides the only correct way for understanding and expressing, in the context of the Trinity, the data of “ascending” theology, i.e. the return to God of Jesus and ourselves with him. In this theology the filioque and the Eastern ways formulating the procession of the Spirit, i.e. the per filium and monopatrism, rightly apply only to the data of “descending” theology, i.e. to the outward movement from God which results in the mission of Christ and the offer of grace to us⁷⁸

Thus Coffey uses the mutual-love theory frequently in his work, and it seems that he has adapted the theory into his theology. Now Coffey is not alone emphasizing the Spirit as mutual love. As I will show later in the thesis, for example, Bruce D. Marshall. Gunton does give a lot of blame to Augustine for the way Western theology went bad, and his critique of Augustine’s theology of the third person of the Trinity seems to lead into the wide range of wrongs committed by Augustine. To reflect upon Gunton’s critique against Augustine, I would like to refer to a contribution on the topic.

Neil Ormerod says about *De Trinitate* in his *Trinity: Retrieving the Western Tradition*, that “we do not simply measure it; it measures us.”⁷⁹ He points to the value of classic texts and the fact that Gunton seems unable to go into a sympathetic dialogue with Augustine’s world view.

The second lesson is to note how little sympathy contemporary theology has for the theological worldview of the Western tradition. This is evident in Gunton’s complaint that Augustine begins “with dogma as something given” (Gunton 1990, 41 n.13). Such a complaint is indicative of the gap that now exists between contemporary theology and the Western tradition. What is surprising is that Gunton appears so unaware of the gap he is unable to enter sympathetically into the theological worldview of Augustine. While we might have difficulties with this worldview because of the modern emergence of historical consciousness, it is anachronistic to complain that Augustine does not share our difficulties. Much contemporary theology reflects this same problem.⁸⁰

Although Gunton is thorough in his treatment of Augustine, I can not skip the fact that he already holds a strong critical view on Augustine. Augustine’s use of scripture is treated at the

⁷⁸ Coffey, "The Holy Spirit as the Mutual Love of the Father and the Son," 193.

⁷⁹ Neil Ormerod, *The Trinity: Retrieving the Western Tradition* (Milwaukee, Wis.: Marquette University Press, 2005), 52.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

very last section of a chapter that clamps down on the overall Augustinian heritage. Therefore it is proper to ask the question whether Gunton gives Augustine a fair enough chance or just continues his line of critical arguments. As it is easy to go on in a rhythm that is already set, one might say that there is a possibility of continuing the same way because it is most suitable to the former argumentation. I am not stating that Gunton only follows his own “bag of critique” against Augustine, because he argues reasonable, but that he might here have been influenced by his own overall view.

The different approach to scripture by Gunton and Coffey, and my own can be said to show the variety between traditions stress on interpreting scripture. A view into this theme is contributed by Joseph A. Burgess in *The Bible in the Churches*. He depicts a Lutheran approach to interpreting scripture, which involves five points. The first is that the NT interprets the OT. The second is that clear passages interpret more unclear passages. Third, scripture interprets itself, fourth by Christ alone and fifth the interpreting should be done within church. These stands Lutherans spell out a certain way, through five slogans. That is through Christ alone, grace alone, faith alone, cross alone and scripture alone. Thus Lutherans emphasize a certain way of interpreting scripture. Now Gunton was no Lutheran, but I am, and my background can stand in relation to a Catholic way of interpreting. If we look at my background, scripture has been and is still regarded as the sole authority for Christians, as God’s Word.⁸¹ This we also see according to Luther’s critique of the expansion of literature in addition to the Bible, where he is afraid of the consequences.⁸²

The Catholic tradition’s relation to scripture has been much wider, including a greater amount of supporting literature and course-literature as Harrington stresses in his chapter. He depicts the status of the Bible after the second Vatican Council (1971) the following way: “At every level in the Catholic educational system— colleges, high schools, grammar schools, religious education classes— the Bible is read and discussed.”⁸³ Although scripture has become more important for Catholic’s in modern times, it still is strongly connected with church and the former tradition of scripture, through, for example, biblical theology:

This kind of study places detailed philological research on individual biblical and extrabiblical texts in the broader framework of the history of biblical ideas. Part of the popularity of this approach to biblical theology among Catholic scholars is due to the Catholic concern and fondness for tradition. This approach

⁸¹ Joseph A. Burgess, "Lutheran Interpretation of Scripture," in *Bible in the Churches: How Various Christians Interpret the Scriptures*, ed. Kenneth Hagen (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1994), 103, 14-19.

⁸² Martin Luther, *Levende Luther: Et Utvalg*, trans. Inge Lønning (Oslo: Land og Kirke, 1967), 34.

⁸³ Daniel J. Harrington, "Catholic Interpretation of Scripture," in *Bible in the Churches: How Various Christians Interpret the Scriptures*, ed. Kenneth Hagan (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1994), 29-35.

is really a charting out of the tradition a biblical word or idea. For a church that is immersing itself more and more in language and ideas of Scripture, and that is so eager to hand on the tradition of faith, the concentration on key concepts and their development in biblical times and against the background of the biblical world is a sound approach and is sure to pay rich rewards.⁸⁴

This biblical theology is something different than ordinary interpreting of scripture, and for that reason it is a contrast to a Lutheran view where scripture is considered alone. This I mention because we all have backgrounds, whether Catholic, Protestant or Orthodox, which effects our emphasis of Scripture.

As mentioned in the introduction, I believe the four sources of theology have reciprocal influence on each other. Scripture, the way we see it in through the two theologians writings, are easily to be seen as something influenced by their backgrounds. Though being in danger of seeing to great a connection, I still would like to draw a few lines. Coffey, as a Catholic, belongs to a tradition which has and does emphasize tradition as a contribution to theology. Coffey has a view that tries to make use of Augustine's ideas, although he knows Augustine's theory does not hold methodologically. Gunton comes from a Protestant tradition. Protestantism has less weight on tradition and more weight on scripture. And as we can see, Gunton, compared to Coffey, is more oriented towards "pure scripture" and experience in that he does not approve the mutual-love theory due to what he means is thin scriptural basis. Further he finds problems in seeing the Spirit as love due to more reasonable way of seeing love, through incarnation, which should be emphasized. Gunton has more weight on experience than on tradition, which in the case of Augustine he largely rejected. So therefore I suggest that both Coffey and Gunton's way of treating *scripture* are influenced by their view on and background in *tradition*.

This reciprocal structure is of course to be found in my own thoughts about theology as well. My view is affected by a Lutheran tendency to stress scripture more than reason. So in the same way, in this thesis, if I criticize too much people who put weight on tradition, they might criticize me for too strong an emphasis on the Bible. This is absolutely appropriate, since too much stress on scripture can lead to a too fundamentalistic approach to theology, and that is not desirable tendency. Thus ideas, which easily can be seen as having strong roots in reason and vague foundation in scripture, are by my view not good enough. I would suggest an effort to use the different sources for more balance.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 43.

Conclusion

Throughout this chapter I have looked at Augustine's mutual-love theory as he developed it, through the eyes of Coffey and Gunton. As we have seen, both theologians are critical to Augustine's use of scripture, due to the fact that he is using terms that are not to be found in scripture. Coffey goes through Augustine's use of scripture more thorough than Gunton. David Coffey tries to find a new foundation in scripture for the mutual-love theory, though he, as I have tried to show, does not succeed. Coffey finds weak references to scripture and there are other ways of approaching the Holy Spirit that might make more sense.

David Coffey's objective for treating Augustine's theory is the attempt to reconcile East and West due to the view on Filioque and Monopatrism. He finds Augustine's methodology not good enough, and tries himself to find scriptural foundation of the mutual-love theory. This he does through referring to the Father's love for the Son which is shown in the baptismal text of Luke. Further he points to Jesus' words on the cross taken from Matthew and Luke where the Son "gives up his spirit," and says "I commit my spirit!" The second passage is taken from Hebrews concerning the eternal spirit. I have argued that Coffey's scriptural "proofs" are not good enough support for stating the Son's love for the Father as the Holy Spirit. I have emphasized the more suitable use of scripture in dealing with the Holy Spirit, i.e. a Holy Spirit who relates us to the Son and the Father, the way in which we experience Trinity. This is first and foremost a view on the Spirit. The Holy Spirit as mutual love between the Father and the Son is as I mentioned, a view on Trinity in how the persons relates to each other, hence there is less connection to how humans relate or are related to God.

For Gunton, Augustine's bad contribution as to western theology is the objective for treating the mutual-love theory. Gunton finds problems with Augustine's argumentation on the idea that the Holy Spirit is love. The love of God described by Gunton is a love between the three persons in the Trinity. This love is oriented outwards towards us humans as an invitation to participate in the Trinitarian communion. He stresses the importance of seeing God's love also from the act of incarnation where god became man, lived, died and resurrected to redeem us humans. Gunton also emphasized the Holy Spirit's eschatological force, which realizes in Christians the time to come in future as Christians. Thus Gunton shows a more nuanced picture of the Holy Spirit, which I do believe is more suitable according to scripture. I used Ormerod to show Gunton's tendency be critical to Augustine in general. He is although having problems with Augustine in several ways. The extent of his

criticism of Augustine will surface in the *Tradition* chapter.

I tried to show differences in Catholic and Protestant (Lutheran) interpretation of scripture. To show this, I referred to the *Bible in the Churches*, where there are depicted different traditional ways of interpreting the Bible. This I did to show the variations a tradition holds and that how we interpret the scripture is strongly influenced by our tradition. This counts for not only scripture, but also experience and reason. Thus Coffey and Gunton's different appropriations of scripture might be seen as a result of their backgrounds. Further follows chapter on Tradition, which explores the two theologians use of Augustinian theology.

Tradition

The word *tradition* can be understood in different ways. Throughout this chapter we will encounter different uses of the word, albeit the main target has been a something unifying from the time of the apostles. Controversies through church history do show the importance of tradition in maintaining Christian orthodoxy.⁸⁵ One of the Apostolic Fathers, Ignatius, did already around year 100⁸⁶ write about the church's unity versus heresies. He sent out letters to seven different ministries, showing his care for and interest in the local churches, proclaiming the church unity against the heresies, e.g. Docetism.⁸⁷ McGrath emphasizes the Gnostic debates as the prime example on the church's need for certain doctrinal standards. Irenaeus of Lyons (c.130-c.200) contrasts the "new" Gnostic teaching with a public tradition which builds upon apostolic beliefs. Gnosticism was the heresy of the greatest extent. Irenaeus used the word *tradition*, "in a novel and restricted sense, specifically to the Church's oral teaching as distinct from that contained in scripture."⁸⁸ My angle on *tradition* will be the tradition contributed by Augustine, but as elsewhere through the writings of our two theologians. So, throughout this chapter I will see how Coffey and Gunton look upon Augustine's theology and his heritage. As we have seen in the introduction, Augustine had tremendous influence on later Western theology and he emphasized the Filioque. I will also see both theologians awareness of their own tradition and their way of organizing and structuring theology.

Coffey and Augustinian theology

In the first main chapter on scripture we met Coffey's treatment of Augustine's mutual-love theory. Just to sum this up before we go on, Coffey acknowledged Augustine's idea as rightfully, though it did not have good enough grounds supporting it. Thus Coffey is favourable to Augustine's theory about the Holy Spirit as mutual love between Father and

⁸⁵ McGrath, *Christian Theology: An Introduction*, 136.

⁸⁶ Ernst Baasland and Reidar Hvalvik, *De Apostoliske Fedre*, 2 ed. (Oslo: Luther Forlag, 1997), 15. Baasland and Hvalvik do date the Ignatius-letters to approximate 110 AD

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 41.

⁸⁸ J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines, Revised Edition* (New York: Harper Collins, 1978), 37.

Son. Coffey starts his article on the mutual-love theory by stating the Filioque as Augustine's development. This gave Western theology a certain stamp which has been there ever since.⁸⁹ As we have already seen in the chapter on scripture, Coffey carries on the idea that the Holy Spirit is the Father's love for the Son and vice versa. The reason for doing this is an attempt to reconcile Eastern and Western Trinitarian theology. Coffey argues that the West must be more "mindful of the monarchy of the Father, while the East need to acknowledge to the Son a role in the origination of the Holy Spirit."⁹⁰ Coffey states that the problem with the Filioque is that it is only Western in its form. It does not include the Father's monarchy. As for the creed, Coffey states, it is problematic because it only mentioned the Father as the one the Spirit proceeds from. The creed is to be said mainly eastern due to the fact that the Council of Constantinople presented the eastern perspective. The return model therefore takes care of both Filioque, the Eastern view: "who proceeds from the Father and receives from the Son" and the Per Filium, which states that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father through the Son. A reconciling formula is not to be found, because it is illusory. Concerning the Spirit's procession is too complicated to be stated in a single formula, though the return model provides an understanding that might appear complementary to the different approaches of East West and Per Filium.⁹¹ Coffey sums up his view on the Filioque and the reconciling effect of the mutual love theory:

In the book I have taken the view that the Eastern and Western positions of Monopatrism and Filioquism, respectively, are reconciled in that the Son himself proceeds from the Father, provided the monopatrism position be interpreted in the sense that the Holy Spirit proceeds ultimately from the Father alone. What is needed from East is a recognition that the Son plays a positive role, subordinate to that of the Father, in the spiration of the Holy Spirit (and not just in the latter's economic manifestation), and this without prejudice to the fact that the Father and the Son constitute a single principle of spiration. The West in turn could recognize more openly that there is an important sense in which the Holy Spirit must be acknowledged to proceed from the Father alone. .. Though the restoration of the original formula has valid supportive arguments, the best solution in an ecumenical age would undoubtedly be negotiated compromise that in a short and simple statement gave better expression to the full tradition of the Church, a formula that permitted, without actually stating, the more extreme positions of both sides. Such, I suggest, is "The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and receives from the Son," which is well attested in Scripture and tradition. My argument in this book is that the mutual love theory best accommodates the various true, though at times apparently contradictory statements of both sides, and alone explains exactly what it is that

⁸⁹ Coffey, "The Holy Spirit as the Mutual Love of the Father and the Son," 193.

⁹⁰ _____, *Deus Trinitas: The Doctrine of the Triune God*, 53.

⁹¹ Ibid.

the Holy Spirit receives from the Son, namely, the quality of being the Son's love for the Father, which, completing that of the Father for the Son, constitutes in its objectivization the person of the Holy Spirit.⁹²

Coffey stresses the Filioque, as developed by Augustine, does not attend to the whole Church and therefore something more is needed. These counts for both sides, where both East and West need to give and take to get a view in which all can agree on. Although the Filioque is not good enough for a common ecclesiology, the credit lies with Augustine through his idea of the Holy Spirit as mutual love.

Coffey also contributed to the discussion around the 'clarificaton' note developed by Pope John Paul II in 1995. The note was an attempt to give clarification to the Western Filioque in proportion to the Constantinople Creed which stated that the Father was the pure source of Trinity. There is no room for this discussion in this thesis, but we can draw out some of Coffey's references to Augustine in the debate. On the argumentation of difference in Eastern and Western language considering the Father's relation in producing the Son and Spirit, Augustine is emphasized as a positive contribution. Coffey refers to Augustine's use of *principaliter* and says "these reflections enable us to appreciate what Augustine meant when he said...that the Holy Spirit proceeds 'principally' (*principaliter*) from the Father."⁹³ This, Coffey states, shows Augustine's *principaliter* is equivalent with the Greek 'cause' (*αἰτία*). Thus Augustine depicts a view of God's procession which can be reconciled with the Eastern view that the Father is the sole origin of the Godhead. Here we will not engage this question any further, but notice Coffey's positive reference and pick up this thread in the evaluation.

As when it comes to Coffey's use of Augustine in general, he does involve him throughout most of his works. We will go to *Did You Receive the Holy Spirit When You Believed*. Through the chapter on the Spirit's activity, Coffey states Augustine's view on the procession of the Spirit. Here he stress that Augustine would not hear of any procession of the Spirit from the Father.

What Augustine here sees as strict alternatives, I see as dialectical complementaries. It is clear that Augustine was considering the procession strictly in itself, and hence prescinding from all question of the Spirit's "destination." Eastern theologians, on the other hand, have no hesitation in doing precisely this.⁹⁴

⁹² Ibid., 155.

⁹³ David Coffey, "The Roman 'Clarification' of the Doctrine of the Filioque," *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 5, no. 1 (2003): 6.

⁹⁴ ———, *Did You Receive the Holy Spirit When You Believed?: Some Basic Questions for Pneumatology* (Milwaukee, Wis.: Marquette University Press, 2005), 86.

The Spirit proceeded from both the Son and the Father at the same time. Coffey emphasizes Augustine's standpoint as meaning the direction of the Spirit, and not like for example, proceeding from the Father and the repose of the Spirit on the Son, as emphasized in East by Dumitru Staniloae. Despite the Filioque, Coffey states, Augustine desired the same emphasis. Coffey also argues that Augustine was regarding the mutual love theology as a model, but ended, as many others on the procession model.⁹⁵

In the Anthology *Advents of the Spirit*, Coffey contributes with an article *Spirit Christology and Trinity*. There he refers to Augustine among other well known theologians, when explaining his own view. This theme is not of major relevance for this thesis, but it does show how Coffey appropriates Augustine and his theology. We also meet Cyril of Alexandria as the Eastern example of Spirit Christology. Through a couple quotes of Augustine Coffey states that the Bishop of Hippo does not distinguish between Son Christology and Logos Christology.

