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The Mediator and the Mediations:
Divine Self-disclosure in Thomas F. Torrance

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I, Titus Chung, hereby declare that the thesis has been composed solely by myself and is therefore my own work. It has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification.

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Thesis Abstract

Could a work of revelation justify itself today as a viable theological project? The question is imperative especially when sceptics have questioned the validity of revelation as a doctrinal discipline. Colin Gunton traces the modern difficulty with revelation to the influence of Hegel in giving rise to immediacy, and suggests that attention should be given to mediation. It is in this light we argue that the distinctiveness of Thomas F. Torrance's theology of revelation and mediation is able to contribute significantly to the debate and bring a fresh breeze to the theological landscape laden with a sense of revelation-weariness.

Principally we are making two claims. First, divine self-disclosure in Torrance's theological scheme instead of immediacy is the mediation of God in Jesus Christ. It is through the Mediator who bridges between God and humanity that the self-revelation of God is finally and fully mediated, and the normative pattern of the union and communion of divine and human action of revelation and mediation is set. We would argue that dualism is, to Torrance, the threat to Christ's revelation and mediation, and the way of surmounting is to return to the scientific realism of understanding God appropriately in accordance with the compulsive nature of his self-disclosure.

Our discussion of Torrance's pneumatology and multiple mediations involves the second claim. Notwithstanding the intent to uphold the primacy of scriptural mediation, we argue that Torrance, in responding to dualistic peril, has made the unusual move to advocate the effacement of scripture in revelation. Such move is unjustifiable as it has adverse repercussion not only for the mediation of scripture, but other media of revelation as well. The move has subtly gravitated revelation from mediation to immediacy and subverted Torrance's theological framework. What is required of Torrance to overcome the dualistic tension, as we claim in the discussion of the church, Word and sacraments, and contingent creation as media of revelation, is to remain in line with the normative pattern of revelation and mediation which he has built upon the foundation of the Mediator. Essentially revelation in Torrance's scheme is the mediation of God's self-disclosure in Christ, and the continuous unfolding of that revelation by the conjoint work of the divine and the human through multiple mediations in human history. Finally, we would engage Paul Tillich and Colin Gunton in providing Torrance with alternatives that affirm the validity of scriptural mediation.

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Abbreviations

BSCL	*Belief in Science and in Christian Life*
CAC1	*Conflict and Agreement in the Church,* Vol.1
CAC2	*Conflict and Agreement in the Church,* Vol.2
CD	*Church Dogmatics*
CDG	*The Christian Doctrine of God*
CTSC	*Christian Theology and Scientific Culture*
DCO	*Divine and Contingent Order*
DM	*Divine Meaning*
GGT	*The Ground and Grammar of Theology*
GR	*God and Rationality*
KBBET	*Karl Barth: Biblical and Evangelical Theologian*
MC	*The Mediation of Christ*
RET	*Reality and Evangelical Theology*
RP	*Royal Priesthood*
RST	*Reality and Scientific Theology*
SF	*The School of Faith*
STI	*Space, Time and Incarnation*
STR	*Space, Time and Resurrection*
TCRK	*Transformation and Convergence in the Frame of Knowledge*
TF	*The Trinitarian Faith*
TP	*The Trinitarian Perspectives*
TRci	*Theology in Reconciliation*
TRst	*Theology in Reconstruction*
TS	*Theological Science*

Introduction

Could a work of revelation justify itself today as a viable theological project after question about the validity of revelation as a doctrinal discipline is raised by F. G. Downing in, as the title conspicuously suggests, *Has Christianity a Revelation?*[1] Downing is not alone in casting the doubt. Ronald Thiemann pinpoints that scholars, among others, such as James Barr, David Kelsey and Gordon Kaufman have reverberated the query, in one way or another.[2] The sceptical voices may be construed as representative response to the failure of the discussion of revelation, which dominates theology mainly from the 1920s to the 1960s, in providing clear understanding with regard to the nature and possibility of the discipline. This is the period that, according to Thiemann, has given rise to a sense of 'revelation-weariness' over the discussion in the theological landscape.[3]

The problem of clarity, however, is not merely a modern symptom. The difficulty can be traced back to the era of Reformation when major differences about how Christianity is to be perceived as a revealed religion emerge between Catholic and Protestant. The matter is complex for the differences, as Colin Gunton claims, do not restrict to beliefs about the nature of scripture and tradition, they concern as well 'a far less easily formulable question about the nature of revelation according to Christianity, and its relation to its sources.'[4] The problem compounds during the Enlightenment when revelation is displaced by reason, when reason becomes the yard to measure the historical basis of Christianity and query the epistemological foundation of faith. On this note, Hegel, in perceiving reason as the dynamic self-revelation of God, regards Christianity as the revealed religion and thus engenders the programme of appropriating revelation as a form of immediacy that eventually paths the way for future developments. The immense contribution of Hegel, nevertheless, is as well one of the main causes of modern difficulty with revelation. According to Gunton, 'Since Hegel's time, theology has been dominated by quests for different forms of immediacy, and that, I believe, is one root of our modern discomfort with

[1] F. Gerald Downing, *Has Christianity a Revelation?* (London: SCM 1964).
[2] Ronald F. Thiemann, *Revelation and Theology: The Gospel as Narrated Promise* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 1985), 2-3. See James Barr, *Old and New in Interpretation* (London: SCM, 1966), 65-102; James Barr, *The Bible in the Modern World* (London: SCM, 1973); David H. Kelsey, *The Use of Scripture in Recent Theology* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975); Gordon Kaufman, *An Essay on Theological Method* (Missoula: Scholars, 1979).
[3] Ibid., 1.
[4] Colin Gunton, *A Brief Theology of Revelation* (London: T & T Clark, 2005), 2.

question of a revealed religion. The [biblical] notion of a revealed religion… has been replaced by different forms of immediacy.'[5]

If Gunton's account is acceptable, the nineteenth-century quest of biblical criticism could be read as a form of immediacy as the movement seeks to attain the direct knowing of God independent of tradition. The post-modern pursuit of biblical narrative is another example, as the accentuation that the constitution of the reader is shaped by the retelling of the story is achieved at the expense of the relation between word and reality. The period between the two, the phase Thiemann regards as leading the discipline into the blind alley,[6] cannot be spared of the influence either. In alluding to John Baillie who claims in contrast to the past that modern theology has come to understand revelation as God revealing himself, Gunton believes it is another form of immediacy.[7] Rudolf Bultmann is clearly the theologian of existential immediacy to Gunton. The question is would Karl Barth be regarded as another? Gunton, in making a controversial criticism, says, 'Barth's insistence that God is revealed through God, he [Alan Spence] argues, detracts from the incarnational and pneumatological mediation of revelation.' 'Even if we concede to Barth the rejoinder he could make that revelation is mediated by the humanity of Christ, we can continue to hold against him that the humanity is in some way given short measure, so that the mediatedness of revelation, given with the right hand, is in effect taken away by the left.'[8] Arguably there is ground for Gunton's claim. However, if the conclusion is suggestive of the model of God-reveals-Godself as another form of immediacy, we may diverge slightly from Gunton as here, we claim, is where the distinctiveness of Thomas F. Torrance could manifestly be found.

It would be superfluous to add anything to the accolade of Alister McGrath that regards Torrance 'as the most significant British academic theologian of the twentieth century'.[9] Torrance's contribution indeed has been remarkable; especially, among others, his massive oeuvre of theological works ranging from the important field of science to theology.[10] As the student of Barth and someone who self-

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[5] Ibid., 3-4.
[6] Thiemann, 1.
[7] Gunton, 7. Cf., John Baillie, *The Idea of Revelation in Recent Thought* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1956), 55-56.
[8] Ibid., 5. Cf., Alan Spence, 'Christ's Humanity and Ours,' in *Persons, Divine and Human: King's College Essays in Theological Anthropology*, ed. Christoph Schwöbel and Colin Gunton (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1992), 89.
[9] Alister E. McGrath, *Thomas F. Torrance: An Intellectual Biography* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999), xi.
[10] Torrance has authored, edited or translated more than 360 pieces of work by the time of his retirement, and another 250 more after that. See McGrath, xi.

professes to have built upon the theological foundation of his teacher,[11] Torrance is not the ordinary 'Barthian' of regurgitation.[12] As Gunton rightly recognises God-reveals-Godself as the hallmark of Barth's theology of revelation, so it is of Torrance but without the difficulties as indicated, or, at least, working to rectify them. That is to say, and we would suggest, Torrance's divine self-disclosure is to be read as the endeavour to articulate a theology of revelation and mediation centred on the incarnate Son Jesus Christ as the sole Mediator who reveals and mediates the Father to humanity by the Spirit; the human person of Christ is underpinned as the cornerstone of the normative pattern of revelation and mediation, and the work of the Spirit is given a far greater role beyond the subjectivity of the knower. The emphasis of mediation is not inadvertent but worked out with the intent to develop a theology of revelation and multiple mediations that views scripture, church, Word and sacraments, and contingent creation as the media of divine revelation. The anchorage of Torrance's argument is to be found primarily in the normativeness of the union and communion of divine and human action that is derivative of the hypostatic union of Christ. That is to say, the mediation of revelation is achieved by the conjoint effort of the divine and the human. On this note, theological science as the human action of scientific inquiry locates its indispensable and rightful place in Torrance's total interconnected scheme. Here is the distinctiveness of Torrance: God-reveals-Godself is the collapse of revelation and mediation in the Mediator. The inseparability of revelation and mediation in Jesus Christ is the jewel of Torrance's theology that is able to find the place of some illumination particularly when the discussion of revelation is currently having a bewildering time.

