

RETRIEVING NICAEA

The Development and Meaning
of Trinitarian Doctrine

Khaled Anatolios

Foreword by Brian E. Daley


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Foreword

Since at least the late 1960s, Christian theology in virtually all of our churches has shown once again a vital interest in reflecting on the trinitarian mystery of God. Theological themes have their fashions, of course, with periodical ups and downs in their popularity. Like other aspects of recognized church doctrine, the conception of God as Trinity seemed, to many traditional Christians in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, to be formulated already with a clarity that left it beyond discussion. To liberals and modernists, on the other hand, it often seemed quaintly irrelevant: an inherited, incurably paradoxical way of thinking about the divine Mystery that defied both rational explanation and practical applicability. Many of us have probably heard sermons on Trinity Sunday, for instance, or on other occasions where a reference to God's threefold simplicity seems called for, that begin with words like those a friend of mine once was shocked to hear on a bright Sunday morning following a gathering of patristic scholars: "Today we celebrate our belief that God is one in nature, subsisting eternally in the three Persons of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We don't know how to explain this, or even to say exactly what it means—so let us, instead, try to love one another!" God's trinitarian being has come to seem, for many modern Christians, far removed from what faith is really about.

Yet the Trinity is so deeply written into the language and liturgical use of the church that Christians can hardly escape it altogether. Drawing on Jesus's commission in Matthew 28:19, Christian communities, as far back as we know, have normally baptized new members "in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit" as an immersion into the divine power that underlies both Jesus's commands and his promise always to be present with his disciples. Since the beginning of Christian records, liturgical forms of blessing and doxologies at the conclusion of homilies have invoked God's favor and praised God's glory with this characteristic, yet intractably puzzling, formulation. For some contemporary Christians, trinitarian formulations seem inappropriate because they do not feature the "inclusive language" we want to use for God; for others, they are simply unintelligible. Do we really need them?

So speculative Christian thinkers have begun again to look for a vocabulary and a conceptuality that might serve as a contemporary vehicle for unpacking and applying the trinitarian mystery that our tradition presents as the heart of faith. Hegelians have drawn on that philosopher's highly structured form of historical idealism to seek out its implications for how we conceive of God and suggest that somehow absolute spiritual being must always be understood as threefold. Other thinkers—especially from the Reformed tradition—have followed Jürgen Moltmann in the attempt to develop a “social model” of the Trinity. “Process” theologians have argued for a divine Trinity whose being actually develops to fullness in inseparable involvement with the development of creation. The Orthodox John Zizioulas and the Catholic Catherine Mowry LaCugna have drawn on the Continental tradition of personalist philosophy to suggest a way of approaching trinitarian doctrine that begins with the relational, interpersonal character of conscious being itself. In his famous reflection on trinitarian doctrine that first appeared in the German collection *Mysterium Salutis*, Karl Rahner has tellingly reminded modern theologians that our way of thinking about what God is, in God's eternal being, is for Christian faith identical with the way God has revealed himself in sacred history—enunciating there his oft-quoted principle that the “immanent Trinity” is the “economic Trinity,” and vice versa.¹ And Hans Urs von Balthasar, in his reflection on the liturgy of the Holy Week Triduum in that same collection, has suggested that the death and burial of Jesus, as Son of God, really introduces abandonment and death as well as vindication and new life into the eternal inner relationships that form God's own being.² All of these approaches—and numerous others—to conceiving of the Trinity in new ways, ways related to the main themes of modern church life and modern philosophy, have drawn new criticisms. But they also testify at least to the growing consciousness among Christian thinkers that we cannot talk responsibly about God, as Christians, without somehow shaping our speech in explicitly trinitarian terms.

Theoretical models of the Trinity, however, whether ancient or modern, always seem doomed to failure if they are taken to be models for rational explanation—for actually making sense of how we can confess the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, whom Christians invoke in liturgy and prayer, to be at the same time both radically one and simple and irreducibly three. The reason, of course, is that our thought and speech about God as Trinity is not, in any sense, a theory or hypothesis intended to explain how God has touched us in history. So trinitarian language always resists further explanation; it simply confesses, proclaims. And the reason is that the Trinity is not a theory so much as a summary of biblical faith, the briefest and most lapidary of Christian creeds.

As Christians, believers commit themselves to the faith of Israel, as Jesus and his disciples did: they take as utterly fundamental the ancient Hebrew profession of

1. Karl Rahner, “Der Dreifaltige Gott als Transzendenter Urgrund der Heilsgeschichte,” in *Mysterium Salutis: Grundriss heilsgeschichtlicher Dogmatik*, ed. Johannes Feiner and Magnus Löhrer (Einsiedeln: Benzinger, 1965), 2:328 (ET: Karl Rahner, *The Trinity*, trans. Joseph Donceel [New York: Crossroad, 1967], 21).

2. Hans Urs von Balthasar, “Der Zugang zur Wirklichkeit Gottes,” in *Mysterium Salutis*, 2:15–43.

faith in a single God (Deut. 6:4) and the engagement to “have no other gods besides” him (Exod. 20:3). With Jesus, they dare to call this transcendent, ultimate divine mystery, whom no one can define or imagine, by the name “Father”; they seek to live in utter obedience to his will (see Luke 22:42) and commit their lives into his hands (see Luke 23:46). In the risen Jesus, proclaimed by the witness of his disciples to the world, they recognize one who makes God personally present and visible today, who brings to fulfillment, in unexpected ways, the full prophetic promise of Israel’s history. They dare to say with the disciples, “Jesus is Lord,” recognizing him not simply as an eschatological prophet or even simply as Israel’s promised Messiah but as one who is literally the Son of God, God’s Word made flesh, “God with us.” And in the very process of making this confession, they recognize that God is present and active among them in yet another way, mysteriously enabling them to grasp more fully the identity of Jesus and to walk with him on his way to the Father. “No one can say ‘Jesus is Lord,’” Paul reminds the Corinthians, “except by the Holy Spirit” (1 Cor. 12:3).