To sum up, Augustine like Cyril proposes a Spirit Christology that he sees as in no way incompatible with Logos Christology, that he sees indeed as requiring a Logos Christology, but again like Cyril he advances no explanation as to how the Father's radical gift of the Holy Spirit results in the Incarnation of the Logos. I conclude this section with the observation that with such strong, even if scarcely noticed support from a major Father from each of East and West, a modern reconciling Spirit Christology, far from being ruled out in advance, merits at the very last our respectful and sympathetic consideration.⁹⁶

David Coffey also involves Augustine in his treatment of persons both human and divine in *Deus Trinitas*. Coffey argues that the metaphysical concept of relation has been applied to Augustine and Western tradition, although it was something which began with the Cappadocians, more particularly Gregory of Nazianus, who used relation (schesis) on the Father. The Cappadocians thus emphasized hypostasis which is united in a single essence of God, and the persons differed in their mutual relations to each other. Further, Coffey states, there is "good reason to believe that it was in Gregory that Augustine, despite his lack of in Greek, discovered the concept of trinitarian relations."⁹⁷ This Coffey argues more when he refers to Augustine who states the trinitarian relations between Father and Son, and not

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ ———, "Spirit Christology and the Trinity," in *Advents of the Spirit* (Milwaukee Ithaca, NY: Snow Lion Publications Marquette University Press, 2001), 323.

⁹⁷ Coffey, *Deus Trinitas: The Doctrine of the Triune God*, 68.

according to substance.⁹⁸ Coffey also mentions the trinitarian persons in the paragraph *Some Key Trinitarian Terms*: "...it is an *interpersonal* reality, the proper activity of a person, uniting him or her to other persons."⁹⁹ This idea, Coffey says, goes back to Augustine.

The last point we will involve is Coffey's treatment of the ontological order. Here he disagrees with Augustine on the way God unfolds from unity into diversity:

In any case, for St. Augustine in the West God's unity was paramount on philosophical grounds. In his understanding, the one God unfolded into diversity through knowledge and love of himself. But also, be it noted, the Augustinian view followed the order of revelation: the God first revealed as one in the Old Testament was finally revealed as threefold in the New. My own view is that these considerations do not settle the matter. Faith acknowledges in God a dialectical tension between the unity of being and the diversity of persons that does not allow an absolute priority of either member of the dialectic over the other, while theology, for the sake of rationality, has to choose one or the other as a starting point. Certainly, because of its dependence on the psychological model Western Catholic theology has traditionally awarded priority to the unity over the trinity of God, but with the fading of this model the alternative emphasis becomes possible. My own preference, as will become clear when I expound the two complementary models of the Trinity, is to begin with the "Western" order and end with the "Eastern."¹⁰⁰

Augustine here describes God from unity to diversity of persons, while Coffey stress a view other than the Catholic tendency to treat unity over Trinity. He refers to his own models of 'immanent' Trinity which I will discuss in the next chapter.

Colin Gunton and the crisis of West

From David Coffey's view we now turn completely around to the critique presented by Gunton on how Augustine has made a rather bad contribution to the West's theology. Gunton starts his treatment of Augustine with a reference to Rahner's critique *On the One God* that Augustine separates the One God with the Triune God, and might be close to Modalism. Further he states, with reference to Harnack, that Augustine avoid Modalism only because he does not want to be a Modalist and because he uses "ingenious distinctions between different ideas."¹⁰¹ The treatment of Augustine he divides in four parts. First he treats materiality, then substance and persons, third Augustine's analogies and fourth the Holy Spirit. We start with materiality.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 69.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 28-29.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 25.

¹⁰¹ Gunton, *The Promise of Trinitarian Theology*, 32.

Gunton stresses that Western theology has mainly failed in creating proper concepts which bring out Christ's full humanity. This, he states, is due to Augustine's lack in giving full weight to the materiality in the incarnation in Christ. He shows signs of anti-incarnational Platonism in his treatment of the Old Testament. Gunton argues that Augustine does not look back at the Old Testament and thus making connections between God and humans are comes to show in Jesus Christ.¹⁰² Further he criticizes Augustine for being too close to a view on God as matter. Augustine treats the angels as the relation to humans and the world instead of the Word. This Gunton argues has two consequences. First Augustine's weight on spirituality and second it: "distances God from creation and flattens out the distinctions between the persons of the Trinity..."¹⁰³ As for Augustine's treatment of the Spirit, it appears that his treatment is of substance instead of personal.

The second point made by Gunton is about substance and persons. Here Gunton comes with a sharp critique of Augustine's contribution:

...that Augustine either did not understand the trinitarian theology of his predecessors, both East and West, or looked at their work with spectacles so strongly tinted with neoplatonic assumptions that they have distorted his work. The tragedy is that Augustine's work is so brilliant that it blinded generations of theologians to its damaging weaknesses.¹⁰⁴

First of all Augustine has problems understanding the language of Cappadocian theology. This again does not make him understand the depth of ontology stressed by the Cappadocians, that which the Trinitarian persons distinction are due to their relations. Augustine is unable to avoid the dualistic ontology, in that he makes distinction between oneness and threeness of God. Thus Augustine uses the term relation logically instead of, like the Cappadocians, ontologically. This understanding of the Trinity emphasized by Augustine, Gunton argues, is the reason why most of western theology is tending towards modalism.¹⁰⁵

In his Trinitarian analogies Augustine "treats divine threeness which owes more to neoplatonic philosophy than to triune economy..."¹⁰⁶ For Augustine, the true knowledge of the Trinitarian God is found not through the economy of salvation, but through the threefold mind. Gunton illustrates this by referring too Augustine's *intellectualism* and *individualism*. The latter describes the attempt to compare the nature of Trinity with the individual human

¹⁰² Ibid., 34.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 35.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 39.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 38-42.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 42-43.

mind. The second point, individualism, refers to Augustine who thinks about God as a Supermind, and stresses the Word which has to be understood mentally, as the abstract meaning, rather than physically as the person of Jesus Christ in relation to the Spirit and the Father.¹⁰⁷ The Father in the Trinity, Augustine also compares with the human mind, i.e. he stresses that the function of the Father is parallel to the function of the human mind through being a “storehouse of being and, as such, the fount of the Trinity.”¹⁰⁸ Gunton here comes with an example that shows where Augustine gets into trouble considering his parallel to the human mind. The Spirit is given the third function of the human mind: the will of God.

If we were to think from the economy, would not the Father be a better candidate, as the one whose will is realised in the economy by the Son and the Spirit? The dominance of the platonic is demonstrated by the fact that after many contortions, Augustine establishes the difference between Son and Spirit, as we have already seen, by appeal to the distinction between understanding and will.¹⁰⁹

Through these analogies Augustine “tends to call attention away from the concrete historical events in which God is present to the world in the economy of creation and salvation.”¹¹⁰

The last section in which Gunton criticizes Augustine we have already looked upon through the chapter on *Scripture*. I have already treated this topic, but it is worth mentioning again due to Gunton’s critique. Augustine has no good foundation in scripture for saying that the Spirit is love. Gunton sees Augustine’s treatment of the Spirit more as something which has to fit the scheme already stated by Augustine’s parallel to the human mind. The Spirit is again not given enough hypostatic distinctiveness and lacks the eschatological dimension in which the Spirit, according to Gunton, is to be emphasized.

We have now seen Gunton’s treatment of Augustinian theology in chapter three of his book. His critique against Augustine extends much farther than this chapter, and we will look into some of the topics, starting with Gunton’s discussion of community.

Gunton argues that a weakness in Augustine’s Trinitarian theology is one of the reason for the view on the Trinity as a difficulty and not using the Triune God as a starting point for ecclesiology. As stated elsewhere, the critique concerns hypostatic distinction of the three persons of Trinity.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 44.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 46.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 48.

...There is a widespread assumption that the doctrine of the Trinity is one of the difficulties of Christian belief: a kind of intellectual hurdle to be leaped before orthodoxy can be acknowledged. Some reasons for this have emerged from the study of Augustine in the previous chapter. In fact we shall find that the problems with the theology of the church run in parallel with some of the chief weaknesses of Augustine's theology of the Trinity, among which lies his failure to establish adequate distinctions between the modes of action of Father, Son and Spirit. Because the differences between the persons become effectively redundant, they no longer bear upon the shape of thought about the realities of life in the world, and in this case are not able to shape ecclesiological thinking. If all divine actions are actions of the one God, so that the actions of the Trinity towards the world are undivided in an absolute sense, the persons are irrelevant for thought, and a kind of monism results. We may say, then, that because the Trinity has been divorced from other doctrines, it has fallen into disrepute, except as the recipient of lip service. But because it has been neglected, the church has appropriated only a part of its rich store of possibilities for nourishing a genuine theology of community.¹¹¹

Gunton blames Augustine for his part in contributing a way of thinking about the Trinity which does not contribute to ecclesiology. Thus Augustine's teaching does obstruct the possibilities which lie in giving the Trinity more emphasis as "possibilities for nourishing a genuine theology of community."¹¹²

The next point by Gunton deals with the concept of person. Here Gunton means that Augustine owes more to Aristotelian logic than the personal relation as spoken by the Cappadocians. Augustine seems to be stuck in the concept of person as something individualistic and therefore denies God's unfolding into the relational persons of Trinity.¹¹³ To emphasize the importance of relation of persons, Gunton refers to Greek theologian John Zizioulas. The persons of the Trinity are always 'connected' and must therefore not be isolated in individuals but rather emphasized as beings in relationship. This, Gunton says, are argued by the Cappadocians, that the persons realize himself in and through the others. Thus each person's uniqueness is kept, while tendency towards individualism is avoided.¹¹⁴

The last reference to Gunton concerns his treatment of concept and being, which he calls for *concluding theological postscript*. He deals here with questions on the Unknowable God:

One of the fruits of the Augustinian legacy, as it comes to us through the fire of the Enlightenment's criticism of dogma, is a tendency to misunderstand the point of trinitarian theology. What has happened in recent discussion is that the intellectual situation has been understood in an over simple fashion, in two respects in particular, both of them presupposing a more static conception of dogmatic development than

¹¹¹ Ibid., 57.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Ibid., 95.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 96.

that with which I have tried to work. The first is that according to which it is held that the classical doctrine of the Trinity is to be understood as a 'model', developed in its entirety in the past, which may now be obsolete *because the precise form of words in which it was formulated no longer satisfies modern rational criteria or theological developments.*¹¹⁵

Thus Augustinian heritage is, the way Gunton argues it, still strongly connected with platonic thought. This tendency to be stuck in platonian concepts, Gunton argues elsewhere too. By reference to Paul Helm's treatment of the creation in time, Gunton states that the Western view of timelessness considering God and creation he states comes ultimately from Augustine:

In this, Helm is working with a strong doctrine of the timelessness of God: God is in every respect timeless; any divine act will therefore be timeless; therefore, from God's point of view the universe is timeless. God may create it with time, but in no way his action of creation to be conceived as temporal. The conception comes from Augustine – ultimately, perhaps from philo – whose embarrassment with the Genesis account of six days, combined with his Platonism, caused him repeatedly to assert that God creates the whole world instantaneously, because it would be in some way a slur on God's omnipotence to suggest anything else...

Here again Gunton refers to a negative contribution from the Bishop of Hippo. Due to his link to Platonic concepts, Augustine brings with him consequences:

This involves two mistakes, which have had serious consequences. The first is that it introduces a divorce between God's creating action, which is timeless, and his saving and redeeming action, which takes time...The second is that it perpetrates such violation of the Genesis text that one is tempted to a sneaking sympathy for the so-called creationists, who at least have the merit of taking the text seriously. But we do not have to pay that price. We are not faced with a choice between liberalism and the kind of Platonizing allegory that turns the days into stages of the spiritual life, as in Augustine.¹¹⁶

After this critical point about Augustine, Gunton turns to the Basil of Caesarea, who involves the eternity perspective and his relational view. Later on Gunton returns to the mistake by Augustine and the divorce:

Between God's timeless creating action and his temporal saving and redeeming action. It is at the root of the much-documented and lamented breach in the western theological tradition between the orders of creation and redemption. One revealing symptom in our context is the almost complete lack of substantive

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 194.

¹¹⁶ ———, *Father, Son and Holy Spirit: Essays toward a Fully Trinitarian Theology*, 137-38.

christological structuring in the medieval tradition of creation theology, so that William of Ockham can even cite John 1.1ff. without reference to the part played in creation by the eternal Word.

In *God and Freedom*, Gunton treats Augustine's contribution to the discussion about human freedom as God's creation. Augustine, he says, treats free will, determination and Gunton here acknowledges the intellectual contribution made by Augustine on this specific theme:

In *On Grace and Free Will*, for example, Augustine attributes, without reference to the notion of grace, considerable power to both mind or spirit and will. In modern thought, the belief is sometimes held that free choice takes place indifferently and entirely free from any determination, but in Augustine the theory of freedom derived from his inheritance from the Greek philosophical tradition, with its tendency to assume that, by virtue of the spark of divinity that defines human reason, freedom is an intrinsic possession. In that respect, too, Augustine remains the intellectual father of us all.¹¹⁷

Although this is taken from the introduction of the collection of essays, it does show a positive reference to Augustine, that he has in fact contributed with something worth basing future theology on. Though in Gunton's own article in the anthology, Augustine is not mentioned at all.

In his *Act and Being*, Gunton has written two chapters which consider the relevance of 'economic' Trinity and 'eternal' Trinity in earlier tradition. He uses contributions from early Church Fathers and Schoolmen. We here meet Irenaeus and Gregory of Nazianzus from early theology. In treating the 'eternal' trinity he exemplifies with primarily Karl Barth, Robert Jenson and Eberhard Jüngel. As for Augustine of Hippo, he is once mentioned, but no importance for either of the 'Trinities'.¹¹⁸

Evaluation

The views on tradition as contributed by our two theologians, does strongly differ. Coffey seems to have a overall positive view of Augustine's theology while Gunton, as we shall see treats the Latin church father as merely destructing Western theology. We start with Coffey.

Throughout the work by Coffey, I have been studying, there is mainly only one topic where he aims critique on Augustine, and that is the mutual-love theory. As was stressed in the chapter of Scripture, Coffey finds shortcuts in Augustine's methodology. I will not discuss

¹¹⁷ Colin E. Gunton, *God and Freedom: Essays in Historical and Systematic Theology* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1995), 3.

¹¹⁸ ———, *Act and Being: Towards a Theology of the Divine Attributes* (London: SCM Press, 2002), 76-108.

this again, but one thing is worth mentioning here and that is the tendency with Coffey to not deal with topics on which he disagrees. He uses most of the space between the book covers to emphasize his own view of mutual-love, and therefore the places where he refers to Augustine mainly are of positive character. Both in his treatment of the Filioque developed by Augustine, Coffey stress that Augustine means that the Holy Spirit ultimately (principality) proceeds from the Father. In this case Augustine does come close to a similar view of East.

In the treatment of persons in *Deus Trinitas*, Coffey gives credit to Augustine for having developed the idea of the interpersonal uniting reality, uniting the persons of Trinity to each other.

I also referred to Coffey's critique of Augustine concerning the ontological order. Here Coffey criticizes Augustine for stressing the God revealed in the Old Testament was revealed as threefold in the New Testament. It seems like Coffey even in his critical points manages to be positive. Instead of emphasizing strongly why Augustine's view is not right, he goes on with his own view after mentioning "that these considerations do not settle the matter." This I would argue shows the overall positive image Coffey has of Augustine and his theology. This I suggest has to do with Coffey's overall objective in theology, reconciling Eastern and Western view on the Trinity and language of the Trinity.

If we look upon Gunton's objective, it is entirely different. The overall goal in his chapter on Augustine in *Promise of Trinitarian Theology* is too see concerning the crisis "how far responsibility for the state of affairs is to be laid the door of St Augustine."¹¹⁹ This again has, as we have seen, been a red thread throughout his book. Gunton criticizes Augustine on the Holy Spirit as mutual love, materiality, view of the Trinity, view of substance and being and most of all for having strong connections to platonic and Aristotelian reasoning. Thus Gunton uses much of his strength to point to negative contributions in the Western tradition. There is nothing wrong with an approach like this, but with it follows certain limitations.

First, Gunton does emphasize Augustine's failure so strongly that it might seem that nothing of Augustine's theology appeals to him. Though this is most likely not the case here it does illustrate how the weight that is put in theology says something about the scholars view. This counts for Coffey as well on account of his weight on 'immanent' Trinity. I will elaborate this further.

With putting weight on one specific aspect or theme of theology comes a responsibility. When a theologian chooses to discuss a theme, but not another, he shows us where the

¹¹⁹ Gunton, *The Promise of Trinitarian Theology*, 31.

importance should lie. Then aspects which are not included, will be considered, not so important to the discussion. As for the themes emphasized, they might vary in extent and in what order they are presented. Often the most central theme is treated first in a work to ensure enough emphasis. Before I turn to our two theologians again, I would like to present a few examples of how arranging your work, says something about what you consider important or less important.

Swiss theologian Emil Brunner wrote the three-volume *Dogmatics* for over half a century ago. The books are divided into *The Christian Doctrine of God*, *The Christian Doctrine of Creation and Redemption* and *The Christian Doctrine of the Church, Faith, and the Consummation*. If we go to his volume one, which is quite extensive, we see the following structure: First prolegomena which deals with the basis and task of dogmatics, then section one which deals with the nature of God and his attributes and third the will of God. He treats the Triune God in one out of 23 chapters of this book.¹²⁰ Now what kind of signals does this structuring give? Certainly the Trinity is not of the greatest importance for Brunner's treatment of the Christian God. I am well aware of my position here today and that this theology was written in the first half of the twentieth century, still if Brunner meant that the Trinity was central in the Christian Doctrine he would definitely have given it more space throughout his work.

As a second example, we can turn to Karl Barth's milestone *Die Kirchliche Dogmatik*. Of his thirteen volumes it is only in the first that he deals explicitly with the Trinity. It is in the latter part of his treatment of *die offenbarung Gottes* in volume one.¹²¹ This section counts for less than hundred pages. Now this would have been a lot if we were talking about just one volume, but considering that Barth's work counts nine thousand pages, it is more like mentioning it than treating it. For Barth it therefore seems like the Trinity is of less importance for the Christian Doctrine.

The third example is Wolfhart Pannenberg's *Systematic Theology*¹²², which is organized quite different compared to the two former. Although the first volume mainly treats God in general and the Trinity, we see an other structure in the following two volumes. Here all three persons of Trinity are treated. Not shallow, but extensive with basis in great themes in theology and, as is in accordance with my view, Pannenberg makes use of all four sources of

¹²⁰ Emil Brunner, *The Christian Doctrine of God*, Dogmatics (London: Lutterworth press, 1949).