Yet, surprisingly, in the light that revelation is not an unfamiliar theme to the readers of Torrance, this aspect of his thought seems to attract less attention than it deserves. One main reason could possibly be that Torrance, in his whole academic career, has contributed substantially in various disciplines of scholarly discussion ranging vastly from patristic to modern theology, and from theology to science. As

[11] *TCFK*, vii. Torrance says that his theological works 'have arisen out of a sustained engagement with the tension between Christian theology, as it has been renewed directly or indirectly through the great work of Barth, and the general frame of thought that has dominated Europe culture for several hundred years.'

[12] Whether Torrance should be called a Barthian is an issue of debate. For example, Richard Gelwick claims that as a mature theologian he has moved beyond Barth. McGrath, Weightman and Langford however believe that Torrance's work is the further refinement of the methodology of Barth's theology. See Richard Gelwick, Review: 'Transformation and Convergence in the Frame of Knowledge,' *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 54 (1986): 198; McGrath, 133-40; Colin Weightman, *Theology in a Polanyian Universe: The Theology of Thomas Torrance* (New York: Peter Lang, 1994), 132; Thomas A. Langford, 'T. F. Torrance's Theological Science: A Reaction,' *Scottish Journal of Theology* 25 (1972): 155.

his diverse works are influential and have aroused significant responses not only in the United Kingdom but more so in the United States and areas in Southeast Asia, studies of them have often been led to different focuses. A quick overview of some academic works on Torrance in recent decades would illuminate the diversity and perhaps ably explain the 'neglect'. One of the earliest doctoral theses is accomplished by Gray who attempts to explore Torrance's understanding of theology as a discipline of science.[13] Sansom adopts similar approach in his work and focuses more on the methodological aspect of Torrance's discourse.[14] Trook looks into Torrance's arguments of the correlation between science and theology, and seeks to examine the interrelatedness that connects the disciplines.[15] The importance of Torrance's Christology is taken up by Yeung in *Being and Knowing*.[16] The work analyses the implications of the doctrine of Christ in human knowing of the triune God and science. Richardson has done a thorough study on Torrance's appropriation of science, particularly the realism of Einsteinian science, in explicating the ultimate trinitarian reality.[17] Torrance's use of Einstein in theology is once more examined by Wong.[18] Spjuth approaches Torrance with the framework of the doctrine of creation. He has done exemplary work in comparing Torrance with Eberhard Jüngel and brought to light the significant influence of Barth on both of them.[19] Weightman's thesis aims at the contribution of Polanyi on Torrance's theological science.[20] Martin, in comparing Torrance with Polanyi, explores the incarnational basis of Christian education.[21] Simmons in his research has addressed Torrance's christological exploration of science through semantic studies.[22] Luoma's detailed

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[13] Bryan J. A. Gray, 'Thesis: Theology as Science: An Examination of the Theological Methodology of Thomas F. Torrance' (Katholieke Universiteit te Leuven, 1975).
[14] Dennis Lee Sansom, 'Thesis: Scientific Theology: An Examination of the Methodology of Thomas Forsyth Torrance' (Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1981).
[15] Douglas Alan Trook, 'Thesis: The Unified Christocentric Field: Toward a Time-Eternal Relativity Model for Theological Hermeneutics in the onto-Relational Theology of Thomas F. Torrance' (The University of Drew, 1986).
[16] H. K. Yeung, *Being and Knowing: An Examination of T.F. Torrance's Christological Science.* (Hong Kong: Alliance Bible Seminary, 1996).
[17] Kurt A. Richardson, 'Thesis: Trinitarian Reality: The Interrelation of Uncreated and Created Being in the Thought of Thomas F. Torrance' (University of Basel, 1993).
[18] W. H. Wong, 'Thesis: An Appraisal of the Interpretation of Einsteinian Physics in T.F. Torrance's Scientific Theology' (The University of Aberdeen, 1994).
[19] Roland Spjuth, *Creation, Contingency and Divine Presence in the Theologies of Thomas F. Torrance and Eberhard Jüngel* (Lund: Lund University Press, 1995).
[20] Colin Weightman, *Theology in a Polanyian Universe: The Theology of Thomas Torrance* (New York: Peter Lang, 1994).
[21] Robert Keith Martin, 'Thesis: The Incarnate Ground of Christian Education: The Integration of Epistemology and Ontology in the Thought of Michael Polanyi and Thomas F. Torrance' (Princeton Theological Seminary, 1995).
[22] Stephen Arthur Simmons, 'Thesis: The Semantics of God and Nature in the Writings of Thomas F. Torrance' (The University of Chicago, 1995).

work bestows *homoousion* the central focus of Torrance's understanding of the relation between theology and science.[23]

The above projects in one way or another concentrate on the interrelation between science and theology in Torrance's corpus. There are, however, other works which pay more attention to matters of dogma and theology. For example, Kang gives a thorough discussion on Torrance's profound understanding of the significance of the vicarious humanity of Christ.[24] Stamps analyses the relation between the Eucharist and incarnation, and presents an interesting aspect of Torrance's sacramental theology within the framework of Calvin.[25] Brondos works on the reconciliatory nature of Christ and the significance of atonement in Torrance's scheme.[26] Lucas, in comparing Torrance with Balthasar, analyses the doctrine of personhood.[27] The theme of personhood is again looked into by Bevan in the context of post-modern era.[28] Torrance's discourse of the nature and work of the Spirit in relation to the triune Godhead is examined by Shin.[29] Redding examines the relation between the priestly ministry of Christ and prayer in Torrance' theological framework and sets it within the eucharistic tradition of the Church of Scotland.[30] The theme of union with Christ is taken up, although rather differently, by Rankin and Kye. Rankin develops his work by mainly focusing on Torrance's Auburn and New College lecture notes.[31] Kye gives a much complete and well-structured account of Torrance's thought on the topic that could serve as a fine secondary literature.[32]

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[23] Tapio Luoma, *Incarnation and Physics: Natural Science in the Theology of Thomas F. Torrance* (New York: Oxford, 2002).
[24] P. S. Kang, 'Thesis: The Concept of the Vicarious Humanity of Christ in the Theology of Thomas Forsyth Torrance' (The University of Aberdeen, 1983).
[25] Robert Julian Stamps, 'The Sacrament of the Word Made Flesh: The Eucharistic Theology of Thomas F. Torrance' (St John's College, 1986).
[26] D. A. Brondos, 'Thesis: Jesus Christ the Living Reconciliation: A Transformational Model of Atonement' (King's College, 1996).
[27] R.H. Lucas, 'Thesis: The Whole Christ for the Whole Person: A Comparative and Critical Study of the Doctrine of Personhood in Hans Urs Von Balthasar and the Doctrine of Sanctification in T. F. Torrance in Light of Their Trinitarian Theology' (The University of Aberdeen, 1997).
[28] A. M. Bevan, 'Thesis: The Person of Christ and the Nature of Human Participation in the Theology of T.F. Torrance: A Post-Modern Realist Approach to Personhood' (The University of London, 2002).
[29] M-C. Shin, 'Thesis: A Dialogical Trinitarian Pneumatology: A Critical Appraisal of Contemporary Pneumatological Discourse in the Light of Torrance's Trinitarian Theology' (The University of Aberdeen, 1997).
[30] G. E. Redding, 'Thesis: The Significance of the Priesthood of Christ for a Theology of Prayer in the Reformed Tradition, with Reference to T.F and J.B. Torrance, and the Eucharistic Tradition of the Church of Scotland' (King's College, 1999).
[31] William Duncan Rankin, 'Thesis: Carnal Union with Christ in the Theology of T.F. Torrance' (The University of Edinburgh, 1997).
[32] Kye Won Lee, *Living in Union with Christ: The Practical Theology of Thomas F. Torrance* (New York: Peter Lang, 2003).