The events of Easter and Pentecost, in other words, are for New Testament Christianity the beginning of a new depth of human awareness of God’s transcendent, ineffable reality and nearness, working in history to save us from self-destruction. More important, this astonishing revelation is the reason Christians affirm that these three distinct ways our forebears have had of conceiving God’s working are—taken together—a revelation of *what God is*. God *is* the invisible presence in the burning bush and on the top of Sinai, the one who guided Israel throughout its history, whom Jesus spoke to as his Father; God *is* the rabbi from Nazareth who proclaimed the kingdom, who was crucified and then raised from the dead, whom the disciples recognized as “Lord”; God *is* the sudden, irresistibly powerful Holy Spirit of Pentecost and of the continuing life of the church, the interior “advocate” sent by Jesus from the Father (John 15:26) to bear witness to him and to guide his followers “into all truth” (John 16:13). For Christians, all three of these figures and voices in the history of revelation remain distinct—related intimately to one another, working along with one another, but not simply the same as one another—yet all, taken together, *are* what Christians mean by “God.” And salvation for the Christian is nothing less than to be caught up into this manifold divine mystery, this unified yet textured and endlessly reciprocal life of God. It is to be moved by the Spirit to call Jesus “Lord,” to be Jesus’s disciple, to be made part of Jesus’s ecclesial body, and so to walk with him on his way to the Father in obedience and in hope. It is to be identified by the Spirit, through trinitarian baptism, with Jesus Christ; to become “sons and daughters in the Son,” children of the Father with Jesus; and so to be embraced within the life of God.

In the first five centuries of Christian history, theologians came only haltingly, only gradually, to a recognition of the contours of this staggering mystery of salvation and to the words and expressions that would enable them to put that recognition into human language. From the late second century on, many spoke of the three names of the baptismal formula as a “Triad,” a *trias*; step by step, with the help of the best conceptions available to them from philosophy and literature for thinking about the world and human existence, they built up patterns of thought and language that would

let them speak faithfully of this divine Triad within the boundaries of biblical faith. In classical patristic usage, most of the “-ologies” by which Christians today analyze the facets of faith were still unknown; “Christology,” “eschatology,” “soteriology,” “Mariology,” and so on, as subdivisions of the wider project of theology, are all creations of post-Reformation scholasticism, Protestant and Catholic. The overarching term for speaking about what God has done in history to reveal and to save was *oikonomia*: God’s “household management” within creation, God’s plan to share and rebuild the life that began with the act of creation itself and reached its culmination in the incarnation of his Son. To speak of God as God has shown himself to be—to try, on the basis of what humans have seen of his *oikonomia*, to reach beyond history into his own inconceivable life—was alone *theologia*: talking and thinking about God!

By the last quarter of the fourth century, halting Christian attempts to do *theologia* in the biblical and liturgical tradition had led, by unpredictable twists and turns, to what later generations generally think of as “the doctrine of the Holy Trinity”: the formulated idea that the God of Jewish and Christian revelation *is* Father and Son and Holy Spirit, as one reality or substance, operating outward in creation always as a unity, yet always internally differentiated by the relationships of origin that Father and Son and Holy Spirit have with one another—the ways each one *is*, with the others, the single mystery of God. By the conventions of the late fourth century, first formulated in Greek by the “Cappadocian Fathers,” these three constituent members of what God is came to be referred to as *hypostases* (“concrete individuals”) or, more misleadingly for us moderns, as *prosōpa* (“persons”). As St. Augustine would remark in his monumental treatise *On the Trinity*, when we speak of the distinguishing relationships we have come to recognize between Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and are asked to say in what sense they are three, we speak of “three *hypostases*” or “three individuals” or “three persons” simply for lack of a better term:

For the sake, then, of speaking of things that cannot be uttered, that we may be able in some way to utter what we can in no way express fully, our Greek friends have spoken of one essence, three substances (= *hypostases*), but the Latins of one essence or substance, three persons—because, as we have already said, essence usually means nothing else than substance in our language. . . . And provided that what is said is understood only in a mystery, such a way of speaking is sufficient, in order that there might be something to say when we are asked what those three are, which the true faith pronounces to be three.³

But the relationship of these three remains mysterious as well as crucially important for salvation; their unity remains as central to their divine identity as their distinction. So St. Gregory of Nazianzus, rejecting the notion that each of the three “persons” has responsibility for a different aspect of salvation or a different region of creation, insists,

This is not what we are saying; “For this is not the division of Jacob” (Jer. 10:16), as my theologian puts it. But each of them is one with what is united to it, no less than it

3. *Trin.* 7.4.7; see also 5.8.10 and 6.8.9.

is with itself, by identity of substance and power. This is the structure of [God's] unity, as far as what we have understood of it allows us to say.⁴

God's identity is ultimate self-identity, like that of a conscious subject, even while it remains a dynamic, self-giving, internally related identity of three agents who, each and all together, realize God's being, God's subjectivity, and God's unified action in eternally distinct ways. Each of these agents *is* the unique God!

These passages, like so many others in the classical tradition of Christian speech about the mystery of God, seem to bend the structures of linguistic coherence, to push the limits of normal meaning to the breaking point. What they reveal is that statements about God as one substance and three *hypostases* are, first of all, boundary statements: statements that mark out, in the name of the community of Christian faith and worship, the limits of what represents biblical and ecclesial faith from what lies outside it. As boundary statements, they are also rules of religious grammar: formal principles for the use of language within the ongoing tradition of the church's belief. They are summaries of all that Christian faith proclaims about God, about God's work in Jesus and God's continuing work through the Spirit in the church, about human salvation and transformation by sharing in their mutual gift of life. Yet even so—perhaps for the very reason that they are not attempts at giving a satisfying explanation of God—their content and meaning remain inexhaustibly rich and provocative, irretrievably beyond what any of us can understand or explain. They are simply the halting beginnings of developed Christian *theologia*.

What my dear friend and colleague Khaled Anatolios offers us in this book, *Retrieving Nicaea*, is nothing less than a retelling of how and in what terms the Christian community of the first five centuries learned to speak in this challenging yet normative way, and why their speech is important for us as believers. It is not simply another attempt to reconstruct the tangled early history of trinitarian dogma or an essay in late antique social or intellectual history. It is rather, in my view at least, a work of profound theology: a brilliant summary of the conflicts and debates that originally led the church to articulate just what God is for a Christian, as substance and person, and of the beginnings of some accepted answers to the questions that troubled many believers in the controversies surrounding the Council of Nicaea (325). Every later generation of Christian theologians, in one way or another, has had to carry on the process of forming answers to the questions raised then concerning God's being. The process, by the very terms of the discussion, never reaches a fully satisfying conclusion. Yet, as Prof. Anatolios reminds us, we are blessed by the fact that these first theologians, these first writers to "talk about God" in what we call trinitarian terms, were also great theologians: great thinkers, great writers, individuals of great devotion and great faith. As we attempt to carry on their work today, joining intelligently and generously in their debates is probably the best place for any of us to begin. We can learn from them, perhaps better than from many more recent thinkers, both the

4. *Or.* 31.16.

terms of the discussion and the spirit of devout and eloquent brilliance that such a discussion inevitably requires of us if we are to carry it on well. This book, in fact, does just that, and does it supremely well; it brings us—with clarity and insight—face to face with the origins of trinitarian doctrine as a theological conversation on which our salvation, in one way or another, ultimately depends. The subject, after all, as Gregory of Nazianzus reminds us, is nothing less than God.⁵

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5. *Or.* 27.3.