¹²¹ Karl Barth, *Die Lehre Vom Wort Gottes: Prolegomena Zur Kirchlichen Dogmatik*, 6 ed., vol. Erster Halband, Die Kirchliche Dogmatik (Zürich: Evangelischer Verlag Ag. Zollikon-Zürich, 1952), 311-95.

¹²² Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley, 3 vols. (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1991).

theology. The way I see it he also keeps a balanced use of the four sources. This brings us to the final, and the way I see it the best example of awareness of structure and organizing.

In *God For Us*, Cathrine LaCugna uses trinitarian language and deals with the Trinity as well as all three persons one and one. To show some of this appropriation of language I would like to turn to the beginning of the book where she spells out the introducing words.

The doctrine of the Trinity is ultimately a preactical doctrine with radical consequences for Christian life. That is the thesis of this book. The doctrine of the Trinity, which is the specifically Christian way of speaking about God, summarizes what it means to participate in the life of God through Jesus Christ in the Spirit. The mystery of God is revealed in Christ and the Spirit as the mystery of love, the mystery of persons in communion who embrace death, sin, and all forms of alienation for the sake of life.

Further she emphasizes the distinction of Christ, with the transforming power, and the Holy Spirit which brings love:

Jesus Christ, the visible icon of the invisible God, discloses what it means to be fully personal, divine as well as human. The Spirit of God, poured into our hearts as love (Rom. 5:5), gathers us together into the body of Christ, transforming us so that “we become by grace what God is by nature,” namely, persons in full communion with God and with every creature.¹²³

Here LaCugna depicts the persons’ distinction and the invitation that the triune God invites us to be part of the trinitarian communion. The way in which we can be in relation, she discusses further:

The life of God – precisely because God is triune – does not belong to God alone. God who dwells in inaccessible light and eternal glory comes to us in the face of Christ and the activity of the Holy Spirit. Because of God’s outreach to the creature, God is said to be essentially relational, ecstatic, fecund, alive as passionate love. Divine life is also *our* life. The heart of the Christian life is to be united with the God of Jesus Christ by means of communion with each other. The doctrine of the Trinity is ultimately therefore a teaching not about the abstract nature of God, nor about God in isolation from everything other than God, but a teaching about God’s life with us and our life with each other. Trinitarian theology could be described as par excellence a theology of relationship, which explores the mysteries of love, relationship, personhood and communion within the framework of God’s self-revelation in the person of Christ and the activity of the Spirit. This ongoing revelation and action of God is the proper source for reflection on theological

¹²³ Catherine Mowry LaCugna, *God for Us: The Trinity and Christian Life* (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1991), 1.

ethics, spirituality, ecclesiology, and the liturgical and communitarian life of the church.¹²⁴

Not only does LaCugna use the whole specter of theology when talking about God, she also includes trinitarian weight in doing so. To be able to argue this kind of trinitarian theology, I do mean we need the diversity that traditions give us. With great variation come great possibilities for theology. But that is not the same as saying that one is allowed to talk about God ways that do not attend the core of Christianity, i.e. the Trinitarian love which the Father, Son and Holy Spirit wants us to experience. That is through *God For Us*, LaCugna uses traditional resources from both East and West, which shows both the treatment of the relationship between us and latter God.

Now back to Coffey and Gunton. Coffey's *Deus Trinitas* does treat the models of 'immanent' Trinity early, right after the *introduction*. From there he sticks with this theme for three chapters before turning to discussions with other theologians in the latter part of the book. As for Coffey, he names the work *Deus Trinitas: The Doctrine of the Triune God*, and I have to ask does the content reflect what it says in the title? My opinion is that it does not. Coffey might have used the word 'immanent' in his title to support the weight he gives it in his work. The Triune God or the Trinitarian God or the Trinity is not the name of a God "up there", but a God which we are to know through Christ and the Holy Spirit. If this is (and it certainly is for many) the way in which God as Trinity is understood and experienced in the world, should it not be central in the Doctrine of the Triune God? I believe it should. It shall be mentioned that this counts not only for Coffey, but for several theologians who uses broad doctrine tags on their book covers. There should be a correspondence between what we read on the front and what is to be found inside.

Gunton, as we have seen, seems to have an inexhaustible arsenal of critique. He does, in addition to the chapter on Western Crisis due to Augustine also put in points about the Augustinian heritage and the bad influence he has had on future theologians. *The Promise of Trinitarian Theology* is as Gunton himself puts it "neither a set of essays thinly disguised as a unified book nor a fully unified book, but a set of essays for which is claimed a unity of theme, direction and development."¹²⁵ Further he says that not only will he concentrate on the doctrine of the Trinity, but also the "possibilities opened up by the Trinitarian thought."¹²⁶ Gunton seems to be unable to talk about Augustine without criticizing him. Now is this so bad? I do believe that Augustine has absolutely provided good contributions, but this is not

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Gunton, *The Promise of Trinitarian Theology*, xi.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

the case here. What is interesting is that writing theology does show the scholars perspective and weight of importance. Is the objective for Gunton that all Augustine has contributed has been for the worse? If not, he should definitely make this point, because the way. Well, I want to argue that these possibilities somehow get in the shadow of the Augustinian critique. Now why am I discussing this? I would argue that the way in which you organize structure and name your work, shows what you consider to be important; what theological view you promote and what you consider to be of less importance. Thus one has I would argue a responsibility as scholars to reflect on this matter, and consider what signals might be sent out. This counts especially for tradition.

We are all part of a tradition, whether it is as East or West, Orthodox or Catholic or Reformed or Lutheran. There has been and is a great variety of articulations of beliefs, as Hall argues “the past articulations of Christian belief with which the disciple community lives are not sufficiently unified or congruent to constitute a single entity.”¹²⁷ This means that we are, whether we like it or not, influenced by our tradition, and I would argue that we, because of that, are permitted to discuss why we are treating for instance the Doctrine of the Trinity the way we are. Catholic theologian Hans Küng describes this relation between traditional background and theology.

What is the basis of Christian faith? Is it the Church, Tradition, or the Bible? Answer: It is neither the Church nor Tradition nor the Bible: -Even the Protestant Christian does not believe in the Bible, but in the one to whom the Bible bears witness. – Even the Orthodox Christian does not believe in Tradition, but in the one whom Tradition hands down. – Even the Catholic Christian does not believe in the Church, but in the one whom the Church proclaims. – The unconditionally reliable reality, to which men and women can hold fast for all time and eternity, is not the Bible texts and not the Fathers of the Church, nor the Church’s magisterium, but God himself, as he spoke for believers through Jesus Christ. The texts of the Bible, the sayings of the Fathers and church authorities mean to be – with varying degrees of importance – no more and no less than an expression of this belief. ¹²⁸

This way Christians do not believe in scripture tradition and church, but rather in Christ who is witnessed in the sources of theology. Here we clearly see how the main traditions of Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant are more strongly connected to one or more of the theological sources. I can in addition to Küng’s three examples add experience and reason.

¹²⁷ Douglas John Hall, *Thinking the Faith: Christian Theology in a North American Context* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 263.

¹²⁸ Hans Küng, *Theology for the Third Millennium: An Ecumenical View*, trans. Peter Heinegg (New York: Doubleday, 1988), 62.

All four sources of theology are different ways of approaching and meeting the same eternal Triune God. If we do not take this into consideration doing theology, then all readers must presume that what was written is what is most important for the scholar. Thus, what is written by Coffey in *Deus Trinitas* shows what he considers most important for his treatment, i.e. God in 'immanent' Trinity and Augustine seems to be a good contribution to the theological heritage. As for Gunton it is important to show the whole specter of God from the community of the Church to God in eternity. Thus he attends to a broader theology, to which I agree.

Coffey as a Catholic and Gunton as a Protestant shows they're influenced by their background. Coffey appreciates most of Augustinian theology, as part of a Western tradition. In his *Response to Paul Molnar* Coffey defends himself against Molnar's critique of *Deus Trinitas* and here he shows awareness of his tradition:

In this brief contribution, I would like to offer four words of self-defense. My first would be that Molnar's article should be acknowledged for what it is: an exercise in Barthian criticism. As such, it will not necessarily persuade Catholic theologians, who operate within their own tradition (or traditions), at the same time being willing to enter into dialogue with representatives of other traditions. Of course, Catholic theology and the Barthian variety have points in common; but they also have differences, and it is these that are defining.¹²⁹

It is not the objective here to go into the discussion between Molnar and Coffey, but rather to see how the two of them actually discuss traditional differences, as Coffey stated. The fact that we have different views, emphases and traditional backgrounds, does I would argue provide a breeding ground for the best possible theology. Molnar does in his critique of Coffey involve several different contributions, i.e. that of Catherine LaCugna and Ted Peters whom he considers as "recent presentations of the doctrine of Trinity that have polemicised against a doctrine of the immanent Trinity and have floundered because of their failure to understand the importance of this doctrine,"¹³⁰ and further contributions from Karl Barth, Thomas F. Torrance and Colin Gunton among some. This diversity of approaches does create a safety net for each other. This, I argue, should also count for the four sources of theology, in that they balance each other. Therefore, this is central in all systematic theology that is the use of other contributions, ideas, treatments from other theologians in discussing theology. It is precisely because of the variety from the traditions that we have the opportunity to talk in

¹²⁹ David Coffey, "In Response to Paul Molnar," *Irish Theological Quarterly* 67, no. December (2002): 375.

¹³⁰ Paul D. Molnar, "Deus Trinitas: Some Dogmatic Implications of David Coffey's Biblical Approach to the Trinity," *Irish Theological Quarterly* 67, no. March (2002): 34.

different ways about the Trinitarian God. I stated the importance of being aware of our traditional background, and at the same time it is exactly the fact that we have different backgrounds that makes fruitful theology possible. I will use contributions from various theologians from various traditions and backgrounds to illuminate the Trinitarian theology. Now Coffey does show some awareness of tradition in his *The Incarnation of the Holy Spirit in Christ*:

In this article I aim to explore the nature of this “incarnation” of the Holy Spirit. To do this I take the point of departure from my book *Grace: The Gift of the Holy Spirit*, explaining the various theses which constitute this point of departure, but not attempting to establish them over again. At the same time I shall take advantage of the opportunity to update a number of things said in the book. It must be stated at the outset that this theology belongs firmly to the Catholic tradition. Other Christians, I hope, will be able to identify with, but only to the extent that they can distance themselves from that Calvinist and Barthian position which totally denies to man and woman any natural capacity for God. However much one would want to affirm our radical sinfulness and our incapacity to do of ourselves anything that would advance us in the way of salvation, one must still reject, as a conclusion flowing from the philosophy of nominalism rather than divine revelation, this basic principle of Calvinist and Barthian thought. We proceed rather on the Thomistic basis that the human person is the one being in all creation who is *capax Dei*, capable of God, a principle which, in regard to the incarnation, began life in the form of the *enhypostasia* of Leontius of Byzantium, consolidated itself in the ensuing history through several reformulations, and perhaps attained its zenith of development in the transcendental Christology of Karl Rahner. It will be clear that to him this article owes a great deal. His rethinking of theology has opened the way to important gains in both Christology and pneumatology.¹³¹

Here Coffey clearly reflects upon what he is treating and for whom the theme will be most relevant, and for whom it will be uncomfortable. He mentions both his own tradition as Catholic and other Christians. A small critical point is set out through the argumentation if they can let go of the Bathesian and Calvinist limiting position. Rahner is further emphasized as an important contributor to both pneumatology and Christology. This is exactly the kind of awareness I argue should be done in both Gunton and Coffey’s case, so that they show that they are reflecting outside their own tradition and arguing for the themes place in their overall theology.

Before I turn to the conclusion I want to go back to Hall’s treatment of tradition in his *Thinking the Faith*, where he gives reflection on the belonging to a tradition. We are not just

¹³¹ David Coffey, "The "Incarnation" Of the Holy Spirit in Christ," *Theological Studies* 45, no. 3 (1984): 466.

part of a tradition in the broad sense, but also in our way of focusing on certain aspects of theology and certain contributors.

A particular tradition which may have been important for one age is replaced, in the next epoch, by a different – not infrequently by a radically different – tradition. A Christian thinker taken up by this era and made, as one may say, almost the patron saint of the theologians, is dropped by the next. An obscure scholar of the distant past suddenly becomes particularly authoritative for the present disciple community, or some segment thereof.

Thus what has been of great importance for theology might shift through time. Hall further exemplifies Augustine's sudden relevance.

Dramatic shifts in the evaluation and meaning of doctrinal traditions occur, especially, in periods of radical transition in church and society. Indeed, part of what is meant by a radical term like "radical transition" is precisely this diversification in the search for authorities within the abundant traditions of the faith. At the time of the Reformation, for example, there was a sudden resurgence of interest in Augustine, who, during the High Middle Ages, had been caused to retire into the background on account of the high scholastic preference for Aristotelian categories rather than the Platonic views of the Bishop of Hippo.¹³²

For at the same time as we are part of a tradition, we are also part of a shifting tradition. As for post modern time it has been and is a tendency to emphasize the Holy Spirit and relationality. So, in this sense, I can say I am a part of this tendency also, being influenced by all the writings of the Holy Spirit that are being published.

Gunton is more concerned with experience and community and does not approve Augustinian theology proper, as a tradition. The Protestant tradition does have a tendency to emphasize scripture and tone down tradition. As a Protestant Lutheran, I put more weight on scripture. We have different theological backgrounds and in addition to be a part of a diversity of viewpoints, I argue, that we need to be aware of our connection to tradition to be able to develop better theology. This is because our tradition influences and is influenced by the other sources of theology: reason, scripture and experience.

¹³² Hall, *Thinking the Faith: Christian Theology in a North American Context*, 264.

Conclusion

In this chapter we have looked upon Coffey and Gunton's view on the Augustinian tradition. Coffey uses Augustine in his treatment of the Holy Spirit as mutual love, Filioque and throughout most of his work. First we looked upon Coffey's treatment of the Filioque where Augustine's contribution is not good enough for reconciling East and West, although Coffey gives positive weight on Augustine's mutual love theory as starting point for his return model. Further I referred to Coffey's contribution to the 'clarification' of the doctrine of the Filioque. Here Augustine's ideas (principaliter) were mentioned as positive due to the correspondence with the Greek word for 'cause'. The other parts where Coffey treated Augustine was in his Spirit Christology, his treatment of persons and of the ontological order. I argued that Coffey seems to treat Augustine only in the places where he agrees with him, i.e. he has a rather positive view on Augustinian theology. This I argued is because of Coffey's overall objective: Reconciling East and West, and therefore we saw that even where Coffey disagrees he seems to get something positive out of it.

Gunton, as we saw, has a completely negative view on Augustine's contribution to Trinitarian theology. I looked upon five points of critique by Gunton.

First, Augustine's lack of giving full weight to the materiality in the incarnation; second, Augustine did not understand the theology provided by both East and West before him, and he was somehow blinded by his neoplatonic assumptions. Third, Gunton argued that due to neoplatonic philosophy again, Augustine found knowledge of the Triune God in the mind instead of through Christ and salvation. The fourth point of critique is Augustine's treatment of the Holy Spirit as mutual-love, which Gunton says stops already with the question whether the Spirit can be called love.

The fifth point was Augustine's fatal interpreting of Genesis due to Platonic concepts of time and timelessness. In addition to Gunton's main contribution in chapter three of *Promise of Trinitarian Theology*, he deals with Augustine other places, and it is my view that he tends to be overall critical of Augustine. This has been strengthened by his primary appeal to the negative contribution of Augustine and to a lesser degree the positive.

I also argued that both Gunton and Coffey need to be more aware of their organizing and weight on specific themes in their work. This is because how you structure your work does say what you mean is important. For Coffey 'immanent' Trinity seems the most relevant and for Gunton criticizing Augustine. I exemplified with Karl Barth, Emil Brunner, Wolfhart Pannenberg and Catherine LaCugna and showed problematic structuring with Barth and

Brunner, and Pannenberg and LaCugna's organizing with which I agree. In addition to this I said that LaCugna's way of arguing involves the "whole theology" and could not have been done without the diversity of theological views and traditions.

In the last point of my argumentation I stressed the awareness of traditional background, our shifting traditions and positive effect of traditional diversity. Through Hall's example I showed the tendency through history that tradition shifts like Augustine in medieval times, who suddenly became popular. This, I argued, is to find in post-modern theology as well. As there are the main traditions such as Protestant and Catholic, there are also other levels of tradition such as the one of post modern time emphasizing the Holy Spirit. I argued that the broad specter of traditions give possibilities for good Trinitarian theology.

Reason

The third source of theology is *reason*. Alister E. McGrath states that human reason should play a major role in theology due to the fact that human beings are rational, even though it has been great debate on what weight reason should have in Christian theology. On one side reason is emphasized as important for theology, which Justin Martyr tends to support. On the other side, there is a more critical view of philosophy as supported by Tertullian.¹³³ Further, in enlightenment reason contributed to several difficulties due to attempts to grasp God. My approach to reason will be two terms, ‘immanent’ and ‘economic’ Trinity, which in post-modern time still creates debates.

Theologians are using reason to all its extent trying to get the best possible understanding and language on the Trinitarian God. One main contributor to Trinitarian theology is Karl Rahner, well known for his axiom the ‘economic’ Trinity is the ‘immanent’ Trinity and the ‘immanent’ Trinity is the ‘economic’ Trinity.¹³⁴ Before I go on, some explanation is necessary. ‘Economic’ comes from the Greek word *oikonomia* which means the way something is carried out, i.e. in this sense how God works out creation and salvation through history and revelation. ‘Immanent’ is used on how the Trinity is within. Karl Rahner developed his axiom as a reaction to the isolation of Trinity in theology and second as an answer to the tradition contributed by Augustine, the tendency to separate between On the One God and On the Triune God.¹³⁵ Catherine Mowry LaCugna describes the terminology the following way: “The phrase ‘‘economic’ Trinity’ refers to the three ‘faces’ or manifestations of God’s activity in the world, correlated with the names, Father, Son and Spirit... The phrase ‘immanent’ Trinity, also called the ‘essential’ Trinity, points to the life and work of God in the economy, but from an ‘immanent’ point of view.”¹³⁶ Further LaCugna stress that “there is wide agreement in Catholic and Protestant theology with Rahner’s principle that “The ‘economic’ Trinity is the ‘immanent’ Trinity, and vice versa.”¹³⁷ With this in mind I will now

¹³³ McGrath, *Christian Theology: An Introduction*, 141.