A few works that are related to the subject of our concern have to be mentioned. Guthridge has worked on Torrance's Christology with the frame of revelation and reconciliation. Although revelation is discussed, the main concern of Guthridge, and rightly so, is Torrance's insight of Christology. In addition, as the work is done in 1967, it is therefore deprived of Torrance's later important works.[33] McPake's research on the reception of Barth in Scotland does make reference to Torrance's concept of God's self-revelation.[34] Morrison gives a meticulous and substantive account of Torrance's knowledge of God by underscoring the importance of epistemological realism.[35] McPake and Morrison although deal with Torrance's revelation, due to their main focuses, they, like Guthridge, are unable to give it the centre-stage; the theme of revelation and mediation, and the critical relation between them in Torrance's profound thought fail to shine. Perhaps, among all, Kruger's project comes closest to the subject in question. In *Participation in the Self-Knowledge of God: The Nature and Means of Our Knowledge of God in the Theology of T. F. Torrance*, Kruger explores Torrance's understanding of our knowledge of God in Christ by the Spirit. Kruger aims to argue that in Torrance's scheme our knowledge of God lies primarily in our participation in God's self-knowing. Such knowledge is chiefly communicated through the earthly means of scripture, sacraments and church. However, as the title suggests, the main focus on participation in the self-knowledge of God excludes revelation and critical issues of immediacy and mediation from the main menu. Due to the 'neglect', Torrance's theological science and discussion of scientific inquiry as human participation in the knowledge of God are given less than little attention, and the quintessential discourse of the contingent creation as the crucial medium in mediating our knowing of God is left without mentioning. In addition, Torrance's subtle yet sophisticated rhetoric of the dynamic of the union and communion of divine and human action of revelation and mediation remains very much to be unearthed. Having said that it is in no way to discredit Kruger's effort, as his work remains unquestionably as one of the most useful reference materials. But the work, like the above projects mentioned, involves to certain extent the discussion of revelation and yet subordinates it to the main thrust

[33] Joannes Guthridge S.J., 'Thesis: The Christology of T. F. Torrance: Revelation and Reconciliation in Christ' (Pontificia Universitas Gregoriana, 1967).
[34] J. L. McPake, 'Thesis: H. R. Mackintosh, T. F. Torrance and the Reception of the Theology of Karl Barth in Scotland---with Particular Reference to the Concept of the Self-Revelation of God' (The University of Edinburgh, 1994).
[35] John D. Morrison, *Knowledge of the Self-Revealing God in the Thought of Thomas Forsyth Torrance* (New York: Peter Lang, 1997).

of the thesis, fails to engage the problems that Gunton has acutely pinpointed. Thus, with the notion that a work is yet to be fully committed to Torrance's revelation and mediation, we believe a project of such nature could justify its valid place in the on going research of Torrance that is increasingly gaining greater momentum. It is with this intent that the present project is undertaken, and rudimentary steps are made to embark on a journey of academic expedition.

Principally we endeavour to make two claims. First, divine self-disclosure in Torrance's theological scheme instead of immediacy is the mediation of the incarnate Son of God Jesus Christ. It is through the Mediator who bridges between God and humanity that the self-revelation of God is finally and fully mediated, and the normative pattern of the union and communion of divine and human action of revelation and mediation---of which God in Christ by the dynamic work of the Spirit is revealed continuously in human history through multiple mediations---is set. Thus, in the first three chapters that constitute part one of the thesis, our chief focus is to analyse Torrance's thought on Jesus Christ as God's revelation and mediation. Chapter one would examine Torrance's understanding of the nature and fulfilment of Christ as the two-way movement of God's revelation and mediation. Through the mediation of Israel and ultimately has its foundation in the hypostatic union of Christ, we would argue that Torrance's thought on the normative pattern of revelation and mediation as the conjoint action of the divine and the human in union and communion is unfolded. We turn to what Torrance perceives to be the threat to God's revelation and mediation in chapter two, the detriment of dualism. We attempt to show that Arian dualism and Newtonian dualism according to Torrance relegate divine self-disclosure by separating God from the created world irreconcilably. As the main problem of dualism lies in approaching divine revelation and mediation from the standpoint of humanity separating erroneously the knowing from the being of God, we suggest Torrance's postulation of theological science that takes cognisance of the realism of Einsteinian-Polanyian science is to be read as the repair of the damage. Thus, chapter three would focus on Torrance's understanding of scientific inquiry as the appropriate human action because it is carried out responsively in accordance with the nature of Christ's revelation and mediation.

Theological science as the apposite human action of the normative pattern of revelation and mediation leads the discussion into the second part of the thesis that pivots on Torrance's arguments of the work of the Spirit and multiple mediations. Chapter four aims at the pneumatology of Torrance. It would examine firstly the

essentiality of the communion of the Spirit as the divine action of bringing humanity to God in Christ, and secondly the importance of the epistemic dynamic of the Spirit in enabling the mediation of divine revelation by the correlation of our rational knowing with God's objective being through media of created existence.

Our discussion of Torrance's multiple mediations in chapter five and six involves the second claim of the thesis. We would, in the analysis of Torrance's understanding of the normative status of scripture in chapter five, claim that notwithstanding the intent to uphold the mediatory nature, his unexpected advocacy of the effacement of scripture (after it has served its function of mediation) has adverse repercussion not only for the mediatedness of scripture, it has also unknowingly gravitated revelation from mediation to immediacy. We would critically examine the nature and cause of the advocacy, and ascertain the severe ramifications the shift to immediacy entails. We would argue that the move of effacing scripture is both unjustifiable and unnecessary because it is not only at odds with his explication of the importance of multiple mediations, it also cuts against the grain of the normative pattern of the union and communion of divine and human action of revelation and mediation. It fundamentally subverts Torrance's theology of revelation and mediation. What is required of Torrance in this regard, as our examinations of his discourse of the church, Word and sacraments, and contingent creation as the ordained media of divine self-disclosure in chapter six would argue, is to remain in line with the normative pattern of revelation and mediation which he has built upon the foundation of the Mediator. The upshot of our argument essentially is that revelation in Torrance's theological scheme is principally the mediation of God's self-disclosure achieved in Jesus Christ, and the continuous unfolding of that which Christ has achieved in human history by the dynamic work of the Spirit and the scientific participation of humanity through media of created existence of which God has ordained.

Finally, apart from recapitulating the main arguments, we would, in the conclusion of the thesis through a brief dialogue with Tillich and Gunton, provide Torrance with alternatives that affirm the mediatedness of scripture. Tillich and Gunton are selected because of their contrasting theological position in relation to Torrance, and also they belong to the same historical era. Tillich's insight of the revelatory role of religious symbol and Gunton's view of propositional revelation would be able to give Torrance some impetus to reconsider the unnecessary move. Their arguments would be, at least, food for thought.

To end we would state that the purpose of this work is to examine Torrance's theology of revelation and mediation. The thesis would proceed by appropriating the method of systematic analysis. With the intent to unfold the vision of Torrance, to engage him within his arguments that are embedded in his enormous corpus so to appreciate the beauty of architectonic interconnectedness and to sieve through the problematics, little attention would be paid to the context and historical development of his thought. The fact is, as McGrath and Kye point out, Torrance is remarkably coherent and consistent in his theological articulation throughout his research life.[36]

[36] McGrath, xii, xiv; Kye, 2.

Part I

Chapter One
The Mediation of Christ

Chapter one, as part one of the thesis, aims at Torrance's thought on Jesus Christ as the revelation and mediation of God. The task of the chapter is twofold. First, it attempts to examine Torrance's claim that Jesus Christ is the sole Mediator of God, and it is in and through him that one locates the fulfilment of divine revelation and mediation. We will begin our analysis first by discussing the mediation of Israel. We intend to argue that as Israel to Torrance is the womb of the incarnation it is through her that the normative pattern of divine revelation and mediation is grounded, as it awaits its fulfilment in the coming of the Son of God. We will proceed to discuss Torrance's understanding of the nature of the Word made flesh. We attempt to demonstrate that the concept of hypostatic union becomes for Torrance the undergirding principle to articulate Christ as the epitome of the union and communion of divine and human action, and in him the two-way movement of the normative pattern of revelation and mediation finds its fulfilment. Second, in our analysis of the mediation of Israel we would argue that Torrance indeed possesses a rich understanding of multiple mediations. The argument is meant to be an anticipation of a fuller study especially when we come to chapter five and six of the thesis. It nevertheless serves to prepare the stage and demonstrate the theological thrust of Torrance with regard to the importance of multiple mediations and the indispensability of the media of divine revelation.