Preface

The composition of this book has been animated by a double conviction: that the development of trinitarian doctrine is the key to its meaning, and that the contents of this meaning constitute the entirety of Christian faith. It represents the trinitarian debates of the fourth century as a crucial and irreversible stage in the church's appropriation of the gospel of Jesus Christ that simultaneously identified the God whom Christians worship with Jesus's relationship to his Father in the Spirit and interpreted the entirety of Christian life and faith as bearing the imprint of this identification. The full exposition and substantiation of this double claim would require many more volumes dealing with ancient personages not treated in this book as well as modern themes and questions. An original schema that included substantive treatments of the likes of Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nazianzus, Hilary of Poitiers, and Ephrem the Syrian had to be abandoned in favor of a narrower but more intensely focused approach that attempts to highlight the comprehensive range of trinitarian faith as virtually coextensive with the entire breadth of Christian faith in the theologies of Athanasius and Gregory of Nyssa while highlighting the epistemology of trinitarian faith in Augustine. The concluding chapter, outlining in very broad strokes "the systematic scope of Nicene trinitarian doctrine," can also easily be extrapolated into a much more extensive treatment in explicit dialogue with modern theology. While this project can thus be materially broadened in both the directions of ancient and modern theology, its present form amounts to a concession to the limits of space and time that nevertheless attempts to lay a sufficient foundation for the demonstration of its double claim. Rather than purporting to be an exhaustive *Dogmengeschichte*, it is a hopeful, if not quixotic, effort to engage both historical and systematic theologians in a conversation about the enduring value of the historical development of trinitarian doctrine for its systematic exposition.

I have adapted parts of two earlier published pieces for this manuscript. Chapter 1 involves a reworking of material from my chapter "Discourse on the Trinity" in *Constantine to 600*, vol. 2, *The Cambridge History of Christianity*, ed. W. Löhr and

F. Norris (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 431–59; chapter 2 incorporates material from my “The Immediately Triune God: A Patristic Response to Schleiermacher,” *Pro Ecclesia* 10 (Spring 2001): 159–78.

I am thankful to a number of colleagues for reading parts or all of this manuscript and offering helpful comments and suggestions, including Gary Anderson, John Baldovin, John Behr, John Cavadini, Boyd Taylor Coolman, Brian Daley, Kevin Hart, George Hunsinger, Robert Imbelli, Richard Lennan, Bruce Marshall, John Milbank, John R. Sachs, Kelley McCarthy Spoerl, and Markus Vinzent. It has been a special pleasure to work with James Ernest, senior editor at Baker Academic. Since I was already admirably familiar with James’s own significant scholarship on Athanasius, I started out with high expectations. But what I did not expect was a throwback to the famed, perhaps legendary days when milk and bread were delivered to one’s front door and editors took meticulous interest in every matter of style and substance. James’s profound and extensive erudition, keen intelligence, attention to every detail, and unfailingly good humor have made the collaboration of preparing this manuscript for publication a truly memorable pleasure.

Finally, and above all, I want to express my deepest gratitude to my wife, Meredith, whose companionship has lightened the burdens and greatly multiplied the rewards of my every labor since I have been gifted with her presence. The crowning joy of completing this work is to dedicate it to her.

Introduction

Development as Meaning in Trinitarian Doctrine

In this book I aim to exhibit the intelligibility of trinitarian doctrine by interpreting the writings of key Christian thinkers of the fourth and early fifth centuries. My premise is that if we wish to understand trinitarian doctrine, we must observe how it came to be formulated in the councils of Nicaea (325) and Constantinople (381) and how such formulations were interpreted in the immediate aftermath of these councils. The approach taken here rejects as simplistic any sharp distinction between “historical theology” (as “what it meant then”) and “systematic theology” (as “what it means now”). Rather, it traces the logic whereby trinitarian doctrine developed in order to find resources for contemporary appropriation of this doctrine. We cannot ignore the historical development and gain direct access to the objective referents of the normative statements of trinitarian doctrine; we must creatively re-perform the acts of understanding and interpretation that led to those statements. In other words, in order to grasp trinitarian doctrine creatively in our own setting, we must “retrieve Nicaea.”

In this perspective, “Nicaea” refers not to the historical event of 325 in and of itself but rather to that event as appropriated and interpreted by those who over the succeeding decades claimed to be—and later were generally accepted as being—in continuity with its declaration of the consubstantiality of the Father and the Son. They understood that declaration to entail both unity of being and real distinction between Father, Son, and Spirit. This book contends that their interpretations were not based on arcane speculations about unity and diversity in God, or about the nature of substance and persons, but rather expressed coherent construals of the entirety of Christian existence. Many voices today lament the isolation and abstractness of trinitarian theology and ask how it connects with lived Christian faith; we can address those concerns fruitfully by retrieving the doctrine in the course of its development.

Because of the particular challenges that trinitarian faith has always posed to understanding, as well as the various shortcomings of modern strategies for apprehending the meaning of trinitarian doctrine, we should see the creative “indwelling of the tradition”¹ whereby this doctrine was constructed as an indispensable maneuver in appropriating trinitarian faith. Indeed, the peculiar difficulties of understanding trinitarian doctrine are not distinctly modern discoveries. The North African bishop Augustine already presented the unique character of these difficulties clearly in the fifth century.² In every other doctrine, says Augustine, we can at least understand the objective referents of the individual terms of the proposition recommended to faith, even if we have no direct access to the whole reality to which the entire proposition refers. For example, Christian faith proposes that Jesus the Christ rose from the dead. A potential believer must accept or reject this faith proposition without direct empirical access to the event of Jesus’s rising from the dead. But at least in this case we apprehend the objective referents of the proposition enough to know what we are being asked to believe. We have experience of people both living and dying, and we can ascertain that we are being asked to believe that after Jesus died, he continues to live. But this is not the case with the proposition that God is triune, which seems to predicate of God a three-in-oneness of which God is apparently the only instance. What then do we believe when we believe that God is Trinity? And what meaning can such faith have for us, both cognitively and existentially?