¹³⁴ Karl Rahner, *The Trinity* (London: Burns and Oates, 1970).

¹³⁵ LaCugna, *God for Us: The Trinity and Christian Life*, 213-14.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 211.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*

get down to how Coffey and Gunton make use of this terminology, ‘immanent’ and ‘economic’ Trinity.

Coffey’s models

In the chapter on scripture, I barely touched ‘immanent’ and ‘economic’ Trinity when treating Augustine’s theory. Coffey treats the terms in his models which are to be found in *Deus Trinitas*. Before we go to the models we look at how Coffey describes the relationship between the ‘economic’ and ‘immanent’ Trinity.

Where earlier writing concentrated on the immanent Trinity to the neglect of the economic Trinity, the present trend is in the opposite direction. While the emphasis on the economic Trinity is a positive gain (in that it broadens trinitarian theology to make it include almost the whole of systematic theology, and links it firmly to salvation, thereby demonstrating its relevance), some of the more recent writing shows a lack of balance in that it evinces a dismissive or reductive attitude toward the immanent Trinity, which after all, was a major concern of the Church Fathers and the early councils. This attitude reveals itself in a tendency either to dissolve the immanent Trinity into the economic Trinity altogether or to be agnostic about the existence of the immanent Trinity. In this book I am at pains to avoid this trap in either of its forms. While I share with other theologians a desire to emphasize the economic Trinity, I still want to uphold the immanent Trinity as an important, indeed essential, element of trinitarian theology.¹³⁸

It is exactly this essential and important element of Trinitarian theology that Coffey weights in his models of ‘immanent’ Trinity. With this in mind, we now turn to the first model.

Coffey writes that Augustine draws conclusions about the ‘immanent’ Trinity from a material sign, i.e. Jesus’ breathing of the Spirit on the disciples. Further Coffey states Augustine’s lack of distinction between ‘economic’ and ‘immanent’ Trinity, and he stresses that due to the biblical data, neither ‘economic’ nor ‘immanent’ Trinity can be justified. Thus scripture constitutes a “biblical” doctrine of the Trinity.¹³⁹ This biblical doctrine of the Trinity, Coffey describes as the following:

This is a doctrine in which the Father is Yahweh, called Father by Jesus because of the unique nature of his relationship to Him, a relationship which combines authority with intimacy; a doctrine in which the Son is Jesus, though his Sonship is not yet understood as an ontological reality requiring an incarnation in the metaphysical sense; and a doctrine in the Holy Spirit appears now impersonally as the spirit, or power, of

¹³⁸ Coffey, *Deus Trinitas: The Doctrine of the Triune God*, 4.

¹³⁹ ———, "The Holy Spirit as the Mutual Love of the Father and the Son," 194-95.

God, and now as this same power impregnated with the human personality of Jesus, though not yet grasped as a person in his own right.¹⁴⁰

Coffey therefore sees biblical Trinity as a Trinity the way it occurs as independent of relation to the world, to humans, as the Godhead within. This, he states, is the way in which the church has seen the ‘immanent’ trinity, the first four centuries. This ‘model’ again has been regarded as moving the following way: From the Father to Jesus, from Jesus to the Holy Spirit. Further he calls it ‘the mission model’ on account of the outwards movement from Father to Jesus and Holy Spirit, but further affirms that procession model is a better name, due to the fact that procession is necessary lead to by mission. This procession Coffey argues is common to both West and East, though East stresses that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father, while West stress that the Spirit proceeds from both the Father and the Son. This is as we have already seen because of the nature of the Filioque.¹⁴¹

The second model Coffey introduces us to is the ‘return model’, i.e. he starts with Augustine’s mutual-love theory, which stresses the movement of Father to Holy Spirit to Son to Holy Spirit to Father. Another way of putting it is the return of the Son in the Holy Spirit to the Father. This, as we saw in the former chapter, is the Spirit as mutual love between Father and Son. Here Coffey states, we have an ‘immanent’ theory as well, but though the name is return, no movement is to be emphasized, rather a dynamic equilibrium which encompass the relation between the three persons in the Trinity. These relations again are mutually distinctive in union together. Further Coffey emphasizes the return model as dealing with the return to the Father and “presupposes the outward movement from him,”¹⁴² while the former model of procession deals with only the outward movement from the Trinitarian God to the World. Coffey uses different names for his models and to clarify we will look at the terms again. The biblical Trinity refers to two different ways of approaching the trinity. The first is the mission model and the other the return model. These two models again leads to “two corresponding models of the ‘immanent’ Trinity, the *procession* or *distinction* model and the *return* or *union* model.”¹⁴³ The procession model is given the alternative name distinction due to the processions movement from unity in God the Father and ends in the distinction of the three persons.

The procession model starts with God’s unity as taught through the Old Testament. This

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.: 195.

¹⁴¹ _____, *Deus Trinitas: The Doctrine of the Triune God*, 43.

¹⁴² Ibid., 44.

¹⁴³ Ibid., 46.

unity unfolds into diversity through the distinctions of the persons of the Trinity. Coffey stresses the different views of East and West; while West, through Augustine, Anselm and Aquinas supports the Filioque, the East also made use of the procession model, though without applying the Filioque. The East started with the Father's unity instead of God's unity. Coffey states a view that describes "the Holy Spirit proceeds "through" the Son, and this is a way that has been acceptable in both East and West."¹⁴⁴ This though is not precise enough. Coffey then asks what is meant by through, and does not seem to know whether it should be understood in an active sense or in a passive sense. By active sense he means the Holy Spirit constituted as a single principle by the Father and the Son together. In order to formulate a view that in which both East and West acknowledge, Coffey turns to the return model.

The return model gives a different picture of the Holy Spirit's relation to the other persons of Trinity. Coffey argues that when treating the Holy spirit as the mutual love, a problem arises. This problem is to be found at the level of 'immanent' Trinity. First the Son proceeds from the Father. And at this stage the Holy Spirit is not participating. But turning to the biblical Trinity, we see that the Father bestows the Spirit who again generates the being of Jesus. Thus we have a contradiction between the immanent and the biblical Trinity. Even though this problem, Coffey argues, is solved when the Father bestows the love *ad extra* ('from the outside') and that generates the Son as the human being Jesus, who again enters in the unity of person. In this Trinity there is and ever was one object for the Father's love, i.e. the Son Jesus Christ.¹⁴⁵

Coffey also deals with the order of the two models. The procession model, he says, is prior to the return model.¹⁴⁶ This is because the Trinity must be viewed *ad extra*, 'from the outside' before viewed in extra 'from the inside'. Further he states that both models can be treated in isolation and in the case of the return model, it can clarify the relation between the persons of the Trinity. Coffey sums up this part with saying that "With the procession model via the filioque we have established the hypostatic distinction of the Holy Spirit; with the return model we have clarified the relation of the Holy Spirit to the Father and the Son, respectively."¹⁴⁷

The procession model is stated by Coffey as inadequate. He argues with love and shows how the procession generates self-love: "At the beginning at the operation of the model the love in question is simply the self-love of God; at the end it is self-love of the Father, with

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 48.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 49.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 52.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 53.

which he generates the Son. But in either case it is self-love.”¹⁴⁸ If we look at the return model, an interpersonal love is emphasized; a love characterized as love of neighbour. The procession model brings divine self-love, when the ultimate love is to be found in the mutual love between Father and Son. This love, Coffey states, should be emphasized and not the former form in which narcissism rules.¹⁴⁹ The love meditated in the return model is by Coffey stressed as a single act. Both Karl Rahner and St. Bonaventure did not accept mutual love since something mutual cannot be a single act. To see Coffey’s answer to this we will use his own words.

In the immanent Trinity, the self-love of God brings about first of all the differentiation of Father and Son, in that, acting out his self-love, which is his own self-love, the Father generates the Son. This act must be identified as a self-communication of the Father to the Son. In it the Father communicates to the Son everything that the Son will have, including the Son’s power to love his other, the Father. The act of the Father is a notional act, eternally positing the Son in existence as the Son of the Father. The Son thus receives himself at the hands of the Father. The Son is not identical with this self-communication, but rather is its term. Next, the Father communicates himself again to the Son, this time not acting out of his self-love but out of his love for the other, the Son. At the same time the Son returns his love to his other, the Father, thus communicating himself to him... This mutual love, the self-communication of the Father and the Son (to each other), is a single act, not because its two components occur simultaneously in the Godhead, but because the Son’s power to love (the other) is identical with the divine essence precisely as communicated by the Father to the Son, that is, as communicating a perfect personal likeness. This act of the Father and the Son is a notional act, productive of the Holy Spirit, who is the objectivization, or, better, the personalization, of their mutual love.¹⁵⁰

This “singleacted” love is the love of the return model which is not self-love, but a love constituted by the other, the Father for the Son and the Son for the Father in the Holy Spirit. The first love of the Father which generated the Son would in the procession model only be self-love without any love within persons of the Trinity. So where the procession model stops due to failure in expressing the love in God, the return model does the opposite, shows the mutual love of Father and Son, and affirms the Filioque.

Coffey deals with Rahner’s axiom in his conclusion of *Deus Trinitas*. He sums up the procedure in which he argues for Trinitarian theology should be grasped by transition from the biblical to the ‘immanent’ Trinity and back to scripture again for affirmation the new

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 60.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 62-63.

understanding. The outcome then would be the economic Trinity. We let Coffey describe this himself; this problem with Rahner's dictum.

This meant that I could no longer totally accept Karl Rahner's dictum of the simple identity of the economic and the immanent Trinity or Piet Schoonenberg and Walter Kasper's methodology of proceeding only from the economic to the immanent Trinity (and not vice versa). True, I proceed from the biblical to the immanent Trinity. And while I can affirm the identity with the immanent Trinity, the transcendence of God over the creation prevents my affirming the converse. To this extent at least, I must agree with Karl Barth. Finally, I found it necessary to reject the agnosticism of Roger Haight and others about the actual existence of the immanent Trinity. Though for the sake of the relevance of the doctrine of the Trinity I endorse the modern emphasis on the economic Trinity, the immanent Trinity remains necessary as both a concept and a reality, if the existence of the economic Trinity itself is to be upheld.¹⁵¹

Thus the 'immanent' Trinity is for Coffey necessary for the economy to be upheld. This means further that the 'economic' Trinity is dependent on the 'immanent' Trinity. This aspect of Coffey's Trinitarian theology I will discuss further in the evaluation part.

Gunton's approach

Colin Gunton has a more skeptical view on the terms 'economic' and 'immanent' Trinity which first comes forth in *The Promise of Trinitarian Theology*, where he clearly states that the tendency to "divorce the immanent from the economic."¹⁵² This "divorce" Gunton primarily blame on Augustine when it comes to Western Trinitarian theology. Further we can see a greater deal with this topic in his treatment of Torrance in *Father, Son and Holy Spirit*. He asks the question about what right do we have to go from economy to theology ('immanent') or from temporal time to eternity. Further he discusses the use and lack of use of the 'immanent' and 'economic' Trinity and last Gunton treats the relation between being and person.¹⁵³ This we need to say something more about to get a better picture of Gunton's standpoint.

In treating the relation between being and person Gunton refers to theologian Alan J. Torrance and the Cappadocians when stressing *ousia*, God's being in general, and *hypostasis*, the persons that make up God's being. Further Torrance makes a distinction between the oneness and the threeness, which Gunton is critical of. He makes distinctions between the

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 151.

¹⁵² Gunton, *The Promise of Trinitarian Theology*, xxii.

¹⁵³ ———, *Father, Son and Holy Spirit: Essays toward a Fully Trinitarian Theology*, 42-43.

connotations inner and outer, which by Gunton stresses he “cannot intend the modalistic teaching that God is outwardly – in the persons – one thing, and inwardly, in his unified being another.”¹⁵⁴ He therefore stresses God as outwardly in the ‘economy’ and inwardly in the ‘immanent’ Trinity, and sees no need to make a distinction here.

Gunton again refers to Torrance when talking about Rahner’s axiom. Here we meet a particularly important point of critique against Rahner. Through the writing of Torrance, Gunton shows the apparent confusion of the order of being and knowing. Rahner states that the condition for God’s self-communication is the ‘immanent’ Trinity. This means that the ‘immanent’ Trinity is necessary and Gunton wonder whether something, which is based on God’s freely communication of himself to us, really can be argued as necessary condition. God is free to communicate himself as Triune in the economy, and therefore it is not correct to say that ‘immanent’ Trinity is necessary for conditioning the self-communication of God.¹⁵⁵ The doctrine of the ‘immanent’ Trinity, Gunton states, should make grounds for the theology of economy, but no go any further than this. He answers his own question whether we are right to make claims about God’s action:

That is not to say that we should speculate about the inner being of God in any way that takes us away from the implications of his actions. The point of the doctrine of the immanent Trinity is to provide a ground for the theology of the economy, but to go no further than licensed by revelation. Once it becomes a game of, for example, seeking in some way or order to demonstrate, apart from the unity of action of the one God, how one and three may be reconciled, there lies irrelevance. It is not a matter of mathematics, but of the particular personal being of the one God who makes himself known in the way that he does.¹⁵⁶

He stresses one main reason for developing a doctrine of ‘immanent’ Trinity: God as eternal and Triune and without the need to create anything at all. The creation was for God not necessary. God is a being-in-relation, through the three persons of the Trinity. Therefore a doctrine of ‘immanent’ Trinity would support the idea that God is in eternity, totally autonomous and without need to create the world. Gunton further emphasises this with two examples.

First, to be an omnipotent God does not include the must having of a world around him. Thus, a God who needs to have a world around him, is not an omnipotent God, Gunton argues, but a “pagan projection.” We must therefore acknowledge that God could have

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 48.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 43.

¹⁵⁶ ———, *The Christian Faith: An Introduction to Christian Doctrine*, 185.

remained content in eternity without ever creating anything. This is necessary to keep God's integrity in the world and to maintain the total self-sufficiency of God's being.¹⁵⁷

Second, Gunton argues that only a sovereign God could let the world be itself without the need to pull the strings or let it be a function of His being. Here Gunton again refers to the two hands of God, where one hand creates and saves and the other represents God's "concern to enable it to be truly itself."¹⁵⁸

Several theologians, as Gunton mentions, do treat the 'immanent' Trinity; Catherine Mowry LaCugna and Ted Peters are two contributors. The former emphasize that a doctrine of 'immanent' Trinity is to be rejected even though it is built upon an 'economic' doctrine.¹⁵⁹ For her talk about Trinity must somehow be in the arena of the economy of salvation and *perichoresis*, the mutual penetration and indwelling of the persons of the Trinity, is to be seen as "a kind of univocal principle,"¹⁶⁰ describing all communion, divine as well as human.

Ted Peters emphasizes a view of God as self-revelating to humans as the constitution of God, i.e. we get to know God through his self-revelation in economy. Gunton states that Peters' view is that God is in process of constituting himself to us as other than us. To see what he means here, we need to go a little further. Peters is taking the ideas of Rahner further, and states that the love between Father and Son in the Trinity really is the love between the Father and Jesus. Said another way, the love in which God loves the Son and vice versa is the same love we can experience through knowing Jesus.¹⁶¹

Both of these two contributions (LaCugna and Peters), Gunton argues, are "recent unsatisfactory attempts, Catholic and Protestant respectively, to minimize or abolish the doctrine of the immanent Trinity."¹⁶² After mentioning these two perspectives against a doctrine of the 'immanent' Trinity, Gunton goes on and argues that LaCugna is close to pantheism in that she brings God and the world too close.

The question that must be asked therefore is whether Peter's and LaCugna's approaches finally escapes the pantheism which results from any attempt to bring God and the world too close. From the logic of their position, it is difficult not to conclude that there is ultimately only one reality, the divine-worldly emanation, which constitutes the world and then swallows it up. Against this it must be contended that far

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 187.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ ———, *The Promise of Trinitarian Theology*, xviii.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Ted Peters, *God as Trinity: Relationality and Temporality in Divine Life* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster/J. Knox Press, 1993), 22.

¹⁶² Gunton, *The Christian Faith: An Introduction to Christian Doctrine*, 184.

from ensuring the relevance of trinitarian theologies, the outcome of such a process is to destroy it. God's personal otherness from the world in its own right, as truly worldly creation.¹⁶³

This danger of going into pantheism Gunton states can be avoided through a careful systematic consideration of what is said on basis of theological warrant. The best way to start theological discussions he argues is by Irenaeus of Lyon's biblical teaching. Irenaeus' teaching of the two hands of God, Gunton, mentions with the following words:

He is biblical in the sense that he maintains that the economy of creation, recapitulation and redemption is constituted by the achievement of the Father's work by the Son and the Spirit. They, as the two hands of God, mediate the will and work of the Father perfecting what can be called the project of creation: the final perfecting through redemption of what was created perfect in the beginning. It is often said that when the New Testament speaks of God, *simpliciter* its writers are referring to God the Father, and in that respect Irenaeus maintains a balance that later writers often lose their overanxiety to maintain the unity of the Trinity and the absolute coequality of the three persons.¹⁶⁴

This he states attends to the economy of creation and redemption. Through the hands, God creates and perfects the creation. Further Gunton states a danger in going too far in the other direction, towards use of analogies from the 'immanent' Trinity: "Because God is like this, it is argued, then the world is or ought to be, like that."¹⁶⁵ Gunton says recent analogies have been made between the immanent Trinity and the personal relations social order of humans, i.e. models of personal relations in society.