The Mediation of Israel

The purpose of this section is to examine Torrance's thought on the nature of Israel's mediation. We would argue that by appropriating the analogy of 'tool', Torrance develops implicitly the concept of multiple mediations and underpins the importance of the unity of the form and being of the media in divine mediation. Through the analysis of the two-way movement of revelation constituted within the covenantal

relation between God and Israel, we attempt to establish the essentiality of the union and communion of divine and human action in revelation and mediation. Finally, as the embodiment of divine revelation, we would argue that the media assume an indispensable place in Torrance's theology of revelation and mediation that cannot be discarded, relegated or taken lightly.

Frederick the Great of Germany once asked his private doctor this question. 'Zimmermann, can you give me a single proof of the existence of God?' Dr. Zimmermann replied, 'Your Majesty, the Jews!'[1] The reply to Torrance is not merely about the proof of God's existence. More importantly it is about the great mystery of God especially in relation to his wonderful providence in the world. The persistent existence of the Jews testifies to the intent and act of God in the world. It is God's deliberate work to set 'the Jews before us even to-day in order to teach us something that we cannot learn in any other way.'[2] To Torrance the selection of Israel by God underlines the singular purpose of mediating God's self-revelation in the world in order that the salvation of humanity is made possible through the later coming of the incarnate Son of God, Jesus Christ. Torrance says, 'In his desire to reveal himself and make himself knowable to mankind, he selected one small race out of the whole mass of humanity, and subjected it to intensive interaction and dialogue with him in such a way that he might mould and shape this people in the service of his self-revelation',[3] and 'out of the womb of Israel, *Jesus*---the Jew from Nazareth.'[4] If God may be known through the Jews, the question inevitably is 'How is it possible…?'[5] It is a question about the nature of mediation; about the characteristic of Israel being the medium of God's self-disclosure in human history. To answer the question, Torrance uses 'tool' as an analogy. He asks, 'What are the tools we need in order to grasp the content of divine revelation?'[6] Torrance continues,

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[1] Thomas F. Torrance, 'Salvation is of the Jews,' *Evangelical Quarterly* 22 (1950): 164. Torrance cites the illustration from Barth's *Dogmatics in Outline*, 72ff. Torrance regards the existence of the Jews as an astonishing miracle. He says that by all the laws of geography, history and ethnography, Israel ought to have been swallowed up in the ocean of humanity and to have disappeared along with the Amalekites, the Moabites, and all the other peoples of the ancient days.
[2] Ibid.
[3] *MC*, 7.
[4] 'Salvation is of the Jews', 167. Author's italic. The concept of Israel as the womb of the incarnation is significant in Torrance's understanding of the role Israel plays in mediating God's self-revelation. He says, 'God had adapted Israel to His purpose in such a way as to form within it a womb for the incarnation of the Word and a matrix of appropriate forms of human thought and speech for the reception of the incarnational revelation.' See *GR*, 149; *RET*, 87.
[5] Ibid.
[6] *MC*, 5.

> What I have in mind here are not physical or electronic tools but conceptual tools. Really to get to know something we need to find the appropriate way in which to grasp it and shape what we grasp in mind---that is to say, what we need are adequate modes of thought and speech. The need for conceptual tools of this kind is particularly pressing when we have to do with something radically new which we cannot understand by assimilating it into the framework of what we already know, and for which old patterns of thought and speech are not only inadequate but can prove quite false. Quite new disclosures of nature require new modes of thought and speech to match them. That is why again and again as scientific inquiry opens up new ground and quite unanticipated discoveries are made, it has to forge new mental instruments and invent new symbolic languages, and why if they are really matched to the hitherto unknown aspects of nature they open out the possibility of still further discovery.[7]

And,

> I believe that this applies no less to our knowledge of God. If we are to know him and speak about him in a way that is appropriate to him, we need to have fitting modes of thought and speech, adequate conceptual forms and structures…. Let us consider God's historical relations with the people of Israel in just this light.[8]

The tools Torrance refers to are the matrix of ideas, concepts, categories, linguistic patterns, forms, structures and the whole of other human facilities that could be appropriated to articulate the 'radically new' encounter with God.[9] To Torrance the uniqueness of Israel is that the matter of forging the appropriate tools does not fall solely on her although her participation is crucial and constitutive in the process. It lies fully and finally in God who moulds out of Israel an appropriate matrix of articulation and expression that would serve the cause. Using Jeremiah's analogy to underline the necessary moulding process, Torrance says that it is like the 'potter at work with his clay, which is so apt here. He takes a lump of clay, throws it down upon the potter's wheel, and proceeds to rotate it under the steady pressure of his figures until it is moulded into the kind of vessel suitable for his purpose. But when the clay proves to be lumpy and recalcitrant he breaks it down and remoulds it in accordance with his design, and he does that again and again until he has formed and fashioned a vessel to his liking which will serve his purpose well.'[10] Torrance attempts to bring forth two points from the analogy. He wants to underline the fact

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[7] Ibid., 6.
[8] Ibid., 6-7.
[9] Ibid., 27-28. The basic idea of the analogy of the 'tool' as Kruger observes is to create a medium in human thought and understanding through which God could communicate himself to the human race. See C.B. Kruger, 'Thesis: Participation in the Self-Knowledge of God: The Nature and Means of Our Knowledge of God in the Theology of T.F. Torrance' (The University of Aberdeen, 1990), 47.
[10] Ibid., 7.

that human thought by its sinful nature is 'unusable' for the purpose of mediating divine revelation. And the moulding process is painfully unavoidable if it is to become an appropriate medium of God's revelation. He says that through the historical struggles with God, 'Israel teaches us, then, that divine revelation cuts against the grain of our naturalistic existence and calls into question the naturalistic pattern of human thought.'[11] However, the painstaking process of transformation is not in itself the end to Torrance. What is important is at the end of the moulding there could emerge divinely ordained structures of thought and speech through which God could mediate his self-revelation in human history. Torrance says, 'Among these permanent structures let me refer to the Word and Name of God, to revelation, mercy, truth, holiness, to messiah, saviour, to prophet, priest and king, father, son, servant, to covenant, sacrifice, forgiveness, reconciliation, redemption, atonement, and those basic patterns of worship which we find set out in the ancient liturgy or in the Psalms.'[12] Torrance underlines that these structures of articulation and expression take formative form in the course of the history of Israel. They 'constitute the essential furniture of our knowledge of God even in and through Jesus.'[13] Without them the significance of the incarnation of the Word 'could not have been grasped---Jesus himself would have remained a bewildering enigma.'[14] Torrance says,

> It was just because Jesus, born from above as he was, was nevertheless produced through the womb of Israel, mediated to us through the matrix of those conceptual and linguistic patterns, that he could be recognised as Son of God and Saviour and his crucifixion could be interpreted as atoning sacrifice for sin. It was because God mediated his revelation to mankind in that patient, informing way through the history of Israel and within the interpretative framework of its relation with God in salvation and worship, that people were able in that context to know God in Jesus and enter into communion with him, and to proclaim him to the world.[15]

The importance of the mediatory patterns of articulation and expression, or the appropriate tools, which God has forged in Israel, cannot be undermined. Torrance asserts that they play a crucial role in our understanding of God's self-revelation in Jesus. In order to substantiate his argument, Torrance draws our attention to some modern theology that fails to recognise the important mediatorial role these authoritative patterns play. Torrance remarks, 'We have tried to

[11] Ibid., 12.
[12] Ibid., 18.
[13] Ibid.
[14] Ibid.
[15] Ibid., 18-19.

understand Jesus within the patterns of our own various cultures so that in the West and the East we have steadily gentilised our image of Jesus. We have tended to abstract Jesus from his setting in the context of Israel and its vicarious mission in regard to divine revelation…. That is to say, we detach patterns of thought from their embodiment in Israel as they presented in the Old Testament Scriptures, or even the New Testament, and then schematise them to our own culture…. It is not difficult, as Albert Schweitzer found, to show that, when we seek to interpret Jesus like that within the conditioning of our European culture, we inevitably lose him.'[16] The point of Torrance is basic but important. He is sounding a caution that in our attempt to make Jesus relevant to modern ways of thought, we are in fact obscuring him because the 'tools' that we are using are not of God's choice.[17] The truism to Torrance is there are no other ways except the media which God has ordained---the authoritative conceptual and linguistic structures forged in the history of Israel---if our understanding of God's self-revelation is to be authentic.