A more modern perspective on the question of the intelligibility of trinitarian doctrine comes from the Enlightenment philosopher Immanuel Kant. Kant concluded that because what trinitarian doctrine predicates of God is not accessible to human experience, it is simply not intelligible; therefore it is meaningless in its reference to God.³ More recently, Karl Rahner has given classic expression to another modern challenge to the meaningfulness of trinitarian doctrine, this time posed from within Christian faith. Rahner proposes that the Western postscholastic development of the doctrine has located its meaning in a realm that is abstracted from Christian “piety” and theology and thus has no existential meaning for most Christians.⁴ Since Rahner’s clarion call for an existentially accessible meaning for trinitarian doctrine, there has been much talk of a “renewal” of trinitarian theology.⁵ But given Rahner’s original pastoral motivation, one can still legitimately ask whether this putative renaissance has really borne fruit in the experience of ordinary Christians.⁶ Are our churches today

1. The phrase is originally from Polanyi, as developed in his *Personal Knowledge* and *Knowing and Being*.

2. *Trin.* 8.4.6–8.

3. *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*, book 4, “General Observation.”

4. See his seminal article, “The Method and Structure of the Treatise ‘On the Triune God,’” in *Trinity*, 9–48.

5. For an account and critique of the modern claim for a renewal in trinitarian theology, see Marshall, “Trinity,” esp. 190–200.

6. When I invoke the category of “experience,” I do not intend to denote an area of human existence that is separate from thought, conceptuality, doctrine, etc., but rather the entirety of human existence to the extent that it is consciously interpreted by the human subject and becomes the object of what Newman called “real assent.” See Newman, *An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent*, esp. 49–92.

any more imbued with a trinitarian consciousness than the functionally unitarian Christianity lamented by Rahner?

Three Trajectories in Modern Trinitarian Doctrine

Among modern approaches to retrieving the meaning of trinitarian doctrine, we can identify three major trajectories. The first trajectory, for which Friedrich Schleiermacher is a seminal figure, concedes Kant's objection that trinitarian doctrine says nothing intelligible about God's intrinsic being. The meaning of trinitarian doctrine resides rather in what it says about our relation to God, namely, "the being of God in Christ and in the Church."⁷ "Son" and "Spirit" in this schema refer to how the presumably singular divine essence interacts with the world, not to eternal differentiations within the divine essence itself. And yet Schleiermacher recognizes that trinitarian doctrine does apparently intend to predicate something of the divine being. Consequently—and problematically—he separates the meaning of the doctrine from the doctrine itself: "Hence, it is important to make the point that the main pivots (*Hauptangelpunkte*) of the ecclesiastical doctrine—the being of God in Christ and in the Christian Church—are independent of the doctrine of the Trinity."⁸ Several recent theologians, including Piet Schoonenberg, Catherine LaCugna, and Roger Haight, have adopted Schleiermacher's approach.⁹ The inner contradiction that plagues this approach is most dramatically presented by LaCugna's work, which attempts the baffling balancing act of insisting both on the urgent meaning of trinitarian doctrine for Christian existence as revelatory of God's "being as communion" and yet cautioning that trinitarian doctrine does not really mean that God *is* Trinity.¹⁰ I will not here

7. Schleiermacher, *Christian Faith*, 741.

8. *Ibid.*; *Der Christliche Glaube*, 2:461. Recently, Francis Schüssler Fiorenza has endeavored to defend Schleiermacher from the charge that he marginalized trinitarian doctrine, contending instead that its position at the end of *The Christian Faith* is intended to indicate the status of the doctrine as the "capstone" of Christian confession. See his "Schleiermacher's Understanding of God as Triune," 171–88. However, Fiorenza's defense of Schleiermacher is not relevant to our present concern, which is not with Schleiermacher's subjective intentionality in his evaluation of the status of trinitarian doctrine but rather with his construal of the actual contents of the doctrine. Inasmuch as he refuses to concede that it refers to eternal distinctions in the divine being, his construal of that doctrine is effectively marginal with respect to the mainstream Christian tradition, regardless of his estimation of the relative rank of the doctrine in relation to other aspects of the Christian confession.

9. See thesis 25 in Schoonenberg, "Trinity—the Consummated Covenant," 114; LaCugna, *God for Us*, esp. 209–41; Haight, *Jesus: Symbol of God*, 480–83; and Haight, "The Point of Trinitarian Theology," 191–204.

10. LaCugna approvingly summarizes Zizioulas thus: "Human persons exist in the first place because God subsists as triune love" (*God for Us*, 266). However, she explicitly rejects the notion of "intradivine relations" in God and of "Trinity" as a predication of God's intrinsic being: "And, as the history of the doctrine of the Trinity shows, as soon as we begin to argue on the basis of such intradivine distinctions, we leave the economy behind. As soon as we leave the economy behind, the doctrine of the Trinity has no bearing on life or faith" (*ibid.*, 227); "The doctrine of the Trinity is not ultimately a teaching about 'God' but a teaching about *God's life with us and our life with each other*" (*ibid.*, 228; original italics).

attempt a detailed refutation of this approach. Suffice it to say that it objectively deconstructs not only the plain sense of trinitarian affirmations—whatever that doctrine purports to say about God, it clearly intends to say something about God in God’s very being—but indeed the intelligibility of Christian revelation as a whole. After all, this revelation has been traditionally understood as divine self-disclosure and self-communication. The latter point was already made in the nineteenth century by the German Lutheran theologian Isaak Dorner: “The economic Trinity . . . leads back to immanent distinctions in God himself, all the more so because in the world of revelation we have to do not merely with a teaching of truths, but with the true *being* of God in the world, with God’s actions, indeed with his self-communication.”¹¹