To get a better grip of Gunton's view on Trinity, we will look at his systematic treatment of the doctrine in a short version. First he argues, that the Son Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit is as truly God as the Father is God. We know God the Father through the Spirit and the Son. So if God works through his two hands, then the two hands, the Son and Spirit, must be eternal also.

The second point is that in talking this way about God as Trinity demands a balanced view, which does not stress the threeness too much so that it becomes a matter of three gods, and do not make God too singular so that the plurality and richness of his being diminishes. God is the way in which we experience him. God is Trinitarian and he "is one God only this way, to be loved, worshipped and praised in the unutterable richness of his being; and it is no

¹⁶³ ———, *Father, Son and Holy Spirit: Essays toward a Fully Trinitarian Theology*, 24.

¹⁶⁴ ———, *The Promise of Trinitarian Theology*, xxi-xxii.

¹⁶⁵ ———, *Father, Son and Holy Spirit: Essays toward a Fully Trinitarian Theology*, 24.

accident that som many of our confessions of worship have taken trinitarian form.”¹⁶⁶

The third point states the concept of person, which is used on the Father, the Son and the Spirit. They are persons. Gunton discuss the how person is understood as individual and separate, which is the normal understanding if we talk about human persons. Further he argues, with help from the theologian John Zizioulas, that “God is one who has his being in communion.”¹⁶⁷ From the word *community* Gunton goes to stress that what is meant here is not community as a common arena where we might not know anyone, but rather the communion which one gives and receives from each other. And this kind of communion is between the persons of Trinity: “They have their being in relation to each other.”¹⁶⁸ This way person is not considered as the first definition of the word, but the second, known as being-in-relation.

Being in communion is being that belongs together, but not at the expense of, nor lose themselves in the being of, the others. Being in communion is being that realizes the reality of the particular person within a structure of being together. There are not three gods, but one, because in the divine being of the other two, that together they make up the one God.¹⁶⁹

The fourth point Gunton states about the Trinity concerns the only word useable to describe the persons relation, i.e. love. He refers to 1 John 4 which says that “God is love”.

Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us. We know that we live in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world.¹⁷⁰

Thus Gunton shows how the Trinitarian God is to Father whom we meet in Christ and the Spirit. He ends the chapter the following way: Without the Trinity, we cannot know that God is love, but we do know it, for the doctrine of the Trinity is the teaching that God is love, not

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 12.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 15.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 16.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ 1 John 4:7-14. For the sake of the overall context I have included some more verses than Gunton.

only towards us, but in his deepest and eternal being.” And exactly therefore, because God is eternal and has a deeper love than we can ever imagine, that he is Trinity, not one and not three, but a Trinity of beings in relation. Thus God is something divine other than human beings, which Gunton means should be stressed. And this otherness Gunton argues should be upheld, and the way to uphold the difference and otherness of the Trinitarian God, is through a doctrine of ‘immanent’ Trinity.

Evaluation

As we have seen through this presentation, we have here two very different views on the topic ‘economic’/‘immanent’ Trinity. While Coffey makes use of both terms in trying to develop models of Trinity, Gunton criticizes the appearing distinction between the two Trinities.

In his treatment of the so-called models, Coffey distinguish between two ‘immanent’ Trinity models. As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter ‘immanent’ trinity is the God as eternal and distinct from creation and all that is created and ‘economic’ Trinity the way in which God let himself be known through outworking the salvation. Coffey brings forth two ‘immanent’ models and does this in my view, not satisfactorily. First Coffey treats the procession model as ‘immanent’ although a major ingredient is procession from God through Jesus and the Holy Spirit to us humans. In a way it seems as Coffey treats the ‘economic’ aspect *in* this ‘immanent’ model. I am not stating this to stress a distinction between the trinities, certainly not, I rather want to point to consistent use of the terms. It is interesting that I am here criticizing due to consistency, when Coffey himself takes up the same argument in treating the mission of the Spirit. He criticizes Muhlen for not being consistent in the use of “ascending” and “descending” on treating the incarnation. Coffey ends his paragraph with the need to be “resultant consistency and rigor in the use of terminology.”¹⁷¹ If one chooses to use the terms ‘*immanent*’ and ‘*economic*’, it is with the purpose of get a better understanding of the Trinity. Hence it rests a certain responsibility to use the terminology in a way that truly gives greater depth and clarification, and not as an inconsistent and confusing appropriation.

The procession model, dealing as it does with the outward movement of God to the

¹⁷¹ David Coffey, "A Proper Mission of the Holy Spirit," *Theological Studies* 47, no. 2 (1986): 20.

world and therefore with his first contact with it in his self-revelation as triune (granted that before being revealed as triune he already stood revealed as having created the world and as being at work within it), necessarily presents a view of the Trinity as it were *ab extra*, “from the outside.”¹⁷²

As he mentions here, the outward movement of God is clearly an ‘economic’ function. If we go to the return model in Coffey, we see a clear ‘immanent’ structure (due to common definition) in that the Holy Spirit is the mutual love between Father and Son.

Coffey does mention the possibility of the return model to be treated in isolation as well as the procession model. It here seems like Coffey makes a distinction between ‘immanent’ and ‘economic’ Trinity – exactly what Gunton himself are critical about. The return model which deals with the mutual love between Father and Son, seems to me to be clearly of ‘immanent’ matter. Further Coffey appropriates the ‘immanent’ Trinity in his treatment of Kilian McDonnell in *Did You Receive the Holy Spirit When You Believed*. Here he says “What I am trying to do in this section is to situate the Holy Spirit as accurately as I can as a person of the Trinity.”¹⁷³ For me this becomes problematic because of the apparent treatment of ‘immanent’ without foundation in how we actually are able to know anything about Trinity, i.e. through the revelation and salvation given to us by the Trinitarian God. Although the overall meaning here is to support that which we can know through ‘economic’ Trinity, it is the way I see it not to be treated separate from what we know.

The next point I would like to expand on is Coffey’s use of models. As Donald Gelpi stresses in his review of Coffey, the use of models on the Evangelists in the New Testament is not without difficulties. Models are static and based on more rational and abductive thinking, that was not to be found within the Gospel writers.¹⁷⁴ Although Gelpi is referring to texts in the New Testament, I do mean this is transferable to Trinitarian theology. Suggesting that the eternal Trinitarian God can be in a model is somehow limiting and not representative for a God in eternity, distinct from creation. A model is understood as a picture of something greater or more complex, and in this sense a model could never do justice to God. Thus it might be restricting instead of clarifying.

Colin Gunton, as we have seen, has a quite different view on ‘immanent’ and ‘economic’ Trinity. He stresses the need for a doctrine of ‘immanent’ Trinity on account of making a distinction between us and God. God did not need to create the world, because God exists in

¹⁷² Coffey, *Deus Trinitas: The Doctrine of the Triune God*, 46.

¹⁷³ ———, *Did You Receive the Holy Spirit When You Believed?: Some Basic Questions for Pneumatology*, 44.

¹⁷⁴ Donald L. Gelpi S.J., "David Coffey's "Did You Receive the Holy Spirit When You Believed?" A Review Essay," *Pneuma: The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies* 28, no. 2 (2006): 333.

eternity and not in time. As for LaCugna's statement about the rejection of the 'immanent' Trinity, I do agree with Gunton. We have to distinguish the Trinitarian God from us. God is starting point for everything. That we all are able to think about God as Father, Son and Spirit is the result of creation from God, in which everything has its origin. Thus we need to attend to this distinction.

I now want to shed light on two aspects about the term 'immanent' and 'economic' Trinity. The first is the matter of distinction between the two terms. Many theologians have in recent years been dissatisfied with the Western tradition's Trinitarian theology, which partly due to Augustine created a split between 'immanent' and 'economic' Trinity.¹⁷⁵ This, as Gunton states in his massive critique of Augustine, is definitely the case. Coffey though clearly tries to treat the trinities as something that can be treated separate. He brings forth the models of 'immanent' trinity. Although the meaning with 'immanent' trinity is to support the 'economic' trinity build upon the 'economic' trinity, this easily disappears when treating them separate. As I mentioned in the part on Coffey above, he emphasized the need to have an 'immanent' Trinity to uphold the 'economic' Trinity. Here it gets problematic. Coffey stresses that something which we do not know anything about except through the economy, should lay the premise for the way we experience God. If (and I have stressed that we should not) one was to make use of the term 'immanent', it should be done carefully, certainly not as a condition for the Trinity which is our starting point in theology, i.e. the way in which we experience God through creation, revelation and redemption. Can we talk about the God in eternity without God in economy? No, that is not possible, because then we would be talking about something in which we have no knowledge of. Theologian F. LeRon Shults stress the problem with distinction of the two Trinities the following way:

Even when the distinction is made for the sake of overcoming the distinction, it brings with it an explicit danger. Insofar as the 'immanent' Trinity and the 'economic' Trinity are dialectically defined concepts, we are too easily forced back into another false dilemma: either they are substantially the same or substantially separate.¹⁷⁶

This show how the distinction problems arise, we have to separate between God and the world, but not go further than revelation allows us, but by treating either alone, we presuppose a split. This brings us further to the second point I would like to make about 'immanent' and

¹⁷⁵ Drayton C. Benner, "Augustine and Karl Rahner on the Relationship between the Immanent Trinity and the Economic Trinity," *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 9, no. 1 (2007): 24.

¹⁷⁶ F. LeRon Shults, *Reforming the Doctrine of God* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2005), 164.

‘economic’ Trinity, is the inadequacy of language.

Both Coffey and Gunton, as well as several theologians, make use of the terms ‘immanent’ and ‘economic’ Trinity. I suggest that we do not use these terms in talking about the Trinity. My grounds for saying this can be emphasized in two points.

First of all, it is problematic to talk about one of them, without including the other, i.e. because of the apparent exclusion of the other. The Trinitarian God in eternity is the Trinitarian God we meet through economy, so the problem therefore is how is it possible to treat something separate which is inseparable? This is not possible, thus we get into difficulties.

The second point that I will make is about the variation in use of the terms. Throughout this chapter we have seen different approaches and use of ‘immanent’ and ‘economic’ Trinity. From LaCugna’s rejection of the former, through Coffey’s blurred boundaries to Gunton’s carefully use. To exemplify further we can turn to theologian Ted Peters, who treats several different contributions on the theme. In addition to emphasizing his own view of the Trinity in which he argues for abolishing the ‘immanent’ category, he treats Robert Jenson’s eschatological dimension of ‘immanent’ and ‘economic’ Trinity, Karl Barth’s emphasizing of Christ and Jürgen Moltmann’s contribution. These are only a few of all the contributions on the topic ‘economic’ and ‘immanent’ Trinity, but give a nuanced picture.¹⁷⁷ I want to go a little deeper into some examples, just to show the extent of variation in term use.

Theologian John J. O’Donnell does treat the ‘immanent’ and ‘economic’ Trinity in his *The Mystery of the Triune God*, where he refers to Walter Kaspar. For Donnell the God making himself known to humankind through revelation, incarnation and becoming Christ in time, actually *is* God in history. But he does not set sign of equation between ‘immanent’ and ‘economic’, but rather describe it more dynamic:

We are not talking about a static identity. Rather the “is” must be understood in the sense of an historical event. Perhaps it would be better to say that the immanent Trinity becomes the economic Trinity, for the “is” indicates a non-derivable, free, gracious historical presence of the immanent Trinity in the economy of salvation... I have tried to show that the specifically Christian understanding of God is rooted in the reality of God’s revelation of himself.¹⁷⁸

This way of talking about Trinity does correspond well with Rahner’s axiom – that the God met through economy is the ‘immanent’ God in history.

¹⁷⁷ Peters, *God as Trinity: Relationality and Temporality in Divine Life*, 22-24.

¹⁷⁸ John J. O’Donnell, *The Mystery of the Triune God* (New York: Paulist Press, 1989), 38.

A view which still follows Rahner's axiom, but is in a different way supported by Jürgen Moltmann, who emphasizes the eschatological dimension and Christ on the cross.

That is why I have affirmed and taken up Rahner's thesis that 'the economic Trinity *is* the immanent Trinity, and vice versa'. If the central foundation of our knowledge of the Trinity is the cross, on which the Father delivered up the Son for us through the Spirit, then it is impossible to conceive of any Trinity of substance in the transcendent primal ground of this event, in which cross and self-giving are not present. Even the New Testament statement 'God *is* love' is the summing up of the surrender of the Son through the Father for us. It cannot be separated from the event on Golgotha without becoming false. The thesis about the fundamental *identity* of the immanent and the economic Trinity of course remains open to misunderstanding as long as we cling to the distinction at all, because it then sounds like the dissolution of the one in the other.¹⁷⁹

This way the 'immanent' Trinity is strongly connected to the act of salvation in Jesus dying on the cross and thereby redeems all humans and shows the ultimate Trinitarian love. This shows how the 'economic' Trinity reveals the 'immanent' Trinity. But Moltmann also stress that there is a retroactive effect, i.e. the economic Trinity effects the 'immanent' Trinity. For Moltmann doxology always ends with eschatology. He further stresses two aspects with the Trinity. First "the cross of the Son puts its impress on the inner life of the Triune God," and second "the history of the Spirit moulds the inner life of the Triune God through the joy of liberated creation when it is united with God."¹⁸⁰ Moltmann concludes his treatment of the relationship between 'immanent' and 'economic' Trinity this way:

If it is the quintessence of doxology, then the doctrine of the immanent Trinity is part of eschatology as well. The economic Trinity completes and perfects itself to immanent Trinity when the history and experience of salvation are completed and perfected. When everything is 'in God' and 'God is in all', then the economic Trinity is raised into and transcended in the immanent Trinity. What remains is the eternal praise of the triune God in his Glory.¹⁸¹

The last example of appropriating the terms are provided by theologian Paul D. Molnar. He stresses the need for a sharp distinction between 'economic' and 'immanent' Trinity. I will let him use his own words on the matter:

¹⁷⁹ Jürgen Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God: The Doctrine of God* (London: SCM, 1981), 160.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 161.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*

I have argued that a proper doctrine of the immanent Trinity will acknowledge that our relation with God is an irreversible one, so that while we can and must say that we meet the immanent Trinity in our encounter with the economic Trinity, still we cannot simply assert that the economic Trinity is the immanent Trinity and vice versa. Instead, a clear and sharp distinction must be drawn; one that allows for the fact of God's free grace. I have stressed, therefore, that theologians should neither separate nor confuse the immanent and economic Trinity and that, because theology really is faith (in the triune God) seeking understanding and not understanding seeking faith, we must adhere to the economic Trinity for our information about the immanent Trinity.¹⁸²

Here Molnar emphasizes that we must not mix together or separate the two Trinities. But he does stress the need for a distinction, which we have seen creates problems due to consistency from one to the other. I would argue that a distinction which stresses God as *other*, does argue an 'immanent' Trinity which is carefully treated not to go too close to the world. This would be an example, of another view on immanent other than Moltmann's.

We see different emphasis on 'economic' and 'immanent', different understanding of what is to be treated under the 'economic' and the 'immanent' category. LaCugna does treat the topic of imprecise use of language in theology, and as I will show, for the sake of variation in term-use, she stresses a few important points. She states that 'immanent' is used imprecisely in that the use varies from the inner life of God to the divine essence. The inner life refers to how God is in God, something LaCugna states is incorrect because nothing can be placed in God, whether it is relation between persons of the Trinity or attributes of God. Second she states that there has been a tendency, as a trajectory from medieval theology, to look upon 'immanent' Trinity with no reference to economy. This she states, when treated together with scholastic substance metaphysics, which treat divine substance and divine relations as ontologically identical, does give impression that immanent Trinity is the same as divine essence.¹⁸³

Through the examples contributed by Moltmann, O'Donnell, Molnar, Peters and LaCugna in addition to our two theologians' contributions, we see a variation in term-use. It seems to be up to each theologian to use the terms as however she or he likes. This again gives us several different appropriations of the language which in second instance creates confusion, instead of the clear view of Trinitarian Theology we were striving for in the first place. So what are we to do then? I suggest treat the "whole" Trinitarian God as we know through scripture as Trinitarian. This means that the eternal relational Trinitarian God, who embraces

¹⁸² Paul D. Molnar, *Divine Freedom and the Doctrine of the Immanent Trinity: In Dialogue with Karl Barth and Contemporary Theology* (London: Continuum, 2002), 312.

¹⁸³ LaCugna, *God for Us: The Trinity and Christian Life*, 224-25.

all modes of both time and space and who is the origin of all different possibilities. The way I see it, we do not need a doctrine of the 'immanent' Trinity to support the Trinity known through economy. Using the term 'immanent' Trinity only presuppose an artificial category; there is no 'immanent' independent of the economy. The scripture gives us more than enough foundation for talking about the "whole" Trinitarian God.

As I have mentioned earlier in the introduction, my background is Lutheran. This might show through my argumentation and my weight on the Trinity we meet through revelation and salvation. As for my weight on reason in treating 'immanent' and 'economic' Trinity, it clearly shows that the four sources mutually influence each other. As for my background, it has been of greater importance for Lutherans to emphasize scripture more than reason. In this context I argue that my skepticism to 'immanent' Trinity is influenced by my view on scripture which again is influenced by the tradition I belong to. In the case of Coffey, he seems to use Trinitarian tradition more than Gunton, who is more skeptical to the split between the two trinities. They both are bound by their background. Coffey uses the terms widely in treating his models, while Gunton is more careful in not going farther than we are allowed to by scripture and revelation.