The importance of appropriating the right tools of conceptual articulation and linguistic structure is manifest in Torrance's thought. If the 'tools' could be said to be the form, the being to Torrance is as important a matter in mediating divine revelation. The crux is that the whole enterprise of revelation and mediation is not merely a business of cognition; it also involves, affects and transforms the whole life and being of Israel. Torrance says that it 'penetrated human existence in the particular life and history of one people elected as the instrument for the actualisation of God's revelation in humanity and separated as a holy nation in whose midst God dwelt in an intimated way through the presence of His Word.'[18] In this regard, we would suggest, the form and being in Torrance's mind are intrinsically related to one another, and they constitute the totality of mediation. In order to have a better grasp of Torrance's thought, the issue has to be looked at within the framework of covenantal relation between God and Israel. As the current section concerns

[16] Ibid., 19.
[17] In fact Torrance says that we are plastering the face of Jesus with a mask of different gentile features. The setback is we are preventing ourselves from seeing and understanding him as who he really is as a Jew. And by doing that we are also preventing the Jews from recognising Christ as the Messiah whom they are still expecting. In addition, Torrance claims that the Jews could help us in our understanding of Jesus as he is actually presented in the Jewish Scriptures. He says, 'We desperately need Jewish eyes to help to see what we cannot see because of our gentile lenses, that is, the cultural-conditioned habits of thought and interpretation which we bring to Jesus and which make us read into him the kind of observational images which have played such a dominant role in our literary culture and, until recent decades, in our scientific culture as well.' See *MC*, 19-20.
[18] *RET*, 86-87.

primarily the mediation of Israel, the limited compass forbids an exhaustive account of Torrance's concept of covenant, except to briefly touch on the essential elements that are related to the discussion.

Torrance accentuates that the covenant established between God and Israel testifies to the grace of God.[19] Although the tedious process of forging the appropriate tools is an act of union and communion between divine initiation and Israel's responsive participation, it is carried out within the sphere of covenantal relation that indubitably points to the grace of God. The covenant is 'the intimate structure of family relations' of which God may 'increasingly imprint himself upon the generations of Israel in such a way that it could become the instrument of his great purpose of revelation'.[20] However, the selection and shaping of Israel within the covenantal relation is not the end in itself. The intent of God is far from being restricted to the people of Israel. To Torrance the covenantal relation between God and Israel is 'the one covenant of grace which embraced the whole of creation and constituted its inner bond and ground, and therefore carried in it the promise of a final universalisation of God's revelation in which His Word would bring light and salvation to all the peoples of mankind and indeed a new earth.'[21] That is to say, within the covenantal framework, '[God] took Israel into his hands in this unique way in order to provide the actual means, a whole set of spiritual tools, appropriate forms of understanding, worship and expression, through which apprehension of God could be made accessible to human beings and knowledge of God could take root in the soil of humanity.'[22] Thus, when becoming aware of the covenantal responsibility, Torrance claims that Israel constitutes into a worshipping community and opens herself towards God. Torrance underlines that the same Word who is the Creator of all things is at work in Israel to create a corporate reciprocity and to use the responses it provokes as instruments for the deeper penetration into Israel's existence and

[19] Torrance says that the keeping of the covenant does not depend on the worth of Israel, but is 'conditioned by the pure out flowing love of God in the continuous act of grace, of grace for grace.' *CAC1*, 289.
[20] *MC*, 7.
[21] *GR*, 147. Torrance says that the covenant embraces not only humanity but the whole of creation as well. It is through the covenant that 'the whole universe of creaturely existence, visible and invisible, is brought into a relation with God in which it is appointed to reflect His glory and be the sphere of His Revelation.' Thus, there is a correspondence between the Creator and creation. See *SF*, l-lv.
[22] *MC*, 7. For fuller account of Israel as the covenantal partner of God in mediating revelation, see Thomas F. Torrance, 'The Divine Vocation and Destiny of Israel in World History,' in *The Witness of the Jews to God*, ed. David W. Torrance (Edinburgh: Handsel Press, 1982), 88-90.

being.[23] The reciprocity between God and Israel within the covenantal relation constitutes a two-way movement. Torrance elucidates,

> A two-way movement is involved: an adaptation of divine revelation to the human mind and an adaptation of articulate forms of human understanding and language to divine revelation. That is surely how we are to regard God's long historical dialogue with Israel: the penetration of the Word of God into the depths of Israel's being and soul in such a way that it took human shape and yet in such a way that the human response it called forth was so locked into the Word of God that it was used as the vehicle of further address on the part of that Word to Israel.'[24]

In the movement of the adaptation of divine revelation to human mind, 'the Word of God invaded the social matrix of Israel's life, culture, religion and history, and clothed itself with Israel's language, it had to struggle with the communal meaning already embedded in it in order to assimilate it to God's revelation of Himself.'[25] The struggle arises out of the adaptation of the Word to Israel is unavoidable because in order for 'new understanding to take root within Israel, it had to take shape with Israel's language, and therefore it had to remould the inner structure of the society within which that language had its home and had to determine the whole history of Israel in its physical existence.'[26] As the Word adapts to Israel, Torrance says that Israel is faced with God in an unprecedented and intimate way that 'the innate resistance of the human soul and mind resulting from the alienation of man from God inevitably became intensified'.[27] That is the main reason why 'Within the moral and liturgical institutions of the covenant, the revelation of God as holy and righteous, as truth and love, was brought to bear upon the whole way of Israel's life and thought, when it was found to cut against the grain of natural existence, even against the grain of its religious desires and forms of worship'. But, Torrance asserts, 'that is what objective divine revelation had to do in opening up the way through all in-built bias against it for its realisation and actualisation within Israel, and in turning the soul and mind of this people inside out so that it was no longer self-centred but

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[23] 'The Divine Vocation and Destiny of Israel in World History', 88-89.
[24] *MC*, 7-8. Also see *RET*, 85-86.
[25] *GR*, 147. Torrance says that the adaptation of the Word of God to the life of Israel could be seen as the movement of the pre-history of the incarnation. It is the movement that 'God prepared a way, manifested His truth, and assumed man into a life-relation with Himself.' Torrance underlines that that is the triple activity of grace which God carries through in Israel and it anticipates as well the coming of Christ to fulfil the triple activity. Torrance says, 'He began to open up through Israel a new and a living way for the redemption of mankind, that was to find its fulfilment in Jesus Christ, the way, the Truth, and the Life.' See *CAC1*, 288.
[26] Ibid., 147.
[27] *MC*, 10.

God-centred.'[28] Succinctly put, the key argument of Torrance is that unless the being of Israel is changed, her innate weakness will eclipse the revelation of God and fail her from the role as the medium of revelation.

In a way it could be said that the covenantal relation between God and Israel is a kind of love-hate relation. The movement of God towards Israel does not just bear upon the life and culture of Israel in some tangential fashion. As the Word adapts to Israel, Israel is able to engage within herself a critical self-revision of her nature and being. The reciprocity between God and Israel within the covenantal relation facilitates and brings forth from Israel both the appropriate forms of articulation and a renewed being so that Israel could completely become an ordained medium of God's self-revelation. The participative response of Israel in her critical self-revision constitutes the movement of the 'adaptation of articulate forms of human understanding and language to divine revelation.' On this note, Torrance says that 'New forms of worships, thought, and expression had to be created as the context within which the Word of God could be heard and understanding of it could be established.' However, Torrance underlines that in order for this orientation towards God to be habituated in the being of Israel, the Word of God needs to keep on pressing for 'articulation within the corporate medium of covenant reciprocity'. And that continuous divine pressing eventually takes 'verbal and even written form through the shared understanding and shared response that developed in this people.'[29] The written form of articulation of which Torrance refers to is the Old Testament scripture. To Torrance scriptural texts are crucially important in this regard not only because by themselves they testify to the selection and transformation of Israel, but also 'in and through them men continued to hear God addressing them directly and backing up His Word by the living power and majesty of His divine Person.'[30] Thus, Torrance says,

> This means that we must think of Israel itself as the *Prophet* sent by God… all the prophets are to be understood within the one body which had been brought into special relationship with God within which it was moulded and structured as the earthen vessel to receive and communicate the Word of God to mankind. It was within Israel constituted in that way that God sent the prophets and out of Israel

[28] Ibid., 10. Also see *CAC1*, 290-91.
[29] *GR*, 148. Torrance underlines that the pressing of God on Israel that takes the form of historical dialogue is maintained by a concentration of the speaker-hearer relation in a prophetic nucleus within Israel society.
[30] Ibid.