A second trajectory exactly reverses Schleiermacher’s disjunction of God’s being from God’s relation to the world: trinitarian doctrine, this view insists, asserts that the form of God’s salvific self-communication to the world coincides with the form of divine being. While Rahner is by no means the originator, even in modern times, of this notion,¹² his oft-quoted *Grundaxiom* has become its most celebrated expression: “The ‘economic’ Trinity is the ‘immanent’ Trinity and the ‘immanent’ Trinity is the ‘economic’ Trinity.”¹³ As Dorner insisted in the quotation cited above, some version of this approach—positing an essential continuity between the form of God’s self-presentation to the world and God’s own being—is necessary not only for a correct interpretation of trinitarian doctrine but, indeed, for an authentic notion of divine revelation. The Christian account of divine revelation and of divine “faithfulness” posits a correspondence between who God is and how God presents himself to the world. But at least two difficulties attend Rahner’s particular presentation of this position. The first has been pointed out by Yves Congar and others: Rahner’s axiom seems to strictly conflate God’s eternal trinitarian being with the economic features acquired by the Trinity in God’s work of salvation.¹⁴ One can hold that the eternal Trinity is the subject of the economy of salvation without holding that the features of “the economic Trinity” are exactly those of the eternal Trinity. In fact, the development of Nicene orthodoxy hinges on the insistence that, at least in one crucial respect, the “form” or appearance of the economic Trinity does *not* correspond to that of the eternal immanent Trinity. A strict and unqualified conflation of the economic Trinity with the immanent Trinity would entail that the subordination of the incarnate Son to the Father reflects the same order of subordination in the immanent Trinity. But a large part of the logic of Nicene theology consists precisely in overcoming this inference.

Of course, Rahner’s own understanding of his axiom did not entail a wholesale transposition of all the features of the “economic Trinity” onto the “immanent Trinity.” The central thrust of his application of this axiom was the insistence that the two modes of God’s self-communication—in concrete history and as the horizon of

11. As cited in Marshall, “Trinity,” 195 (my italics).

12. As noted in *ibid.*

13. Rahner, *Trinity*, 22.

14. See Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, 3:11–18.

the self-transcendence of human subjectivity—correspond to the eternal modes of divine self-communication and differentiation in the eternal generation of the Son and the procession of the Spirit:

In line with this idea, we might point out here that the incomprehensible, primordial, and forever mysterious unity of transcendence through history and of history into transcendence holds its ultimate depths and most profound roots in the Trinity, in which the Father is the incomprehensible origin and the original unity, the “Word” his utterance into history, and the “Spirit” the opening up of history into the immediacy of its fatherly origin and end. And precisely this Trinity of salvation history, as it reveals itself to us by deeds, is the “immanent” Trinity.¹⁵

This quotation clearly brings out the second difficulty in Rahner’s implementation of his own trinitarian *Grundaxiom*, and that is its abstraction from the concrete particularities of the scriptural narrative. Rahner complains about the “isolation” of trinitarian doctrine “from other dogmatic treatises telling us something about ourselves conducive to our real salvation.”¹⁶ However, his own approach does not so much delve into the continuities and discontinuities between the biblical narrative of creation and salvation and the Trinity as the subject of this narrative; rather, he comprehensively enfolds the dialectic of history and spirit/transcendence into divine life and being. Thus, in actual practice, his identification of the immanent Trinity with the economic Trinity pays little attention to the narrative particularities of the economy. All this is not to deny that his trinitarian theology is substantially biblical in its deepest thrust. My point is that his axiom needs to be more thoroughly integrated with particular details of the scriptural narrative.

Other theologians committed to Rahner’s fundamental principle have more explicitly applied this project to the particular details of the biblical narrative and in so doing have reached controversial conclusions. Thus Karl Barth and, more recently, Robert Jenson have sought to reassert the ontological identity between the eternal Word and the incarnate Word, to the point of affirming that the eternal Word is in some sense eternally incarnate, or at least *incarnandus*.¹⁷ Raising such questions simply underscores the point that an approach to trinitarian theology that probes continuities between the narrative of the economy and the very being of God will always encounter difficulties that reverberate to the core of the mystery of Christian revelation. These difficulties cannot be resolved by a mere formal statement of the identity of the immanent and economic Trinity. Moreover, Rahner’s axiom and the complexities of its implementation should make us ask how such complexities were dealt with in the historical construction of the doctrine itself. What light does this

15. Rahner, *Trinity*, 47.

16. *Ibid.*, 15.

17. See Jenson, *Triune Identity*, 138–45, and his discussion of Barth therein. For a defense of Barth on this point, with the clarification that for Barth, the Son is always *incarnandus* by grace and not by nature, see Hunsinger, “Election and the Trinity,” esp. 182–83 (thesis 5).

history shed on our contemporary efforts to identify continuities and discontinuities between trinitarian being and the trinitarian economy?

A third trajectory in the effort to locate the meaning of trinitarian doctrine is probably the dominant one in the modern Western Christian tradition: the search for an appropriate creaturely analogy. Historically, in the West, the regnant version of this approach is the so-called “psychological analogy,” presumed to be originated by Augustine, further developed by Aquinas, and elaborated in a contemporary idiom by Bernard Lonergan.¹⁸ In this version we glimpse a certain semblance of the divine trinitarian being, however remotely and imperfectly, when we attend to the processions of intellect and will from the human mind. More recently, however, theologians have critiqued the psychological analogy as modalist in its trinitarian doctrine and individualistic, in a proto-Cartesian manner, in its anthropological implications.¹⁹ Instead, the version of the analogical strategy that is currently most favored is the “social analogy,” which in certain versions presumes to retrieve another trinitarian image from Augustine that is further developed by Richard of St. Victor. Augustine spoke of the Trinity in terms of lover, beloved, and the love between them;²⁰ Richard of St. Victor spoke of lover, beloved, and co-beloved.²¹ In some quarters, the central question of the meaning of trinitarian doctrine seems to be the choice between the psychological and the social analogies. This centralization of the role of analogies in mediating the meaning of trinitarian doctrine tends to spill over from systematic theology to historical studies, where the trinitarian theologies of figures foundational to the tradition are often interpreted principally in terms of their preferred analogies. Moreover, the search for the meaning of trinitarian doctrine through analogies is probably the default position of most practicing Christians, at least in the Western churches. To the extent that they are stirred to seek this meaning, and to the extent that pastors are moved to supply it, recourse is typically made principally to analogies. I recall a sermon on Trinity Sunday in which the preacher suggested the analogy of a father, a mother, and their baby sleeping in the same bed, the bed corresponding to the one essence!