The last point I will make about the 'immanent' Trinity is that of God's freedom. If we ask why a doctrine of the 'immanent' Trinity is necessary, the answer would in many cases be as Gunton stressed, God's autonomous and with no need to create anything from eternity. According to this I would like to stress that a doctrine of an 'immanent' Trinity, which by itself do not exist, not necessary give a fruitful contribution to Trinitarian theology. Due to the points mentioned above, the different appropriations of language and the problems with the distinction, we can ask the question whether this term 'immanent' has instead restricted Trinitarian theology. By having two terms on Trinity, it is an apparent hermeneutic distinction even if one tries to clarify. It is impossible to talk about both the God we know through revelation and God in eternity at the same time as long as we use the terms 'economic' and 'immanent' Trinity. And it is my opinion that no *doctrine* of the 'immanent' Trinity is necessary to stress that God is eternal and not comparable to anything human finite. It is absolutely possible to attend to God's freedom without turning to the term 'immanent'. The *term* 'immanent' is what I find inadequate due to the examples above. This means that I do emphasize that God is eternal, non-comparable to anything temporal and therefore He must be differentiated from us. But I do not mean that we should treat this otherness in its own term. When talking about God we can use language that appropriates God as eternally free. God is Triune and eternal and is the basis for all differentiation possible. He is omnipotent,

omniscient and invites us all to relationship with Him. Through scripture there is no doubt that God is different, that God is divine other than us. Here is an example from Romans 1, 18-23:

The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness, since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse. For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.

Here Paul does state the condemnation of the unrighteous, and clearly emphasizes God as eternal and divine, which can be seen through all that has been made in history. Further we can turn to Timothy 1:13-18 who gives thanks to God for calling him into ministry.

Even though I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man, I was shown mercy because I acted in ignorance and unbelief. The grace of our Lord was poured out on me abundantly, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst. But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his unlimited patience as an example for those who would believe on him and receive eternal life. Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

The third passage I want to exemplify is from Romans 16:25. Paul does in this epistle come with personal greetings to the church in Rome, and finishes with a proclamation to God, the eternal whom is worshipped:

Now to him who is able to establish you by my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past, but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, so that all nations might believe and obey him—to the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ! Amen.

Now I could come up with several more examples¹⁸⁴ on the treatment of God as eternal in scripture, but that is not the main objective here. I would rather use these passages above as

¹⁸⁴ For other passages treating God as eternal, see 2 Co 5:1, Isa 40:28.

examples of how we can talk about God in ways that gives Him the otherness and freedom that he inhabits and at the same treats our relationship with the Trinitarian God, a relationship we are given due to God's eternal and omnipotent love. After all, this is how our God is treated in scripture and the term 'immanent' is not to be found in the New Testament or the Old Testament. Through this last section of my evaluation I have touched another important point for this thesis, i.e. the relation between the sources reason and scripture.

In arguing for the not using the term 'immanent' Trinity, I have shown my own view on reason (Trinity) as influenced by scripture. Ideas and models on Trinity become for me problematic due to the fact that they do not have foundation in scripture. This way, my view on scripture does form and influence how I appropriate reason. This works both ways, so how I make use of scripture will also be influenced by my view on reason.

Conclusion

Throughout this chapter I have treated David Coffey and Colin Gunton's use of the terms 'immanent' and 'economic' Trinity. Their emphasis on the topic differs strongly. Coffey uses the term 'immanent' to a great extent. Through two models based on the biblical Trinity, he develops a certain view of Trinity, in which he might give a contribution to the reconciling of Eastern Monopatrism and Western Filioque. The procession model deals with the procession of the Son and the Spirit from God the Father. This model is inadequate due to the divine self-love instead of the relational love and love of neighbor that can be found in the return model. Further the return model deals with the relation between the persons of the Trinity, as mentioned in the mutual-love theory, i.e. the Holy Spirit is the mutual love of Father and Son.

Colin Gunton stresses the problem with distinguishing between the 'immanent' and the 'economic' Trinity. When making this distinction it gets problematic due to the fact that the 'immanent' cannot be mentioned without the 'economic'. Gunton does stress the need for a doctrine of the 'immanent' Trinity. For God to remain free, he states, we need to acknowledge a doctrine of 'immanent' Trinity, that God did not have to create the world.

I have criticized Coffey and his blurring the use of the terms 'immanent' and 'economic' Trinity. I also argued that the use of models is problematic. Albeit he tries to clarify and arrange the terms, his models do create a static image built on a rationality which is not supported in scripture.

As with Gunton, I emphasized the problems with distinction between doctrine of 'immanent' and 'economic' Trinity. Further I criticized Gunton's need for a doctrine of the

'immanent' Trinity: I mean we do not need a doctrine of 'immanent' Trinity to stress God in eternity. The word 'immanent' is nowhere to be found in scripture, but so is the word eternal. 'Eternal' also emphasizes what makes God different and attends to God's freedom, which I exemplified with passages from Romans 1:18-23, 1. Timothy 1:13 and Romans 16:28. I argued that the terms 'immanent' and 'economic' are problematic on account of what theologians mean for instance the term 'immanent' it varies greatly. The variety in use I exemplified with LaCugna, Moltmann, Peters and Molnar in addition to Coffey and Gunton. Therefore due to this inconsistency in language and that the Triune God's freedom can be attended to with use of another language, I suggested that we do not use the term 'immanent' when talking about God.

In this chapter I also mentioned the mutual influence of the four sources. The example I used was my own background as Lutheran. My critical view of the doctrine 'immanent' Trinity is affected by my weight on scripture, which again builds upon the tradition I belong to.

Experience

The fourth source of theology is religious experience. Experience, McGrath states, comes from the Latin word *experientia* which means “that which arises out of travelling through life.”¹⁸⁵ If we apply this experience to the Christian life, it becomes the way in which we experience the Trinitarian God through worship, church, communion and prayer. Experience is though the individual in the sense that it has to do with inner life. My approach in this chapter will be the Holy Spirit and experience. I will look at how Coffey and Gunton treat experience of the Holy Spirit, and whether this treatment corresponds with how the Trinitarian God is experienced in church life and everyday life. I will use insights from several theologians as well as my own arguments.

Coffey’s treatment of the Holy Spirit

As we have seen through the previous chapters, Coffey’s view on the Spirit is that of the mutual-love between Father and Son. Coffey stress that the mutual-love theory “provides the only correct way for understanding and expressing, in the context of the Trinity, the data of “ascending” theology, i.e. the return to God of Jesus and ourselves with him.”¹⁸⁶ He further states that this hopefully will contribute to the full agreement between East and West on account of procession of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit in mutual-love theory is mentioned enough, but the Holy Spirit’s activity we can say more about. Coffey deals with this topic in his The Père Marquette Lecture of 2005.

The subjective sense, on the other hand, would be that in which we come to Christ in the Holy Spirit, the sense in which the Holy Spirit, moving us from within, delivers us to Christ, even inserts us in him through faith. In the first sense we objectivize the Spirit, distinguishing him from Christ and the Father and also from ourselves. In this sense we can rightly be said to “experience” the Spirit.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁵ McGrath, *Christian Theology: An Introduction*, 145.

¹⁸⁶ Coffey, "The Holy Spirit as the Mutual Love of the Father and the Son," 193.

¹⁸⁷ ———, *Did You Receive the Holy Spirit When You Believed?: Some Basic Questions for Pneumatology*, 88.

Later on Coffey more specifically argues the Spirit's role in economy, as one of the three Trinitarian persons:

Put quite simply, the personal property of the Holy Spirit in the economy is to "sanctify," that is, to unite us to the Son of God who is "called holy" (see Luke 1:35), and this in turn is for the purpose of uniting us to the Father, the all-holy one and source of all holiness. This causes us to be caught up in Christ's response of love to the Father, so that we participate in their mutual love, which of course is the Holy Spirit in action.¹⁸⁸

Thus the Holy Spirit is here emphasized as the sanctifier who unites us with Jesus, which leads to our union with God the Father. And the Holy Spirit is again stressed as the love between Father and Son in action. Later on Coffey deals explicitly with the Holy Spirit's activity in the world and mentions that the Spirit unites us to Christ and the Father, that Christ sends the Spirit upon the Church, and that the Spirit is supported in existence by the Father and the Son, though he stands free as a distinct person.¹⁸⁹ As for the Spirit's activity, Coffey argues that both the Old Testament and the New Testament have a lot to say about the matter. He states that "the Holy Spirit unites us to God in mediated immediacy in which the medium is Christ; in nontechnical terms the answer is that the Holy Spirit unites us to Christ and the Father."¹⁹⁰ Coffey uses passages from Paul (Rom 8:9, Phil 1:19, Gal 4:6) to the use of "Spirit of Christ", and Acts (2:33) and several places in John when arguing Christ's sending of the Spirit upon Church.¹⁹¹ First we will look upon Romans 8:9: "You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ." The second passage which mentions the Spirit of Christ is Philippians 1:19: "...for I know that through your prayers and the help given by the Spirit of Jesus Christ, what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance." The third example, Galatians 4:6: "Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father." From Acts 2:33 comes an example of the Spirit sent upon Christian community: "Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear." Another sense of understanding is given, as Coffey states, by Rahner who uses the term "entelechy". Coffey says the word has not by Rahner himself been explained, but it can

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., 103.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., 74-79.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., 74.

¹⁹¹ Coffey refers to John 7:37-39, 20:22, 14:16, 26, 15:26 and 16:7. The latter three is called the Paraclete passages. The passages from Paul and John are only referred to, the quotation is made by me to get more insight into what Coffey discusses.

be understood as the Holy Spirit has an inner orientation towards Jesus, through whom he works in the world among humans.¹⁹²

Further Coffey treat the bestowal of the Spirit and the ‘immanent’ Trinity with examples from James D.G. Dunn, who emphasizes “in Christ” and “in the Lord” as an important and often mentioned element of Pauline spirituality and the gift of the Holy Spirit he says, is strongly connected with Christ mysticism.¹⁹³ We will not pursue this, but include some lines by Coffey which stresses the Pauline pneumatology.

Implicit in this Pauline theology is the understanding that the role of the Holy Spirit as bestowed by the Father on believers, both individually and communally, is to unite them in a mystical manner to the risen Lord, so that from then on they exist and live “in Christ.” This, I point out, is the theology of the Holy Spirit as entelechy. I can say “the Holy Spirit bestowed by the Father,” because, as Dunn notes, according to Paul it is by God (the Father), and not by Christ, that the Spirit is bestowed in the world.¹⁹⁴

Coffey also argues that the Holy Spirit acts in and among humans and that the Spirit is communicated to us by the Father. He uses ‘communicate,’ which he stress is the right way of putting it when we are talking about a person (Spirit) who invites persons (humans) to share its own personal world. He further describes this as the Father’s act through the Holy Spirit, who invites us humans to take part in the Trinitarian life. Thus we also get in relationship with Jesus Christ, with whom the Father is in communion with, through the Spirit.¹⁹⁵

The mission of the Holy Spirit is also stressed in *Deus Trinitas*, in that while Jesus went around and spread the Reign of God, the Holy Spirit established the faith in Christ in humans. The father bestows the Spirit on Christ as the Sons Spirit which was the creative force that initiated his life. Thus the Son and the Spirit together are on mission dependent of each other. With the death of Christ the Spirit is poured out on the world and the Church.¹⁹⁶ In the treatment of Persons, Divine and Human, he argues the following:

...we need to apply our knowledge that grace is the Gift of the Holy Spirit and that the work of the Spirit is to unite us to Christ and thus bring us into union with the Father. When we contemplate Christ, who is the very visibility of grace, we appreciate that his whole life as Son of God incarnate can be understood as the realization by him of authentic personhood, the realization of the divine person within the confines of human nature, by his human efforts aided by the Holy Spirit, not over against God as absolute person, but

¹⁹² Coffey, *Did You Receive the Holy Spirit When You Believed?: Some Basic Questions for Pneumatology*, 76.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, 78-79.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 79.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 110-11.

¹⁹⁶ ———, *Deus Trinitas: The Doctrine of the Triune God*.

over against precisely God the Father. This helps us to understand our own case. Thus we are brought to see that the trinitarian character of grace changes what would otherwise be a relationship with God as it were from “outside” to one enacted within the Trinity, where we, through the power of the Holy Spirit, Spirit of sonship and daughterhood, become identified with the Son (that is, we become sons and daughters *in the Son*, to use the patristic phrase).¹⁹⁷

In his article *The Incarnation of the Holy Spirit in Christ* Coffey also treats the Holy Spirit as “the spirit touches us first as the fraternal love of Christ, and in its unitive character unites us with him.”¹⁹⁸ Through his theory about the mutual love, Coffey describes the way in which we can get united with the Trinitarian God:

But the Holy Spirit is also, and indeed primarily, the Father’s love for Christ His Son, and so the word is also, and ultimately, the sacrament of *this* love. Thus, becoming Christ’s brothers and sisters through the action of his Spirit (see Lk 8:21), men and women are drawn into the ambit of the Father’s paternal love, which is also the Holy Spirit, and reborn in the power of this Spirit as His sons and daughters (in the Son), thus becoming directly united with *Him*.¹⁹⁹

In the previous chapter I treated Coffey’s models of Trinity; the procession model and the return model. The procession model, as can be appropriated on Augustine, the communication goes from the Father to Son to Spirit to us, one direction from God to us. Coffey’s return model, as the name indicates, does model the movement from Father to Jesus to the Holy Spirit and here we get in contact with the Spirit, before we are “moving” to Christ and ultimately the father.

It is certainly appropriate to speak of our “return” to God. Not only did we come out from God by creation, but we have departed from him by sin, communal and personal. Therefore the work of God’s grace, reclaiming us through his Spirit, is to bring about our return to him in our personal and communal history through the overcoming of our alienation from him and the achievement of our fulfillment in him. In this process we note an inversion of the traditional taxis, to which witness is borne in Ephesians 2.18: “[T]hrough him [Christ] both of us [Jews and Gentiles] have access in one Spirit to the Father.”²⁰⁰

Coffey states here an important aspect of the Return model. It also returns us to the Father through Christ. It shows that not only the Spirit returns to the Father but also humans through the grace of God. This topic we will discuss further in the evaluation part.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., 81.

¹⁹⁸ ———, “The “Incarnation” Of the Holy Spirit in Christ,” 478.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.: 478-79.

²⁰⁰ ———, *Deus Trinitas: The Doctrine of the Triune God*, 36.

Colin Gunton and the Holy Spirit

In his *The Christian Faith* Gunton devotes a part on the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is the perfecting cause of the creation, he says; Through the Son and the Spirit, the Father perfects his creation. Further Gunton states that the New Testament shows how the Spirit also works in relation to church as well as for particular Christians.²⁰¹ He mentions the Holy Spirit calling the Church's members into God's glory and stresses three concepts in which the Holy Spirit's agency can be summed up in. The first is "rather that the Spirit's first function is to realize in the life of particular human beings and groups of human beings the reality of what God in Christ achieved on the cross."²⁰² Later on Gunton stress that the Spirit gives the presence of community in worship to God through his Son. Thus the Spirit gives way to God through Jesus in words and action. His main emphasize concerning the Holy Spirit we can say is eschatological. The Spirit worked within creation, Jesus' comes and invites humans to take part in God's glory. Gunton emphasizes this another way in *Father, Son and Holy Spirit*.

Yet just as the Spirit, as we have seen, is the focus of God's creation and love of the other, so the distinctive personal action of the Spirit is to prevent us from being content with that communion, but to share it with the world. The mission of the Spirit, his sending by the Father through the Son, is to create communion in the Church, and in so doing to prevent the Church from remaining content with its own fellowship.²⁰³

Here Gunton clearly stresses the Holy Spirit's distinctive action. Further he argues that the Spirit is to be understood eschatologically, through worship, communion and fellowship of the last days. Gunton does mention at the end of his chapter on the Spirit the importance of seeing the perfected Spirit in light of Jesus Christ's life, death and resurrection. The only way we are to avoid sin, death and the devil is to let the Spirit through Christ restore things in the right direction, in the right relation to God. Gunton ends his argumentation with saying "Come, Holy Spirit, come and lead us into the truth that is Jesus Christ, the only Son of the Father, full of grace and truth."²⁰⁴

Now we will look upon Gunton's view on the Trinity. This might seem a little off, but will give us his emphasis on the Holy Spirit as part of the Trinity. In treating the Trinity, Gunton gives three examples to illustrate God's work in the world. This he does to clarify

²⁰¹ Gunton, *The Christian Faith: An Introduction to Christian Doctrine*, 119.

²⁰² *Ibid.*, 121.

²⁰³ ———, *Father, Son and Holy Spirit: Essays toward a Fully Trinitarian Theology*, 88.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 89-90.

what he means with the term *thinking trinitarianly*.²⁰⁵ First he refers to the Anglican theologian G. V. Bennet, which once said that Calvin was the greatest theologian of the West due to the thorough Trinitarian structure of his work. He did not write extensive on the Trinity, but the one chapter he did write permeates all of his work, especially concerning faith. The second example Gunton gives us is Basil of Caesarea. He wrote about the Holy Spirit and its place in the Trinity. Basil wanted not only speak to the church members of holiness, but also to train them in holiness, and that way avoiding drunkenness, a dissoluted life and achieve renewal in the gospel. He wanted to the Church to understand something about the depth and range of the Triune God in the world. The third example Gunton gives through Irenaeus of Lyons. Irenaeus developed an image of the Father who creates and redeems through his two hands, the Holy Spirit and the Son, which then *are* God in action. Even though this is a simple image of God, Gunton states that there is something there. Our hands are ourselves in action. Through these three examples Gunton tries to give a view of how God works in the world. And to get that you must go through the route given by God:

The incarnation of the eternal Son and the life-giving action of the Spirit... The glory of God is a human being truly alive. The Trinity is about life, life before God, with one another and in the world. If we forget that God's life is meditated to us trinitarianly, through his two hands, the Son and the Spirit, we forget the root of our lives, of what makes for life and what makes for death.²⁰⁶

Gunton often brings in the community of church when speaking about the Holy Spirit. The Spirit incorporates Christ into people and brings us into communion with Trinity and communion with each other. Thus the Spirit does not only invite us into relationship with our God, but also in relationships here in the church and sustains this churchly community.²⁰⁷

In this section concerning community, Gunton includes Augustine in his argumentation. He states that a community of believers was important for Augustine, but due to the development in church from Constantine and forward, his thoughts remained in the background. As for the church in the fourth and fifth century, the community of believers was recognized as a gathering of both the saved and the lost. This Gunton states leads first of all to a strong stress on the institutional nature of the church, where the clergy were and are still seen as the core, the real church. This view again fosters weight on the hierarchy of church rather than congregation of the faithful. A second development of church which Gunton

²⁰⁵ Ibid., 6-11.