> constituted in that way that the Holy Scriptures of the Old Testament were composed and handed down.[31]

To Torrance the long struggle of Israel with the living God as recorded in scripture is the preparation of the final and ultimate mediation of divine revelation to humanity. Israel is the womb of God in the sense that out of her one anticipates the coming of the one who is the epitome of the perfect union and communion of divine and human action; 'when the personal self-communication of God could be met by true and faithful reception from man.'[32] Torrance concludes,

> And at last in the fullness of time the Word of God became man in Jesus, born of the Virgin Mary, within the embrace of Israel's faith and worship and expectation, himself God and man, in whom the covenanted relationship between God and Israel and through Israel with all humanity was gathered up, transformed and fulfilled once for all. In him the revealing of God and the understanding of man fully coincided, the whole Word of God and the perfect human response of man were indivisibly united in one Person, the Mediator.[33]

We have thus far analysed Torrance's thought on the reciprocal relation between God and Israel in bringing about the mediation of divine self-disclosure in human history. We argue that by using the tool as an analogy, Torrance develops his thought on the subject in question. It is not difficult to ascertain that the tool to which Torrance constantly refers as he develops his argument is not limited only to the form of concepts and articulations. It includes as well the being of Israel as a nation. If we approach Torrance's discourse of shaping the appropriate tools in this light, a rich but subtle account of multiple mediations emerges indubitably by itself. And the fulfilment of multiple mediations to Torrance would not be possible without the participation of both the divine and human agencies. In the case of Israel, it takes both the divine initiation and Israel's responsive participation through the course of dialogical interaction in history to make possible both the appropriate media of mediation and the unfolding of divine revelation. As Torrance says, 'And we have found that in grace and wisdom God adopted a way of making himself known to this people in which the movement of his revelation fulfilled itself not only from the side

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[31] *MC*, 14.
[32] Ibid., 9.
[33] Ibid. Although Torrance says that it is Jesus Christ and not Israel who constitutes the reality and substance of God's self-revelation, he asserts that it is 'Jesus Christ in Israel and not apart from Israel, so that Israel the servant of the Lord is nevertheless included by God for ever within his elected way of mediating knowledge of himself to the world. Since Israel as a whole is given a permanent place in God's revelation of himself, the Old Testament mediation of revelation must be appreciated and understood from the perspective of its fulfilment in Christ.' *MC*, 23.

of God toward man but from the side of man toward God, and so he brought into being ways of human understanding and human obedience to his revelation which were assumed into union with it and constituted the human expression in concept and word of that revelation in its communication to man.'[34] Notwithstanding the relation between the divine and human action is not necessarily symmetrical, human participation, however insignificant it is as compared to divine grace, constitutes an indispensable place in the union and communion that could not be undermined or relegated in anyway. Essentially when Torrance says that 'divine revelation was progressively mediated to mankind in and through Israel' it means that the revelation of God is embodied in Israel. The notion of the embodiment of revelation could be apprehended in two ways. First, as mentioned, it is the embodiment of the Word in Israel. Second, it is the embodiment of the Word in the matrix of conceptual articulation and expression; 'there arose in the course of that mediation through the embodiment of revelation in Israel appropriate structures of understanding and articulating the Word of God which were of more than transient value, for under divine inspiration they were assimilated to the human form of the Word of God, essential to its communication and apprehension'.[35] It is noteworthy that in the course of establishing his argument, Torrance asserts the importance of scripture not only in mediating but also in embodying the revelation of God; 'in and through them [scriptural texts] men continued to hear God addressing them'.[36] On this note, we would judge that the medium of revelation in Torrance's theological scheme assumes an important role that cannot be taken lightly. To suggest otherwise would inevitably put stress on or even subvert his theology of revelation and multiple mediations.

There is however a lacuna in Torrance's discourse that we would like to underline. Torrance says that God's revelation to Israel takes the form of an ever-deepening spiral process.[37] It is unfortunate that Torrance does not develop the concept further in his argument in relation to the nature of revelation and mediation. Given the importance of the continuous reciprocity between God and Israel in the course of history, a theme Torrance rightly capitalises, the concept of spiral movement is not a peripheral matter. A lack of exposition only results in making the

[34] Ibid., 22.
[35] Ibid.
[36] *GR*, 148.
[37] *MC*, 8.

arguments of Torrance at times seem imprecise and insubstantial.[38] Nevertheless, taking the main thrust of Torrance's argument into consideration, we may suggest that his quick mentioning of the spiral movement of revelation reverberates to certain extent the significance of 'the hermeneutical spiral' of R. L. Hart,[39] or the importance of 'learning about learning' of Rowan Williams.[40] In the case of Torrance, we may say that attention is given to the historical events of revelation and the interpretation of them in the context of Israel's interaction with God as recorded in the Old Testament scripture. In other words, the spiral movement of revelation entails the essentiality of continuous human action in reckoning, interpreting, learning, articulating and embodying revelation in such a way that it is mediated in accordance with the compulsive nature of the revealing God. Alternatively put, the spiral movement mirrors the continuous process of forging the appropriate tools of mediation. And, to Torrance, such a spiral process requires rational and scientific inquiry on the part of human agency to unfold divine revelation.[41] The crux is revelation to Torrance is far from being an immediate or irrational mystical encounter. His definition of the term clearly underscores the intelligibility of it. He says,

> By revelation is meant, then, not some vague, inarticulate awareness of God projected out of the human consciousness, but an intelligible, articulate revealing of God by God whom we are enabled to apprehend through the creative power of his Word addressed to us, yet a revealing of God by God which is actualised within the conditions of our creaturely existence and therefore within the medium of our human thought and speech.[42]

An important question not unrelated to our discussion has to be addressed before moving to the next section. We need to ask Torrance that since Christ has now come and the ultimate revelation and mediation of God has now been fulfilled in Christ, would Israel then be effaced from the surface of the earth since she has served

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[38] In alluding to Donald Winslow's comment that says 'Torrance's speciality is the whole', Kruger underlines that while it mainly bears upon Torrance's comprehension of the 'vast panorama of the history of Christian thought', it is also applicable to Torrance's discussion of Israel as the womb of incarnation. Kruger, 23.

[39] R. L. Hart, *Unfinished Man and the Imagination* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 83-105. Hart argues that revelation as fundament refers primarily to the triadic constitutive process of which the substantive bearing of revelation founds human being in historical time in the hermeneutic spiral. The triadic constitutive process of fundament refers to '*the already founded, to founding afresh, and to the yet to be founded*.' See 85.

[40] Rowan Williams, *On Christian Theology* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003), 131-46.

[41] For fuller account of the importance of rational and scientific activity in unfolding the knowledge of divine revelation, see *TS*, 337-52.

[42] *RET*, 85.

her very function as the womb of the incarnate Son? In 'Salvation is of the Jews' Torrance gives us a number of reasons as to why the Jews continue to exist even until today.[43] Three things are mentioned in relation to the Jews as the witness of God. First, the Jews continue to bear witness to the judgement and mercy of God. Second, the Jews bear the witness of how we are to know God and how to understand Jesus. Third, the Jews bear witness to the contempt and antagonism of the human heart to God. Another reason Torrance gives is that they are God's 'finger-post' pointing to the future; 'What is going to happen? Will God not do anything?' *Watch the Jews!*[44] In someway the account of Torrance resonates the conversation between Frederick the Great of Germany and his private doctor Zimmermann that we mention at the outset. However our purpose of asking the question at this juncture is neither about the proof of God's existence nor his wonderful providence in the world, although both are unquestionably important. What we intend to bring forth is the crucial point that the media of God's self-revelation do not efface themselves after they have served their function of mediation. Israel continues to exist long after she has accomplished her task as the womb of the incarnation. We believe Torrance would concur with our remark as his account well evidences the point.

Incarnation: Fully God and Fully Man

Torrance says that his theological works 'have arisen out of a sustained engagement with the tension between Christian theology, as it has been renewed directly or indirectly through the great work of Barth, and the general frame of thought that has dominated Europe culture for several hundred years.'[45] As we depart from the discussion of the mediation of Israel and turn our attention to Torrance's thought on the nature of the person of the Mediator, the influence of Barth becomes apparent undergirding his discourse of Christ as the sole objective reality of God's revelation and mediation. Even though allusions to Barth are hardly made in Torrance's arguments, the influence of Barth cannot escape one's notice. Thus, with that in mind, we would commence the section by examining Torrance's understanding of the

[43] 'Salvation is of the Jews', 167-73. With regard to the significance of Israel to Christian community, see 'The Divine Vocation and Destiny of Israel in World History', 92-104 and *CAC1*, 284-85.
[44] Ibid., 171. Author's italic.
[45] *TCFK*, vii.

hypostatic union of Christ before going on to the divinity and humanity of Christ in the final section.