The use of analogies has been pervasive in the history of Christian reflection on the divine Trinity. But, going beyond skirmishes over which analogy is most adequate, one has to question the whole approach in which analogies become the primary location of trinitarian meaning. When the meaning of trinitarian doctrine is located principally in some particular creaturely analogue, it becomes separable from other aspects of the Christian mystery. Instead of trinitarian meaning being embedded in the whole nexus of Christian faith, it tends to be reduced to the features of the analogue itself. One can after all espouse “relationality” or wonder at the mind’s differentiated unity

18. A contemporary defender of this approach asserts, “For over one thousand years the psychological analogy for the Trinity was the high point of Trinitarian theological reflection” (Ormerod, “Psychological Analogy,” 281).

19. See, for example, the critique of Gunton in *Promise of Trinitarian Theology*, esp. 42–48.

20. *Trin.* 8.10.14.

21. Richard of St. Victor, *De Trin.* 3:11–19.

in the acts of knowing and willing without actually confessing and worshipping the Triune God as Father, Son, and Spirit. In that case, one could capture the meaning of trinitarian doctrine without ever subscribing to Christian faith. At the very least, the doctrine of the Trinity is then in danger of becoming simply another item in the list of Christian beliefs. Thus a Christian would be someone who believes that God created the world from nothing, that Jesus arose from the dead, and that God is in some way like a shamrock leaf (or human consciousness, or human relationships). Surely Rahner is right: the meaning of trinitarian doctrine must have a more intrinsic connection to the structure and texture of the whole of Christian life and faith.

Locating the Intelligibility of Trinitarian Doctrine

The difficulties of discerning the meaning of trinitarian faith, or the realization that the content of the objective propositions articulating this doctrine is so elusive, should lead us to ask, what intelligibility attended their original formulation? To return to Kant's contention that these propositions are simply nonsensical, we can and must nevertheless ask, what sense did these propositions have for the people who articulated them? They at least seem to have thought they understood what they agreed and disagreed about! Augustine already clearly discerned the central and crucial difficulty in extracting meaning from trinitarian doctrine: the objective reference of the statements of trinitarian faith is not directly available to human perception and is thus ultimately incomprehensible. We cannot directly perceive with the mind's eye what we are saying about God when we say that God is Trinity. But this aporia should lead us back to the intentionalities that generated these statements. If we cannot comprehensively ascertain what predicating Trinity of God objectively entails with reference to God's own being, can we not nevertheless ask what Athanasius, Gregory of Nyssa, and Augustine meant when they affirmed such incomprehensible things? By reappropriating their acts of meaning and judgment, maybe we will also learn to affirm the things they said and to mean them approximately as they meant them.

Some may worry that the approach propounded here will follow the Schleiermacher trajectory and deny the objective reference of trinitarian doctrine to divine being. But that is far from the case. The difference between the Schleiermacherian approach and the one recommended here hinges on the crucial distinction between reference and full comprehension. I do not deny that trinitarian doctrine refers to God's being. But I do insist, along with the mainstream of Christian tradition, that trinitarian doctrine says things about God that are not fully comprehensible. My point is that the meaning of trinitarian doctrine should not be sought primarily in the objective reference of a narrow set of "trinitarian" propositional formulae (since this objective referent is also asserted to transcend full comprehension by human intelligence) but rather in the exigencies that led to their articulation. If we ask what these exigencies are, the answer proposed in this book is that these exigencies involved the entirety of Christian faith and life and thus provide a demonstration of the systematic scope

of trinitarian doctrine. Trinitarian doctrine emerged not from some isolated insight into the being of God, such that its meaning might be grasped from a retrieval of that singular insight, or from some creaturely analogue that somehow approximates that insight. Rather, orthodox trinitarian doctrine emerged as a kind of meta-doctrine that involved a global interpretation of Christian life and faith and indeed evoked a global interpretation of reality. Its historical development thus presents a dramatic demonstration of Karl Rahner's characterization of trinitarian doctrine as the summary of Christian faith. To appropriate the meaning of trinitarian doctrine today, one must learn from the systematic thrust of its development how the entirety of Christian faith and life means the Trinity. Put differently, the suggestion is that we may *perform* the meaning of trinitarian doctrine by learning to refer to the trinitarian being of God through the entirety of Christian existence. The point is not to shift from objective reference to subjective intention but rather to retrieve the intentions of the theologians who had a formative role in the doctrine's expression, precisely in order to thereby learn how to correctly refer to God's trinitarian being. That retrieval leads us to identify the "sentences" that signify the divine Trinity as constituting the whole of Christian existence and not merely some subset of "trinitarian" propositions.

For some, the above proposal will evoke resonances of George Lindbeck's "cultural-linguistic mode" in his now classic, *The Nature of Doctrine*. In that work, Lindbeck notoriously dismisses not only "experiential-expressive" models of doctrine, in which doctrines are conceived as symbolizations of interior states, but also those of "traditional orthodoxies" in which doctrines are understood as conveying cognitive information in a direct correspondence between doctrinal propositions and the objective realities to which they refer. Lindbeck's own "cultural-linguistic" model understands doctrines as "idioms for the construction of reality and the living of life . . . [and] as communally authoritative rules of discourse, attitude, and action."²² Setting aside for the moment the controverted question of whether this cultural-linguistic model completely annuls the truth-telling function of doctrine, I would like to propose that at least a variation of it helps us to grasp the real import of fourth-century trinitarian doctrine.²³ I would contend that the development of fourth-century trinitarian orthodoxy did indeed involve claims to objectively refer to the positive reality of the Triune God—yet not in the manner of a direct cognitive correspondence between propositions and their referents but rather by way of prescribing "authoritative rules of discourse, attitude, and action" that ensure the success of the act of referring to the Triune God. If this is true, then it is not fourth-century trinitarian orthodoxy that corresponds to Lindbeck's characterization of "traditional orthodoxies," but rather modern reductionist readings of this tradition.

Throughout this book, I will try to substantiate that position by demonstrating that the historical development of trinitarian doctrine took place through a syntax

22. Lindbeck, *Nature of Doctrine*, 18.

23. For a defense of Lindbeck against the charge that he is "soft on truth," see Marshall, "The Nature of Doctrine after 25 Years," in *Nature of Doctrine*, 25th anniv. ed., xvii.

that enfolded the entirety of Christian existence. Consequently, the retrieval of this systematic dimension of the historical development is an indispensable element for any subsequent “systematic” treatment of trinitarian doctrine, or indeed of Christian theology in general.