²⁰⁶ Ibid., 11.

²⁰⁷ ———, *The Promise of Trinitarian Theology*, 82.

emphasizes is what he calls “the platonising distinction between the visible and invisible church.”²⁰⁸ The invisible church is only known to God, and it is the clergy who are the elect. Gunton argues that a view like this, stressing hierarchy and distinction in the church, can be said to have sufficed from two complementary influences. The first is neoplatonic reality, which stressed graded hierarchy. Here he refers to Aquinas arguing that there is a grading of persons in the church modeled after that of heaven. The second influence is the legal-political. The church thus employs constraint to keep its unity, something Gunton describes as catastrophic.

Worship is by Gunton considered to be of major importance in Trinitarian theology.

And as soon as we begin to look at worship in the Christian church, the importance of the Trinitarian dimension immediately becomes apparent. Worship is not activity in which we contemplate or observe a being who is over against us – though in a sense God is that also – but it is relational, something that happens between persons. And the happening between persons is worship in the Son and through the Spirit.²⁰⁹

On this worship he depicts as happening *in the Son* Gunton gets support from T. F. Torrance. He stresses the role of Christ in the church. Through the humanity of Christ who is present in and with the church, we get to know the Father. This is mediated by the Son because he is able to “lift” the community into presence with the Father. This, Gunton states, must be understood pneumatologically as well:

The church is the true church at worship insofar as – only, but really insofar as – the Spirit ever and again constitutes the community of believers as the church by bringing them into the life of God through the Son. Theology does not therefore begin in abstract observation, but in the work of those who stand in a particular relation to God.²¹⁰

Thus the Holy Spirit is the way in which the community of believers can know the Son and thereby the Father. Though Gunton argues that the starting point for theology should not be confined to worship, but worship should characterize what also goes on in other dimensions of human life. Gunton argues that to be a human being is to be in relationship to the Trinitarian God, i.e. related to the Father through the Son in the Holy Spirit. This relationship is what characterizes Christian experience. Further he states the following on theology:

²⁰⁸ Ibid., 59.

²⁰⁹ Ibid., 5-6.

²¹⁰ Ibid., 6.

Theology, that is to say, is the enterprise of thought which seeks to express conceptually and as well as possible both the being for human existence on earth. Because it is God to whom we are related by Son and Spirit, theology is required in order to come to terms with the universal implications of the relationship in which we have our being. The God met and made known in Christ and the Spirit is the God so experienced and made known.²¹¹

First he says there is an internal orientation within theology, which is enabling the believing community to understand better and live the truth. Said another way, this can be understood as the community as community for the reason of faith itself.

The second point is the view of the faith for the humans outside the believing community. Gunton states that the Western tendency has been that Trinitarian theology has seemed as a barrier to belief for people outside the community. His own opinion is that the Trinitarian theology has a lot to teach about nature and how the world is, and therefore it should definitely be a subject for the mission to nonbelievers.²¹²

Gunton depicts the Holy Spirit elsewhere with reference to the view of John Zizioulas, who emphasized the Spirit as communion. Here he argues that the communion also is eschatological, because the communion here and now is an anticipation of the life to come after death. Gunton asks the question whether we can say that the Holy Spirit “perfects the life of the eternal Trinity by so relating the Father and Son that together the three are one being in communion.”²¹³

That would be a version, though a rather different one, of Augustine’s conception of the Spirit as bond of love between the Father and the Son. In this case, the Spirit is not the bond but the Agent (mediator?) of love as a third person, hypostasis with his own particular being.²¹⁴

This communion, Gunton states is to be set free by the Holy Spirit of the Father; this because true freedom is only experienced through communion with God.²¹⁵ Gunton’s depiction of freedom is connected to grace, which he emphasizes further in *God and Freedom*:

But where does grace come in here? The answer is that if we are intrinsically relational beings, the grace – gracious action – of God is to be understood as that whereby he realizes forms of relationality which can be

²¹¹ Ibid., 7.

²¹² Ibid.

²¹³ ———, *Act and Being: Towards a Theology of the Divine Attributes*, 103-04.

²¹⁴ Ibid., 104. See footnote

²¹⁵ Ibid., 104-05.

described as free. By relating them to God in Christ, the Spirit at the same time and in the same act also relates the forgiven to one another.²¹⁶

Evaluation

As we have seen through this chapter, we have two theologians who have different perceptions regarding experience in arguing their Trinitarian theology. With Coffey we nearly see an absence of weight on Christian experience, whereas with Gunton, experience is emphasized through his treatment of Christian community. As in the previous chapters, I will start with David Coffey's appropriation.

First of all I would like to stress that Coffey throughout his writings, mainly is concerned with the Trinity in 'immanent' sense. There is certainly nothing wrong in doing this, but it can quickly get into one-track thinking, where too much focus might get you into trouble and create an unbalanced theology. But first, let us look at Coffey's use of the Holy Spirit. I started with Coffey's treatment of the Spirit's activity. Here he explicitly talks about experiencing the Spirit, as an inner movement which delivers us to Jesus. Further Coffey uses the words 'unite' and 'invites' to describe the relationship between the Holy Spirit and us humans. Here we also see all the trinity; all three Trinitarian persons at work.

This he does by the bestowal of the Spirit, who draws us into union with his Son Jesus Christ, so that become sons and daughters in this Son, and thus share intimacy of the Son's own relationship with him. We don't become this unique Son: rather, we become sons and daughters in the Son. Because the persons of the Trinity are constituted by their mutual relations, and only thus, the only way we can truly enter upon their personal lives is by being identified in some way with one of them, so that we begin to share in that one's relations with the other two.²¹⁷

As we see here, both the Father, Son and the Spirit are involved. The Father is the sender of the Spirit, which invites us to get into relationship with Christ. Thus we get to know God the Father through knowing Christ. What Coffey argues here I do agree with, i.e. the Holy Spirit as the connecting link between us and Jesus and the Father. Even though Coffey's thoughts here are easily reconciled with my own, I am still having problems with his approach. This I will discuss in two points.

First of all, Coffey only to a lesser degree, considers the Holy Spirit as the way in which we unite with Jesus. The examples are rare and non-extensive. The parts I have chosen above

²¹⁶ ———, *God and Freedom: Essays in Historical and Systematic Theology*, 131.

²¹⁷ Coffey, *Did You Receive the Holy Spirit When You Believed?: Some Basic Questions for Pneumatology*, 111.

shows the Holy Spirit is the way we experience God, but in every place Coffey argues, it seems like this aspect comes in a parenthesis, where the main cause in the argumentation is something else. Let us consider the parts taken from *Did You Receive the Holy Spirit When You Believed?* In both passages Coffey jumps back to the relationship of the persons of Trinity and only stays a few sentences in discussing the experience of the Holy Spirit as sanctifier or as the uniting act who unites us with the other persons of Trinity. As for the passages from the Pauline letters and Acts, which described the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of Christ or as the uniting factor between church and the Trinity are not discussed any further. Instead of diving into the experience of the Holy Spirit among humans, which I see is a major part of the Spirit's activity; Coffey goes back to the models of 'immanent' Trinity.

The second point is consistent with the former. Coffey mainly emphasizes the relationship between the persons of the Trinity. Thus what we see as rare treatments of experience of the Spirit, is actually a result of Coffey putting his weight somewhere else, i.e. at the mutual love between the Father and the Son. This means that Coffey's emphasis lays with something which we do not meet directly through revelation and the economy, but indirectly through our appropriation of the economy of the Trinitarian God.

The next point I referred to on account of Coffey and experiencing the Spirit, was from *Deus Trinitas* and concerned Jesus's witness of the Reign of God. As elsewhere we meet references to human experience of the Holy Spirit as a result of the mutual love between Father and Son.

In favor of David Coffey, I need to emphasize that he is not alone in emphasizing the Holy Spirit as mutual love. Bruce D. Marshall stresses a similar view in his *Trinity and Truth*. Marshall treats the love of God which we can take part in, through the Spirit: "the Spirit gives to the world this highest possible gift – the eternal mutual love of the Father and the Son – simply by giving himself."²¹⁸ He refers to Romans 5:5 which says: "And hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us."

A second view which holds a slightly different thought, (but holds much of the same idea) is contributed by Eberhard Jüngel. He treats the Spirit's role as mutual relation of Father and Son – but not directly as love:

The eternal God is, as such, concerned with humanity. In the Holy Spirit, the selfless God and totally self-centered man meet each other in such a way that the eternally new relationship of love between God and

²¹⁸ Bruce D. Marshall, *Trinity and Truth* (Port Chester New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 208.

God effectively draws man into itself. It is true here as well that the “immanent” Trinity is the “economic” Trinity. The eternally new relationship between the Father and the Son, which is the Spirit, does not revise the selflessness of God, but rather implements it *for us*. It is *therefore* true of the man who is drawn by the eternally new relationship of the Spirit into the oppositeness of Father and Son that he is made new: “If any one is in Christ, he is a new creation” (II Cor. 5:17). Only this way, only when one is drawn into God’s love, can one become certain of God.²¹⁹

Now I will turn back to Coffey’s models and emphasize what they have to do with experience of the Spirit. As we have seen in the chapter on *Reason*, Coffey stressed the inadequacy of the procession model presented by Augustine. This is a model which describes the movement from God to Jesus to the Holy Spirit and ultimately to humans. While this stresses a kind of self love, Coffey’s return model emphasizes the movement from Father to Spirit to Son to Spirit to Father, and through the Spirit we meet both Christ and the Father. So while Augustine was more concerned with the Trinity, Coffey does give a more nuanced picture and a model which attends to our God’s relationship to us and our relationship to God. This way Coffey give a view on the Holy Spirit which are more concerned with experience than Augustine does. Even though it must be stated that Coffey’s emphasis on our relationship with the Spirit is stronger than Augustine’s, I still find it inadequate. Coffey does stress a model in which experience could be more brought out, but he chooses to lay most of his weight on the matter of what he himself calls models of immanent Trinity.

Turning to Gunton we meet a different approach. Here the Spirit is considered to have a major role in Christian community in addition to the eschatological dimension already mentioned. The Holy Spirit does “incorporates people into Christ and in the same action brings them into and maintains them in community with one another.”²²⁰ Gunton gets down to the level of personal relationship with a slightly different touch:

How can the Spirit be the love between the Father and the Son and still be a personal identity along with the Father and the Son? There is a problem only so long as we must put the question in that order. Let us instead look at the matter the other way around and say: the Spirit is himself one who intends love, who thus liberates and glorifies those whom he “rests”; and *therefore* the immediate objects of his intention, the Father and the Son, love each other, with love that is identical with the Spirit’s gift of himself to each of

²¹⁹ Eberhard Jüngel, *God as the Mystery of the World: On the Foundation of the Theology of the Crucified One in the Dispute between Theism and Atheism* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1983), 375.

²²⁰ Gunton, *The Promise of Trinitarian Theology*, 82.

them.²²¹

Gunton argues that we meet the Spirit through community, and states that the first assignment of the Spirit is to make us understand what Christ did for us on the cross. Further Gunton uses Irenaeus in exploring Trinitarian language and thinking trinitarianly. The two hands of God does in fact give a just image of the Triune God, i.e. how all persons of the Trinity participate in the world. In this view Gunton encompasses all three persons of the Trinity in dealing with how we ought to think about God.

The last point I stated concerning Gunton's treatment of the Holy Spirit and experience is worship and community. Gunton sets the Holy Spirit's role in context with how we can experience Christ and the Father in the Christian community. The Holy Spirit as the mediator of Christ and hence the Father, is the relationship in which we have the ultimate Christian experience.

As shown through the material on Gunton in this chapter, he does emphasize the Spirit and the experience in his works. Both in *The Promise of Trinitarian Theology* and *Father, Son and Holy Spirit* and *The Christian Faith* we meet this topic constantly. The latter book does give an overview of the Christian Doctrine, and Gunton takes up much space to show the importance of pneumatology and Christian experience.²²²

To sum up the two different views, we can say that while Coffey stresses God in the Trinity and Gunton stresses a more general view which encompasses both the Trinity and the human relationship to the Trinity. This might seem unfair, but I do mean that theologians choose to treat certain parts of theology are criticizable because of their unbalanced contribution. The overall purpose with theology I mean is to give the best understanding and language, so that we might get more humans to know Christ and Father in the Spirit. This we may accomplish if we argue a nuanced Trinitarian theology. Thus mainly emphasizing 'immanent' theology I believe is not providing a proper Trinitarian theology. The 'immanent' Trinity as I discussed in the reason-chapter is often to support an 'economic' Trinity, but this is to be considered together with 'economic' Trinity. Coffey does discuss the Holy Spirit mainly as the mutual love of Father and Son, and thereby not paying attention to other important features of Trinitarian theology. Gunton on the other hand does stress that we try to *think trinitarianly* and emphasize how we in community get to know the Triune God. Thus

²²¹ Robert W. Jenson, *The Triune God*, 2 vols., vol. 1, Systematic Theology (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 158.

²²² Gunton, *The Christian Faith: An Introduction to Christian Doctrine*. For the part dealing with the Holy Spirit and Christian experience and community, go to page 117.

Gunton's theology includes more aspects of Trinity that I mean are important, i.e. the Christian experience.

I now turn to some examples of my personal experience of the Holy Spirit, to shed some light on experience as a source of theology. Does scripture, tradition and reason stress the Holy Spirit in a way which corresponds with how we as Christians experience the Spirit? Now I am not qualified to make any conclusions from these following examples, but they can indeed function as contributions to theology. The way I meet the Spirit in church is primarily through prayer. The pastor and other contributors to ministry address the Spirit: "Send your Spirit upon us" or "Come down on us Holy Spirit," and so on. Further the gift of speaking in tongues and the gifts of prophecy are definitely given humans from the Spirit. This comes forth through Acts 19:6 where it says "Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they began to speak in tongues and to prophesy." Now, if this is the case, that the Holy Spirit is the way in which we turn to God, to get know God (through prayer and worship) should we not emphasize this in discussing theology?

Both Coffey and Gunton treat the Holy Spirit as the way in which we know the Trinitarian God, albeit with different emphasis. As is shown through my argumentation, my view is closer to Gunton than Coffey. Although Gunton treats experience at the level of Christian community, I would suggest that we go further down to the individual relationship to God and how we as persons experience Christ in the Spirit. This I stress because I want to use the whole spectrum in theology, from the smallest level where we are as individuals in the Spirit get to know the eternal Triune God who invites us to live in relationship with Him.

Is the treatment of the Holy Spirit by Gunton and Coffey consistent with the way we experience the Spirit? First I would like to look at Coffey's arguments again. He treats the Holy Spirit as the mutual love between Father and Son. So the Holy Spirit is as states before the objectivization of love between the two other persons of the Trinity. While the Father is the creator of everything and the origin of the Trinity, Christ is his Son, the Redeemer who saves humans. Their love for each other *is* the Spirit. Is this problematic? I turn to Ted Peters to address the question. He treats the mutual-love theory briefly in his *God is Trinity*:

Coffey finds he can argue in the following way: "If Jesus can return the Spirit as his own and as his love for the Father, and bestow the same Spirit, again as his own and as his love, on his fellow human beings, then this shows that Jesus, like the Father is divine." Now, I do not fault his conclusion. But I do question his assumption regarding the nature of the Spirit. He treats the Spirit as if it were a thing that can be possessed and then distributed around. He assumes that the Spirit is a kind of divine football that can be carried or

passed. Could it be that Coffey is still working with substantialist assumptions that have “over-thingified” the divine hypostases?²²³

Peters here points to an important issue. Through Coffey’s argumentation it could easily be seen that the Spirit somehow is subordinate²²⁴ to the Father and the Son. Both the Son and the Father have distinctive roles and the Spirit therefore, as their love, does seem a little less important as part of the Trinity. Peters use of “divine football” may seem silly, but it actually provides a fitting image; The Spirit is thus the result of the Father and the Son’s action, so to speak with no action as distinct from the other two persons. Further Peters states that discussions about the Holy Spirit has got inadequate attention. He argues that there has been a misunderstanding between whether the three persons should be emphasized the same way or not.

It is frequently thought that the Holy Spirit receives inadequate attention. Already in the days of Augustine it was common fare to say that the Holy Spirit does not receive the “same fullness and care” given to the other two persons. Yet there may be a misunderstanding at work here due to a confusion regarding the task of Trinitarian thinking. The task of trinitarian theology is to explicate the biblical symbols in such a way as to gain an increasingly adequate set of ideas for conceiving of God’s creative and redemptive work. There is no inherent reason for assuming that the three persons have to be identical or equal in nature.²²⁵

I agree with him and suggest we do not need to emphasize the Spirit the same way as the Son or the Father. Again, I would argue that when we do talk about the Holy Spirit, we should give it proper place and role in Trinity, and not a subordinate role which mutual love tends towards. We must not diminish the value of the Holy Spirit as a person of the Trinity.

Another contribution that emphasizes the tendency to treat the Holy Spirit as mutual love and subsequently as a less ‘important’ person of the Trinity is found through Moltmann. Moltmann discuss in his *the Trinity and the Kingdom of God*, that if we argue for a view of the Spirit as the mutual love, then the Spirit is, “in the inner-trinitarian efficacy,” only treated as the mutual relationship of the other two persons. He says the Spirit often is treated as an appendix due to the lack of “connection with the doctrine of God the Father and the Son.” This is Moltmann states be coherenced with understanding the Son as Logos (the word).²²⁶

²²³ Peters, *God as Trinity: Relationality and Temporality in Divine Life*, 69-70.

²²⁴ Subordinationism refers to “Teaching about the Godhead which regards either the Son as subordinate to the Father or the Holy Spirit as subordinate to both” taken from F. L. Cross and Elizabeth A. Livingstone, "The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church," (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 1552.

²²⁵ Peters, *God as Trinity: Relationality and Temporality in Divine Life*, 70.

²²⁶ Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God: The Doctrine of God*, 169.