What are we then to think of the person of the Mediator? This is the question Torrance asks with regard to Christ as the fulfilment of God's revelation and mediation. According to Torrance the answer lies in the being of Christ. In line with the confession of the Council of Chalcedon (A.D. 451), Torrance underlines that in Christ there are two distinct natures hypostatically united in one person without separation and confusion.[46] 'The union between the divine and human natures in Christ is what we call hypostatic,' Torrance explicates, 'for they are united in the one *hypostasis* or person of the Son; it is therefore a "personal union" in the sense that the two natures are united in One Person, and have their hypostasis or substance in that One Person alone.'[47] Thus, the 'divine and human natures remain distinct but united in the One Person of the Son.'[48] Torrance says,

> We are not to think of Jesus Christ, Athanasius used to argue, as God in man, for that could be said of a prophet or a saint, and stops short of what the Incarnation of Son of God really was. Rather must we think of Jesus Christ as God coming to us as *man*. Nor must he be interpreted just as the appearance of God in human form or in the mode of a human life, for that also would fall far short of what the incarnation really was. The incarnation means that in Jesus Christ we have to do with One who is wholly God and yet with one who is wholly man, but very God of very God though he is, the Son of God comes to us as man.[49]

The conceptual tools Torrance uses to explicate the doctrine of hypostatic union are *anhypostasia* and *enhypostasia*. He underlines, 'By *anhypostasia* classical Christology asserted that in the *assumptio carnis* the human nature of Christ had no independent per se subsistence apart from the event of incarnation, apart from the

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[46] *CAC1*, 110. Also see *MC*, 56, 65.
[47] Ibid., 109. According to Torrance, there are three aspects what the fundamental truth of hypostatic union means for our understanding of the ministry and work of Jesus Christ. First, since in Jesus Christ God himself has come into our human being and united our human nature to his own, atoning reconciliation then takes place within the personal Being of the Mediator. Second, since in Christ God and man are united as one person, Torrance says that the mediation of reconciliation that takes place in Christ has the efficacy of restoring humanity back to God as Christ shares the inner relations of God's own life and love. Third, as Christ is in oneness with the Father, the reconciliatory activity of Christ as man in our human existence finds its ontological ground in the union and communion of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Thus, Torrance says that 'in Jesus Christ, the Mediator, in whom atoning union and hypostatic union served each other. Yet it is not atonement that constitutes the goal and end of that integrated movement of reconciliation but union with God in and through Jesus Christ in whom our human nature is not only saved, healed and renewed but lifted up to participate in the very light, life and love of the Holy Trinity.' See *MC*, 63-66.
[48] Ibid., 109.
[49] *MC*, 56.

hypostatic union.'[50] The crux is that Jesus Christ is not an independent human existence apart from the incarnation. However, by *enhypostasia*, Torrance says that 'it asserts that in the *assumptio carnis* the human nature of Christ was given a real and concrete subsistence within the hypostatic union---it was *enhypostatic* in the Word.'[51] Torrance underscores that *anhypostasia* and *enhypostasia* are inseparable in our thinking and understanding of the person Jesus Christ. The conceptual tools enable Torrance to answer questions with regard to the nature of the person of the Mediator as the eternal Son assuming human nature into oneness with himself in the event of incarnation; to articulate the fact that in that assumption he is not only real man but also a man. Since the hypostatic union of Christ is the linchpin of Torrance's normative pattern of revelation and mediation, we would analyse first the divinity and then the humanity of Christ.

The Divinity of Christ

Torrance's argument of the divinity of Christ revolves around the oneness in being of the Son and the Father. The essentiality of the oneness between the Son and the Father in Torrance's thought is clearly evidenced when he says,

> The supreme point which I wish to stress… is the fact that the Father/Son or Son/Father relationship falls *within the very Being of God*. That is to say, the Sonship embodied in Jesus Christ belongs to the inner relations of God's own eternal Being, so that when Jesus Christ reveals God the Father to us through himself the only begotten Son, he gives us access to knowledge of God in some measure as he is in himself.[52]

The notion that the Son shares the same being with the Father is important to Torrance because it underscores the point that the validity of Christ's revelation and mediation lies in the being of God. Torrance continues,

> [Jesus] is the Son of God within God, so that what he is and does as Son of the Father falls within the eternal Being of the Godhead. That is the doctrine of the Mediator, the doctrine of the incarnate Son of the Father who is of one and the same being with the Father.[53]

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[50] *TRst*, 131.
[51] Ibid.
[52] *MC*, 54.
[53] Ibid.

Because the Son of God is within the eternal being of the Godhead, Torrance argues that Jesus Christ is to be acknowledged as God in the same sense as the Father is acknowledged as God. As the Son and the Father are indivisible, the oneness between them provides the mandate for Torrance to claim that in the revelation and mediation of Christ our 'knowledge of God the Father and the knowledge of Jesus Christ the incarnate Son of the Father arise in us together, not one without the other.'[54] To put it differently, our knowledge of the Father and the Son is one indivisible movement of knowing because it is grounded in and governed by the mutual relation in being in which the Father and the Son share. To Torrance the mutual relation in being is intrinsically affiliated to the mutual relation in knowing between the Father and the Son. On this note, Torrance asserts that 'Our knowledge of the Father and the Son, of the Father in the Son and of the Son in the Father, is mediated to us in and through Jesus Christ in such a way that in a profound sense we are given to share in the knowledge which God has of himself within himself as Father and Son or Son and Father, which is part of what is meant by our knowing God through the Spirit of God who is in him and whom he sends to us through the Son.'[55] Since God has revealed and mediated himself to us in himself as the Son of God, Jesus Christ is the normative centre whereby all knowledge of God's revelation is controlled.[56]

One important concept Torrance appropriates to a great extent to explicate the oneness of the Son and the Father is *homoousion*. Torrance calls it the king-pin of the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed as it assumes an enormous role in articulating the truth of the Son as having the same being with the Father. Torrance underlines, 'The primary and all-embracing significance of the *homoousion* was its categorical assertion that Jesus is God, and that as God he speaks equally with the Father in the one being of the Godhead.'[57] He continues,

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[54] Ibid., 55.
[55] Ibid.
[56] As Christ is the normative centre of our knowledge of God, Torrance says that 'it is theologically quite improper to contrast a Christology from above and a Christology from below, for our knowledge of God the Father and our knowledge of God the Son perfectly coincide in our knowledge of the one undivided reality of God's *self*-revelation in the Person, the Mediator.' When referring to the Christology from below or above, Torrance is aiming at the approach of formulating the doctrine of Christ by beginning either from the side of the humanity or divinity of Christ. To him, either approach will not be able to attain a complete understanding of Christ. For detailed discussion see *MC*, 55-56.
[57] *TF*, 133.

> *homoousion*---the affirmation of oneness in being between the Son---and indeed the incarnate Son---and the Father. Without that ontic unity there is no Mediator between God and man and the identity of Jesus Christ has nothing to do with any *self*-giving or *self*-revealing on the part of the eternal God, in which event the whole structure not only of the Creed but of the Gospel itself would disintegrate and collapse. How much seemed to hang on that one fateful expression, 'of one substance with The Father.'[58]

It is noteworthy that notwithstanding Torrance's extensive use of the term, it is not the term itself that is significant but the reality of which it points to. The term although by definition means consubstantiality to Torrance, it is the reality of the undivided unity in the being of God of which the term indicates that is vital. Torrance says that since the Son is *homoousion* with the Father and is unbrokenly inherent in him, the 'I am' of the incarnate Son is one with and is inseparable from the 'I am' of God the Father. In Jesus Christ 'we have a Logos that is not of man's devising but One who goes back into the eternal Being of God for he proceeded from the eternal Being of God'.[59] The movement of going back to God's being is the movement of Logos-Godward, or Son-Fatherward, as Torrance understands it in the language of the Gospel of John. Torrance calls it the ana-logical reference that means a movement of thoughts and concepts going or referring back to God.[60] Like the biblical statements, Torrance claims that *homoousion* has its ontological qualification not because of its own philosophical significance, or due to its unique place in the history of the church, but because it is rightly related to its object, to the Logos who is consubstantial with the Being of God.[61] The importance of Jesus Christ as the centre of our understanding and articulation of God's self-revelation is again underpinned; 'Everything hinges on the reality of God's *self*-communication to us in Jesus Christ'.[62] To Torrance the claim of Christ's divinity in relation to the oneness in being between the Father and the Son is built upon 'God in his relation to himself' and not upon some *a priori* human presupposition.

