

On the Trinity

1. The one divine substance (mia ousia, una substantia) is God as eminent or all-inclusive individual, who as such includes in his own reality all other nondivine individuals, and so is "all reality as somehow one."

2. The three divine persons (treis hypostaseis, tres personae) are respectively: Father, or the divine essence as the abstract principle of God's own eminent or all-inclusive individuality, which includes the class of other nondivine individuals; Son, or the divine essence as self-known and known by others, i.e., divine objectivity as such, and Spirit, or the divine self-knowing and knowing of others, i.e., divine subjectivity as such.

3. What the above says is this: the truth about reality is that there is one divine life in and for which all lives are lived, this one divine life, which is the concrete and so ever-growing whole of reality, is essentially all-inclusive love, both of itself and of others who, to some extent, are like the divine self in being analogies of its love; by its very essence, this divine love is the unity or ground both of the divine objectivity as such, which is to say the divine life so far as known by God himself and by others, and the divine subjectivity as such, or God as knowing both himself and others.

4. On the whole issue see especially Norman Pittenger, God in Process, pp. 46 f. Also R. Guardini, Welt und Person, pp. 109 f.: "[Gott] ist selbst werthaft . . . Wenn . . . der Sohn Logos genannt wird, so ist damit etwas über Gott überhaupt ausgesagt. Das Wort bildet den Herzpunkt des göttlichen Daseins. Gott ist in sich selbst Sprechender,

Gesprochener, und liebende Innewerdung der ewigen Rede. Von Wesen ist er das. . . . Von Ewigkeit ist Gott Urwirklichkeit und Urgeheimnis, zugleich aber auch jener, der sie ausspricht. So ist in ihm das Wort, wodurch die Wirklichkeit sich schenkt und das Geheimnis ins Offene tritt. . . . [Gottes] Leben trägt von Wesen her das Wort in sich. Gott lebt sprechend; und zwar so dass bei ihm das Wort die Person nicht voraussetzt, sondern begründet. Gott ist Person mit ~~Genug~~^{Bezug} auf das Wort. Er spricht sein unendliches Geheimnis aus; ebendarin existiert er als Der, der spricht, auf den hin, der gesprochen wird--und auch . . . der eigentlich Hörende ist. . . . Aus dem Wort in Gott . . . kommen alle Dinge und tragen darum selbst Wortcharakter. Sie sind auch nicht blosse Wirklichkeiten. Sie sind auch nicht blosse, im stummen Raum dastehende Sinnfakten. Sie sind Worte des Schaffend-Redenden, an den gerichtet der, Ohren hat, zu hören! Die Welt ist nicht nur aus der Macht, aber auch nicht nur aus dem Denken, sondern aus der Rede hervorgegangen" (quoted by H. ~~Mynarek,~~^{Mynarek,} Mensch und Sprache, pp. 61 f.).

5. Speaking of the Cappodocian doctrine, Tillich says, "It is possible to speak of the divine substance as the one divine ground, and of the three persons, Father, Son, and Spirit, as the manifestations of the ground. Then we have a quaternity rather than a trinity" (HCT, 77). Assuming that this is a problem, one of the advantages of the view sketched here is that it makes sense of both points, namely, that the Father is the fountain of the whole trinity (pater est ~~font~~^{fons} totius trinitatis), and yet is one of the three persons thereof. Since what is meant by "Father" is the divine essence as the abstract principle of God's own eminent or all-inclusive individuality, God qua Father is both "the one divine ground"

(i.e., the one divine substance) and one of the three manifestations thereof.

6. Since the Son is the divine essence as self-known and known by others, it makes good sense to say that the Father is known only through the Son and in or by the Spirit (as divine subjectivity as such). I.e., what is known is precisely the divine objectivity as such, which is the divine essence or the abstract principle of God's own eminent individuality (= the Father) qua known. Hence in knowing the Son, we know the Father-- both essentially as the eminent or all-inclusive individual and actually as "Our Father."

7. Question: How does this differ from philosophical doctrines of the trinity such as I have previously criticized? Well, at least one difference is that it does not "divide the substance" by assigning the absolute and relative poles in God to one or another of the persons. Another is clear from a view like Macquarrie's, which distinguishes between "primordial," "expressive," and "unitive" being, which seems a variant on the type of view which does divide the substance. On the other hand, it might be possible to read M's view so that the difference would not be very great.