I further propose two fundamental principles that underlay the historical development of trinitarian doctrine, whose retrieval is indispensable for a contemporary appropriation of this doctrine. First, the construction of a particular set of interpretations of the primacy of Christ—as applied to the entire Christian narrative but especially as informing the notion of divine transcendence—was central to the development of trinitarian doctrine. The previous statement is in fact strongly ironic, since it is a celebrated motif in contemporary trinitarian theology that the greatest deficiency of “classical” trinitarian theology and Christology is that it begins with a non-christological “Hellenistic” conception of divine transcendence and that this deficiency is now being redressed by efforts to rethink divine transcendence from the perspective of the person and work of Jesus Christ.²⁴ In fact, I argue that a christological reconception of divine transcendence was foundational for the deep structure of the developing trinitarian grammar of what came to be associated with “Nicene” faith. Conversely, a contemporary appropriation of Nicene trinitarian doctrine amounts to an understanding and assenting to a particular account of the primacy of Christ and of the re-envisioning of divine transcendence and indeed of all of Christian faith and experience from that vantage point.

A second crucial element in the development of trinitarian doctrine was the clarification of a theological epistemology. According to the terms of this epistemology, trinitarian doctrine does not allow us to encompass the being of God within the confines of human knowing, but it does regulate our being and knowing so as to enable us to successfully relate ourselves to God, who is really Trinity. Moreover, this regulation of our being and knowing constitutes a global interpretation and performance of the whole of Christian existence. Although we cannot encompass God’s trinitarian being within our human knowledge, we can know and glorify God as Trinity and be consciously and thankfully incorporated into trinitarian life. Thus appropriating the meaning of trinitarian doctrine involves learning to think, live, and pray so as to refer to God’s being as Trinity while at the same time learning to disavow a comprehensive epistemic hold on the God to whom we thus refer ourselves. Consequently, the full disclosure of the meaning of our trinitarian affirmations (which, to repeat, constitute the whole of Christian existence) remains an eschatological hope rather than a present possession, though Christian faith involves an authentic foretaste of the substance of this hope.

A helpful modern metaphor for the kind of knowledge that trinitarian doctrine offers, and that the development of this doctrine demonstrates, is Jean-Luc Marion’s

24. For some examples of this motif, see Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, 2:290; Moltmann, *Crucified God*, 87; Barth, *Church Dogmatics* IV/1, 179–85.

notion of the “saturated phenomenon.”²⁵ A saturated phenomenon involves an excess of presencing that so overtakes and overwhelms the knower that she cannot objectify the source of this saturation and enclose it within her cognitive grasp. Similarly, the meaning of trinitarian doctrine, or the apprehension of the trinitarian being of God, cannot be epistemically enclosed or objectified. Rather, we appropriate the meaning of trinitarian doctrine by learning to identify and interpret the various aspects of Christian existence precisely as saturated by the God who is Trinity; conversely, we learn to identify the God who is Trinity through the saturated phenomenon that is Christian existence as a whole and in all its aspects. The historical development of trinitarian doctrine offers foundational insights into this reciprocal process.

How does the project of retrieving trinitarian doctrine as proposed here relate to the three modern approaches described above?

1. The first approach, which denies that trinitarian doctrine can in any way function as a description of divine being, is fundamentally incompatible with the Nicene development of trinitarian doctrine, as Schleiermacher himself was well aware.²⁶ The present proposal insists that trinitarian doctrine does successfully refer to divine being while conceding that the propositions of trinitarian doctrine do not encompass the divine being.

2. With regard to the second approach, which asserts the identity of the “immanent” Trinity and the “economic” Trinity, the retrieval here proposed accepts that the trinitarian economy yields real knowledge of God’s being but does not simplistically conflate the trinitarian being of God with all the features of the trinitarian economy. The Nicene development of trinitarian doctrine involves a global interpretation of Christian life and faith that asserts a series of interlocking continuities and discontinuities between the trinitarian being of God and the trinitarian economy. Only by appropriating the strategies whereby these continuities and discontinuities constitute a coherent interpretation of Christian life and faith can we learn the meaning of trinitarian doctrine.

3. With respect to the search for trinitarian analogies, the Nicene development of trinitarian doctrine does allow for the use of various analogies, psychological, social, and otherwise—meteorological, in one instance!²⁷ But it never makes an isolated analogy, or even a network of analogies, the main locus of trinitarian meaning. That locus is always, at least implicitly, the entire field of Christian existence.

How This Book Proceeds

It should be evident by now that the project of interpreting the development of trinitarian doctrine according to the terms outlined above is far removed from standard analyses that recount the history of this development as different versions of unity and

25. See Marion, *In Excess*.

26. Schleiermacher, *Christian Faith*, 172.3.

27. Cf. Gregory of Nyssa’s analogy of the rainbow in *Ep.* 38 (= Ps. Basil).

diversity, or equality and inequality, between the “persons,” or by way of word studies of “nature” and “person.” There is ineluctably a hermeneutical circle between the kind of meaning that trinitarian doctrine is presumed to have and a given expositor’s reconstruction of the development of this meaning. Standard textbook accounts of the development of trinitarian doctrine are beholden to typical preconceptions of the meaning of trinitarian doctrine, some of which we have just discussed. The meaning of trinitarian doctrine is presupposed to be contained in a set of isolated propositions containing such key terms as *ousia* and *hypostasis*, or to be manifest in the choice of certain analogies, or determined by an isolated key principle such as “Christ must be God in order to save us.” Accordingly, the story of the development of trinitarian doctrine and the main voices within that narrative are treated principally in terms of their use of these key terms, their use or lack of use of certain analogies, and similar considerations.²⁸ But the inadequacy of that approach is manifest in its obvious *post factum* character. It does not bring to light the motivating intelligibility that pushed certain persons to these formulations, analogies, and judgments about the relation of the divine “persons” but simply narrates earlier traces of the final formulations of the doctrine. The result is not a creative reconstruction of a process of discovery that can be reenacted in acts of understanding and judgment but a lexical archaeological expedition.