Theologian Philip Sheldrake does give a contribution to the use and understanding of the theological source experience. In his *Spirituality and Theology*, he stresses the relationship between theology and experience:

Christian spirituality will always treat this perception about Jesus as *the* basic reference point. However, what is significant is that this belief embodies a specific understanding of God and God's self disclosure. This understanding is sustained in a community of faith, the Church. Thus, our personal stories and experiences are continually brought into conversation with *this* story, with this original experience of the believing community and many attempts across time to reflect upon it.²²⁷

This argumentation by Sheldrake does support the idea of experience as an important source to theology. As I have emphasized in all the foregoing chapters, all four sources of theology reciprocally influence each other, and *experience* is no exception. How I emphasize experience as source is influenced by my tradition (Lutheran), my view on scripture and my emphasis on reason. To exemplify further I would like to mention experience as the starting point for the other sources. How I make use of experience and give weight to experience in my Christianity is affected by the view of scripture, which for many Lutherans stands strong, and stronger weight than reason. So why am I discussing this? The idea is not that every source is connected, that is of course a fact too, but the importance lies with how we make use of the sources. I mean it is necessary to be aware of how we relate and make use of each of the four sources. This is important so that we can provide a more balanced theology. Theologians and scholars will always emphasize differently, because this depends on several factors. This I believe is important as well as to keep a fruitful theology which gets the best ideas and thoughts from all aspects within theology.

As a last point of my argumentation on Christian experience I would like to come with some more examples provided by theologian Jürgen Moltmann. In his *The Source of Life* he treats our relationship to the Holy Spirit a certain way. Even though Moltmann talks about sanctification, this definitely shows how to talk about the Holy Spirit in our lives; how we experience God.

We experience it when in the Holy Spirit God surrounds us from all sides, and we trust ourselves to his presence and guidance. Life in the Holy Spirit is a life which lets the influence of the Holy Spirit *come*. A biblical image is revealing here: 'Now the *works* of the flesh are plain: fornication, impurity... idolatry,

²²⁷ Philip Sheldrake, *Spirituality and Theology: Christian Living and the Doctrine of God* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 2004), 15.

sorcery, enmity, hatred, murder...But the *fruit* Of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control' (Gal. 5. 19f. and 22f.). The list that Paul draws up here is influenced by his own time. In our own situation we could add other things too. What is important is the contrast between 'the works of the flesh' there and 'the fruit of the Spirit' here. Works are made, but a fruit grows. We cannot 'make' the fruit of the Spirit, nor can we learn it. We have to wait expectantly for it, and let it grow, as fruits ripen on a tree. What becomes real and visible in our lives as 'the fruit of the Holy Spirit' doesn't come from us. It comes from the Spirit in us and through us.²²⁸

The last passage from Moltmann is his discussion of the Holy Spirit's power as a source for life. Here he uses the whole language from the Spirit as relationship of us to God as eternal and indestructible. The way I see it, this does attend to God's freedom and otherness without getting too far away from our personal relationship with the Triune God.

For the Holy Spirit is 'the source of life' and brings life into the world – whole life, full life, unhindered, indestructible, *everlasting* life. The creative and life-giving Spirit of God already brings this eternally living life here and now, before death, not just after death, because the Spirit brings Christ into this world and Christ is the resurrection and the life' in person. With Christ, 'indestructible life' has come to light, and the life spirit which Christ sends into the world is the power of the resurrection, which brings us new life. The sending of the Holy Spirit is the revelation of God's indestructible *affirmation* of life and his marvelous *joy* in life. Where Jesus is, there is life. That is what the Synoptic Gospels tell us.²²⁹

Thus the Holy Spirit of God as the source of life, brings Jesus into the world for us to get new life through the power of his resurrection.

Thomas F. Torrance also gives an interesting description of how we relate to the Triune God. In his dealing with the mutual indwelling of the Father, the Son and the Spirit, he argues for an experience in communion with the Holy Spirit, which next leads us into the communion of the Trinitarian persons.

It is to the connection between the Communion within the mystery of the Holy Trinity and the great mystery of godliness manifest in the flesh, in the hypostatic union in Christ, that our thoughts turns here, for it is in the incarnation of the Son of the Father in the lord Jesus Christ that the inner trinitarian life of the Love which God is has been thrust revealingly into our human existence and life, and it is through our union with Christ in the Spirit that we participate by grace in the eternal Life and Love of the Holy Trinity. It is, then, the indivisible relation in Being and Act between the Persons of Son and the Father actualized and manifested in the saving economy of Jesus' life and work in history that constitutes, so to speak, the

²²⁸ Jürgen Moltmann, *The Source of Life: The Holy Spirit and the Theology of Life* (Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress Press, 1997), 52-53.

²²⁹ *Ibid.*, 19.

axis on which there revolves our understanding of the Love that eternally flows between the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, that is, the axis of the oneness between the 'I am' of Christ and the 'I am' of God, or the indwelling of the Son and the Father in one another. It is in and through that indwelling that the ultimate mystery of the mutual indwelling of the three divine Persons in one God becomes disclosed to us, for it is through the Communion of the Holy Spirit sent to us by the Father that we may participate by grace in the Communion of the Father and the Son with one another, and thus in the Communion of the Holy Trinity.²³⁰

Torrance refers to scripture when he writes this, and starts with the first epistle of John. It is through the incarnation of the Father as Jesus that we experience the inner Trinitarian love. Further we take part in this love through the grace received through Christ and in the Spirit. As an other suggestion to the mutual-love theory, Torrance here describes love as eternally flowing between Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and it is this love which we can be a part of as we participate in communion of Son and Father in the Spirit.

The way in which we are related to Christ and the Father is only one way of emphasizing the Holy Spirit. One theologian who broadens out the doctrine of the Spirit's activity is theologian Wolfhart Pannenberg. He shows how the experience of the Spirit also has important aspects concerning redemption. The Spirit invites us to participate in the sonship of the Son to the Father. This count both for believers in mere communion with the Triune God and through the sharing of reconciliation.

But how can others share in the reconciliation that was achieved in exemplary fashion by the incarnation and death of the Son in Jesus Christ? They can do so only as they are taken up into fellowship with the Father of the Son who became man in Jesus Christ (cf. Gal. 3:26f.; 4:5; Rom. 8:14f.). This taking up is not merely in the sense of something that happens to them from the outside but as a liberation to their own identity, though the Spirit reconciliation with God no longer comes upon us solely from outside. We ourselves enter into it.²³¹

Further Pannenberg emphasize the Spirit as both mediating the communion with God and the Spirit's work in Christian life and church.

The gift of the Spirit is not just for individual believers but aims at building up the fellowship of believers, at the founding and the constant giving of new life to the church. For by the link to the one Lord by which all believers receive a share in his sonship, and hence also in the Spirit of Christ, they are at the same time intergrated into the fellowship of believers. Each by faith is related to the one Lord and hence to all other

²³⁰ Thomas F. Torrance, *The Christian Doctrine of God, One Being Three Persons* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996), 164.

²³¹ Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley, 3 vols., vol. 2 (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1991), 450.

believers. By the Spirit each is lifted above individual particularity in order, “in Christ,” to form with all other believers the fellowship of the church.²³²

In addition to these passages, Pannenberg also stresses the Spirit’s activity in creation and as the Gift glorifying creation. These two insights supports the other examples I have shown and that there certainly is good reason for emphasizing the Holy Spirit as more than the mutual love between Father and Son.

As the insights above suggest, I mean we should emphasize the Holy Spirit as our way into the Trinitarian communion of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This counts for both church community as a whole as well as individuals. In the Christian community, the Spirit works within, activating gifts as a power which transforms life.²³³ When it comes to the individual level, I argue that we experience the Spirit in prayer and worship. Thus we are drawn to the trinitarian communion of love, where we participate in the glory of Christ intensified by the hopes for the future to come, and all this happens as we live “in the Spirit.”²³⁴ This is what I mean is too be emphasized when speaking of *experience*, that the Holy Spirit draws us into communion and friendship with the Triune God. The communion is at church level, where the Spirit brings us into communion with each other in the Spirit and at a personal level, where the Spirit takes part in our individual everyday life.²³⁵

As a final example of an appropriate way of speaking about the Holy Spirit I will turn to the Spirituality of John L. Gresham Jr. He delivers a view of three different appropriations of Spiritual Trinity, where the latter deals with a more Eastern perspective, i.e. the participation in the fellowship of the Trinity. We are invited to participate in the fellowship of the Father, Jesus and the Holy Spirit. By adopting the Sonship of the Son we may be God’s children in the fellowship of the Trinity, which then takes place through the Son, in the Spirit. Thus we are in relation with all Three Trinitarian persons through Christian prayer and worship.²³⁶

²³² ———, *Systematic Theology*, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley, vol. 3 (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1991), 12-13.

²³³ Clark H. Pinnock, "Church in the Power of the Holy Spirit: The Promise of Pentecostal Ecclesiology," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 14, no. 2 (2006): 156-59.

²³⁴ F. LeRon Shults and Steven J. Sandage, *Transforming Spirituality: Integrating Theology and Psychology* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2006), 136-49.

²³⁵ Yves Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, 3 vols., *Milestones in Catholic Theology* (New York: Crossroad, 1997), xvii, 15-22 vol. 2.

²³⁶ John L. Gresham Jr., "Three Trinitarian Spiritualities," in *Exploring Christian Spirituality: An Ecumenical Reader*, ed. Kenneth J. Collins (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 2000; reprint, 2001), 286-88.

Conclusion

Through this chapter we have seen both Coffey and Gunton's treatment of the Holy Spirit and Christian experience. We first looked upon Coffey's contribution from his *Did you receive the Holy Spirit When You Believed?* He brought examples on the Spirit's activity in the world, and I argued that he did not go in depth, but quickly returned to the models of immanent Trinity, primarily the return model. Coffey referred to passages, but did not write them out. As for the rest of the work I have gone through, Coffey does emphasize certain lines about the Holy Spirit as our relation to God, but as in only continuation of the overall greater theme: Mutual love. I did stress that compared to Augustine, Coffey's return model does give a more relational view than the procession of Augustine. The last passage I referred to was from his *The Incarnation of the Holy Spirit in Christ*. Here again Coffey only comes to the Spirit as the Uniter as a consequence in treating mutual love.

I also stressed, with reference to Peters and Moltmann, that Coffey tends to subordinate the Holy Spirit through the use of the mutual-love theory. Instead of giving the Spirit a proper role; it is treated as something which is there only for the sake of the other two persons of the Trinity.

Through Gunton's work I showed his emphasis on the Christian community and the eschatological dimension. Gunton shows with reference to Ignatius' two hands, the work of God through the Spirit. The Spirit makes us understand what Christ did for us on the cross, and this way we are united with the Father through Christ on the cross in the Holy Spirit. I summed up the two views with saying that while Coffey is more concerned with the Spirit of 'immanent' Trinity than Gunton who showed the importance of God-human relationship in the economy through thinking trinitarianly.

As for my own view on the matter I illustrated with approaches to prayer and gifts of the Spirit, and stated that I often experience the Holy Spirit as the way in which we talk to our Triune God. To support this I brought in examples from Moltmann, Torrance, Pannenberg and Gresham. Moltmann emphasized the Holy Spirit's works as sanctification, the Spirit who makes fruitful in and through us. Torrance talked about the mutual indwelling of love of the persons of the Trinity which we can take part in through Jesus in the Holy Spirit. Pannenberg showed the double work of the Spirit, both bringing us into communion with the Triune God and working among us in Christian community and life. The last example was provided by Gresham Jr, who emphasized the eastern perspective of Spirituality. We are invited to participate in the divine fellowship by becoming children of God in Christ.

In every chapter I have treated the four sources of theology. In this chapter I used Sheldrake's argumentation as a pointer to the importance of experience. When it comes to experience as source, I have argued that like all the other three experiences also influences and is influenced by the other sources. How I meet the Holy Spirit in church is influenced by my tradition, my way of interpreting scripture and my appropriating of human reason. Through the chapters throughout the thesis I have tried to show this reciprocity with starting point in all four sources, stressing the importance of all four, especially the involving of all in talking about theology and hence creating a balanced theology. Next follows the Conclusion of the thesis, where I will summarize the fruits of the thesis.

Conclusion

Summary

In the introduction of the thesis I stated the claim that *The differences between David Coffey's and Colin Gunton's critical interpretation of Augustine's pneumatological mutual-love theory are shaped by their use and balance of the four sources of theology*. This I have tried to show through the four main chapters of scripture, tradition, reason and experience. First I dealt with Coffey and Gunton's appropriation of scripture. I showed the different appropriation of scripture in dealing with the mutual-love theory. Coffey tried to find new support in scripture for the theory. Gunton found problems in Augustine's use of scripture. I further showed how both their views on scripture were influenced by their background as a Catholic and a Protestant. Gunton's view on scripture is therefore stricter than Coffey's who is willing to find passages as support even though they are not clear.

In the second chapter I looked upon Coffey and Gunton's treatment of Augustinian theology. Coffey has an overall positive view of Augustine's contribution while Gunton has a more opposite view which emphasizes the Latin Church Father's negative contributions. I showed through Coffey that he is influenced by his tradition which stresses the importance of tradition and therefore tends to be more receptive to the Augustinian theology. Further I showed the tendency in Gunton to treat negative aspects of Augustinian theology. This way it does seem that tradition is not so important for Gunton, which again reflects his traditional background as a Reformed Protestant.

In the third chapter we saw the two theologians make use of the terms 'immanent' and 'economic' Trinity. Through the treatment of Coffey's models I showed his blurring the use of the terms, which not emphasized a clear distinction between the two. Gunton was more critical to the terms. Through his work we saw the need for the 'immanent' Trinity to attend to God's freedom while he emphasized that we must not go further than allowed by economy. Thus Coffey's tendency to use reason allows him to widely use the terms 'immanent' and 'economic' while Gunton, who tends to be more sceptical about reason is far more careful in dealing with the terms.

In the fourth and last chapter I dealt with Coffey and Gunton's treatment of the Holy Spirit and experience. Coffey made little use of experience in dealing with the Spirit. He was more concerned with the Spirit in the 'immanent' Trinity. Gunton dealt considerably with experience of the Holy Spirit in Christian community.

This clearly shows that the way in which Coffey and Gunton makes use of the four sources of theology shapes how they interpret Augustine's mutual-love theory. Coffey's weight in tradition and reason corresponds better with the mutual-love theory of Augustine than Gunton's weight in experience and careful use of scripture and tradition. Thus I have supported the claim made in the beginning of this thesis.

Further reflections

The third chapter I engaged *Reason* and mentioned other views of the Trinitarian terms. First I mentioned LaCugna, who emphasized that we do not need an 'immanent' Trinity, and a similar contribution by Peters, both stressing that all we can about God is to be found in economy. Moltmann stressed a view more similar to Gunton, although with the importance laid on Christ on the cross, which is the "key" to 'immanent' Trinity. Theologian O'Donnel emphasized a view more like that of Rahner, that salvation, redemption and creation actually is God in history. Due to these different appropriations of the term 'immanent' Trinity and the possibility of creating confusion, I suggested, that we do not make use of the term 'immanent', but rather other words which are emphasized in Scripture, e.g. 'eternal'. Further I argued that we do not talk about God as either here with us or in eternity, but include all dimensions in the same language. Thus as I showed with passages from scripture, all dimensions are included in talking about God. Eternal is a word which is something totally different than temporal humanity and is therefore proper as a description of our Triune God.

In treating Coffey on the 'immanent' and the 'economic' Trinity we barely touched his term *dynamic equilibrium*. This was from Coffey's view meant to illuminate the return model. I would like to borrow this term, not in the same sense, but to transfer it over on the four sources of theology. Throughout this thesis we have seen examples on how the sources influence each other reciprocally. How one makes use of scripture is influenced by the tradition one belongs to. This again gives weight to how much reason is emphasized and the use of experience dimension. This reciprocity is to be found in all four sources. This reciprocal influence I suggest can be seen as a kind of equilibrium, in that all of the four sources are to be considered when practicing theology. But many would say that for instance reason should not be emphasized as much as scripture. Others might give a great weight to religious experience and arguing with "though it is written, this is not how I experience it." Thus we have several ways of stressing and give weight to the sources. This is where the Dynamic comes in. The use of the four sources is dynamic in the sense there is room for

variations. The emphasis can differ, but the sources are to be encountered for all four of them. This way theology does not fall too far either way, explicitly because there will be three other sources to keep the balance. I will therefore end this thesis by saying that theology should be treated with the dynamic equilibrium of the four sources!

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Summary

Title:

A Critical Analysis of David Coffey's and Colin E. Gunton's Treatment of Augustine's Mutual-love Theory

Author:

Erlend Johansen

Abstract:

Both the Catholic theologian David Coffey and the late Protestant theologian Colin E. Gunton treat Augustine's Trinitarian theology in their work. One major common point of their treatment is the theory of the Holy Spirit as the mutual-love between the Father and the Son which Augustine developed. I look upon the two theologians' treatment of Augustine's theory and claim that the difference in their interpretation is shaped by their use and balance of the four sources of theology: scripture, tradition, reason, and experience. I support my claim through four main chapters organized by the four sources. Coffey uses scripture more freely while Gunton is stricter in discussing Augustine foundation of the theory in scripture. Both Coffey and Gunton reflects their respective traditions where Coffey put emphasis on Augustine as Western tradition, while Gunton is overall critical to Augustinian theology. Both theologians uses the terms 'immanent' and 'economic' Trinity. Coffey's view is emphasizes the 'immanent' and shows a blurring use of the terms. Gunton is stresses distinction between the terms, but is careful in going farther than allowed by the economy. As for religious experience Coffey and Gunton are different in their use and emphasis on the Holy Spirit and experience. Gunton stresses the Spirit as active both in eschatology and in Christian community. Coffey are more concerned with the Holy Spirit as love between the Father and the Son. Through these four main chapters: scripture, tradition, reason and experience, I thereby show how Coffey's and Gunton's different weight in the sources shape how they interpret Augustine's pneumatological theory.