I hope the approach propounded here gains a certain measure of hermeneutical transparency by explicitly announcing the hermeneutical circle that governs it. In reading the relevant texts, I have come to the conclusion that the development of Nicene trinitarian doctrine involved most decisively not so much the creation of a certain vocabulary, or the use of certain analogies, or indeed any one thing, but rather comprehensive interpretations of many aspects of Christian faith and life. Thus its proponents insisted that what was at stake was the interpretation of Christian life as a whole. Consequently, my interpretation of the development of Nicene trinitarian theology privileges precisely this systematic thrust. Of course every perspective has its limitations, and I am glad to concede this fact from the outset. Both material and formal limitations necessarily attend the particular perspective deployed here.

Materially, this book does not aspire to anything like the breadth of a comprehensive *Dogmengeschichte* of the development of trinitarian doctrine. Moreover, it does not attempt to offer a detailed historical account of the various alliances and ecclesial-political networks that informed the fourth-century controversies, though it

28. In *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, Ayres makes some significant overtures toward transcending this approach with sporadic appeals to a “Nicene culture,” and to that extent his approach is complementary to mine. I have registered my own conviction that this more comprehensive approach needs to be more consistently implemented in his treatment of fourth-century theology in Ayres, Behr, and Anatolios, “*Nicaea and Its Legacy: A Discussion*,” 141–75. John Behr’s work could also be interpreted as reading the development of trinitarian doctrine as an extended interpretation of the “primacy of Christ” (though he does not use this phrase) and to that extent is also complementary to one of the structural trajectories of the approach presented here. See his *Way to Nicaea* and *Nicene Faith*. For a more systematic exposition of what I have referred to as the principle of the primacy of Christ, see his *Mystery of Christ*.

does interact with contemporary scholarship that deals with such issues. Furthermore, the particular focus on the systematic thrust of developing trinitarian theologies in the fourth century has severely restricted the number of theologians treated in depth. If one seeks the meaning of trinitarian doctrine especially in the use of the language of natures and persons, or in the use of analogies, then a broad analysis of the use of such language or various analogies is needed. But since I am trying to show how the development of trinitarian theology entailed a global interpretation of Christian faith and life as a whole, it seemed more pertinent to focus on a very few major figures and to show how their trinitarian doctrine involved such global interpretations.

Further limitations then come into play. Once the parameters of the notion of “trinitarian theology” are so enlarged as to be effectively coincident with the whole of theology, an exposition of a major figure’s trinitarian theology becomes a much larger undertaking. Some creative selection therefore becomes necessary in presenting these figures. Thus for Athanasius and Gregory of Nyssa, my focus is broader; I portray these figures as representatives of the systematic thrust of Nicene trinitarian theology in relation to other aspects of Christian faith. The chapter on Augustine has the narrower goal of elucidating the epistemology of trinitarian faith in his classic work *On the Trinity* (*De Trinitate*). My focus throughout is on elements I consider relevant to the project of a contemporary appropriation of the meaning of trinitarian doctrine. To say this is to admit to the ineluctable “fusion of horizons” that attends every act of interpretation. It is also once again to destabilize the division of the tasks of historical and systematic theology. The present work purports to be a creative systematic retrieval of systematizing elements within the historical development of trinitarian doctrine.

Formally, perhaps the most crucial limitation of the present work is precisely that it is not a history. It does not attempt to offer any detailed sociocultural context for the fourth-century doctrinal debates. For example, I make no effort to familiarize the reader with the economic and social conditions of Athanasius’s Egypt, though I try to contextualize his theological judgments in relation to contemporaries with whom he was in conversation. Questions about Athanasius’s personal motivations (Did he champion Nicene theology in order to consolidate his own hold on episcopal power? To what extent did he authorize violence against his opponents?) are not entertained. Someone offering a history of the fourth century or of Athanasius himself would need to treat all such questions. The present study seeks only to illumine some of the interconnections that Athanasius and others drew between trinitarian commitments and other aspects of Christian faith. It treats Athanasius as essentially a systematic theologian in his own right, someone who claims to offer a certain vision of the coherence of Christian faith.

The claim underlying this approach is that such an account of Athanasius’s theology, focusing on how it organizes the internal data of Christian faith (Scripture, liturgical rites, etc.), is intelligible in its own right. I do not deny the validity of investigating other elements of historical context, but I do reject an *a priori* presupposition that doctrinal controversies are not intelligible in the terms in which they actually present

themselves, namely, as debates over how the various givens of Christian experience can be organized into a coherent whole. It would be interesting to explore further how various strategies for constructing the coherence of Christian experience interacted with the wider culture. But the aim of this study is simply to present certain versions of Nicene coherences. Moreover, it presents them with the further claim that they are still intelligible and indeed are perennially relevant to attempts to construe the meaning of trinitarian doctrine as embedded in Christian faith as a whole. This book does not set out to elucidate the conditions that make possible this continuity of intelligibility across historical distance. Such an elucidation, which properly belongs to the field of fundamental theology, would aim to explain how historicity and sociocultural variation interact with the structures and interactive presencing of human consciousness and the external world in such a way that a twenty-first-century Christian may recognize fourth-century theology as both intelligible and attractive.²⁹ The present book presupposes that such can be the case, and that presupposition will be validated if a sufficient number of readers are able to understand it and find in it constructive resources for their reasoned appropriation of Christian faith.



Of the chapters that follow, the first will quickly sketch the history of trinitarian debate between the Council of Nicaea in 325 and the Council of Constantinople in 381, assess current schemes for categorizing the positions of the various parties to that debate, and propose what I believe to be a more helpful way of categorizing two main trajectories. The second chapter will present a theoretical model of doctrinal development in general and apply it to certain figures representing both trajectories. As I have already signaled above, succeeding chapters will treat three major figures who, in distinct and overlapping ways, represent Nicene trinitarian theology as an integral interpretation of Christian faith: Athanasius of Alexandria, Gregory of Nyssa, and Augustine of Hippo. The conclusion will make explicit the constructive and systematic underpinnings of this historical enquiry by proposing a number of theses that I take to be key components of “Nicene” trinitarian theology.

29. For an exemplary account of just such a fundamental theology, see now Guarino, *Foundations of Systematic Theology*. By “fundamental theology” I mean that branch of theological discourse that explicitly considers the presuppositions and methods that enable theological enquiry, reflecting on such topics as revelation, faith and reason, and the uses of Scripture and tradition. Among notable modern treatments, see O’Collins, *Fundamental Theology*, and Fries, *Fundamental Theology*.