Unquestionably the term in itself is not a biblical term and Torrance is not unaware of the challenges he faces in putting so much stock in *homoousion*. He says, 'There is admittedly a danger in such expressions, for apart from the dubiousness of

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[58] Thomas F. Torrance, 'Introduction,' in *The Incarnation*, ed. Thomas F. Torrance (Edinburgh: Handsel Press, 1981), xi. Author's italic.
[59] *TRst*, 36.
[60] *RST*, 70.
[61] P.S. Kang, 'Thesis: The Concept of the Vicarious Humanity of Christ in the Theology of Thomas Forsyth Torrance' (The University of Aberdeen, 1983), 346. See *TRst*, 44.
[62] *RET*, 23. Author's Italic.

their history or their ambiguity, to make a single term carry such weight risks misunderstanding.' In alluding to Hilary, Torrance continues, 'The infinite and boundless God cannot be made comprehensible by a few words of human speech.'[63] Thus, in congruence with Hilary, Torrance underlines that when a brief expression like *homoousion* or *consubstantialis* is used, it must be interpreted with scrupulous care.[64] In the light that the non-biblical term of *homoousion* is used by the Nicene Fathers to safeguard the integrity of the Gospel against 'the heretical rabble of the day', Torrance says, 'Far from imposing an alien meaning upon the evangelical witness, theological language of this kind is adapted under the impact of divine revelation to convey the message of the Gospel, so that in spite of the inadequacy of human language in itself it is made to indicate divine realities beyond its natural capacity and is to be understood in their light.'[65] In other words, in a fashion similar to the shaping of the appropriate tool of articulation as we have discussed earlier, the non-biblical term to Torrance has been adapted and harnessed to communicate the realism of the all-important relation between the Father and the Son as revealed in scripture. Torrance asserts, 'That is how we are to regard the term *homoousion* in the Creed, which has been reforged or reminted through the believing and doxological commitment of the Church to God's self-revelation in Jesus Christ', and thus 'What the *homoousion* did was to give expression to the ontological structure upon which the meaning of various biblical texts rested and through which they were integrated.'[66] In this way, Torrance says that *homoousion* becomes a technical term that means 'of one and the same being and nature'. Torrance underlines that it is Athanasius who champions the use of *homoousion* in referring to the truth that the Son is identical in being and of one nature with the Father. Torrance says,

> It is the self-same God who is revealed to us as the Son and the Father---the incarnate Son *is* the very same being as God the Father. No statement about this could be stronger than that of Anathasius when he argued that 'the whole being of the Son is proper to the being of the Father', and that 'the being of the Son is the fullness of the Father's Godhead.' The Son and the Father are so essentially and completely one

[63] 'Introduction', xii. See Hilary, *De Synodis,* 62.
[64] Ibid. See Hilary, *De Synodis*, 91; *TF*, 123.
[65] Ibid.
[66] Ibid. Torrance underlines that the term *homoousion* has proved to be a fertile interpretative instrument in its continuing disclosure of the deeper truth of the Gospel. According to Torrance, it 'was honoured in the Early Church as an "inspired" insight granted to the Nicene Fathers.' However, having said that, Torrance does make it clear that the term is not sacrosanct and beyond reconsideration. Like other theological terms and concepts that fall short of the realities they intend, *homoousion* needs to be continually tested and revised 'in the light of what it was coined to express in the first place, as well as in the light of its fertility in the subsequent history of thought.' See xiii-xiv.

> and the same God that---a phrase Athanasius reiterated---the Son is everything that the Father is, except 'Father'. This being the case, any detraction from the Son cannot but be a detraction from the Father, for to deny the divine nature of the Son is to deny that God is eternally and intrinsically Father, and to deny the divine reality of the Word is to say that in himself God is essentially wordless and wisdomless.[67]

Apart from referring to the oneness of the Father and the Son, there is another important nuance in the use of *homoousion*. Torrance says that if the Son is eternally begotten of the Father within the being of the Godhead, then *homoousion*, while referring to the oneness in being between the Father and the Son, expresses at the same time the distinction between them that obtains within that oneness. In alluding to Basil, Torrance says, 'For nothing can be *homoousion* with itself, but one thing *homoousion* with another', thus, 'while the Father and the Son are the same being they are eternally distinct for the Father is unchangeably the Father and not the Son and the Son is unchangeably the Son and not the Father.'[68] It is manifest from the appropriation of Athanasius, Hilary and Basil, that Torrance attempts to underscore the point that *homoousion* indeed serves as an effective interpretative frame through which general understanding of God's self-revelation is given more exact guideline.

Without doubt *homoousion* to Torrance is the appropriate tool of articulation the Nicene Fathers used when they were confronted with the dualistic threat of Arianism in the fourth century. The use of *homoousion* continues to have significant bearing on our theological reflection today because 'it is a faithful distillation of the fundamental sense of the Holy Scripture.'[69] In addition, as much as the term *homoousion* provides us with an interpretive frame to express the oneness in being between the Son and the Father, Torrance claims that it also serves as a hinge between our creedal confession of the triune God and God's revealing acts in the world. Torrance delineates, 'It is through the *homoousion*, or rather through the reality it stands for, that we are able to understand that what God is toward us in the condescension of his love and grace in Jesus Christ he is in his very own Being, and that the specific modes of God's self-communication to us in the incarnation of his Word in space and time as Father, Son and Holy Spirit are not transient aspects of his Reality but are personal modes of being that belong to God as he eternally is in his own relations and ultimate Reality.'[70] To put it succinctly, it is through *homoousion*

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[67] *TF*, 124. Author's italic.
[68] Ibid., 125.
[69] 'Introduction', xx.
[70] Ibid.

that our understanding of God in accordance with his self-revelation moves from the economic Trinity to the immanent Trinity in realisation that they are one and the same. In this regard, our theological articulation of the oneness in being between the Son and the Father as revealed through the words and deeds of Christ finds its justification in the ontological reality of God's eternal being. Torrance is adamant that if the consubstantial relation between the Son and the Father is sundered, the teaching of economic and ontological Trinity will fall apart. In the words of Torrance, if the Son is not of the same being with the Father, 'Christian faith would be thrown into internal contradiction and confusion.'[71]

We have thus far shown that in his justification of the divinity of Christ, Torrance primarily pivots his argument on the oneness of the Son and the Father. The appropriate conceptual tool to articulate the oneness in being is *homoousion*. However, the crux of Torrance's argument lies not in the term but the reality of God's being which *homoousion* points to. To Torrance any threat to subvert the divinity of Christ would undermine the ontological reality and validity of Christ's revelation and mediation; it will also have detrimental impact on our understanding of the triune God and Christian faith. If the justification of Christ's divinity is crucial in this regard, the importance to safeguard the other pole of the hypostatic union cannot be overemphasised. Thus, we may turn to the humanity of Christ in Torrance's framework.

The Humanity of Christ

In his discussion of the humanity of Christ, Torrance appropriates the conceptual tools of *anhypostasia* and *enhypostasia* to explicate the full human nature of the person of Christ. Notwithstanding the reality that Christ has come and become man, Torrance argues that the humanity of Christ cannot be understood properly apart from the hypostatic union of God and man. To Torrance the human person of Christ is not a separate person from the Word of God, but God and man in one person of Jesus Christ. What the Word of God has achieved as fully man from birth to death in the incarnation cannot be severed from the hypostatic union; as *anhypostasia* and *enhypostasia* are inseparable if understanding of the human person of Christ is to be proper. The import is clearly underscored in the following unpublished lecture note.

[71] Ibid.

Torrance remarks that the hypostatic union is 'one long act' stretching from Bethlehem to the resurrection.[72] He says,

> The crucial factor here is the meaning of 'the human nature' of Christ. There is no doubt at all that by 'human nature' the fathers wanted to stress the actuality of Christ's union with us in our true humanity; that Christ was a man in all points like us, yet without sin. And that is right as far as it goes, for Christ was a man like ourselves, coming into and living in our mode of existence, and sharing in it to the full within a span of temporal life on earth between birth and death, and in the unity of a rational soul, and a body. But the Chalcedonian statement does not say that it was corrupt human nature taken from our fallen creation, where human nature is determined and perverted by sin, and where it is under the accusation and judgment of Holy God. But all that is essential, for the unassumed is unhealed, and it is with and within the humanity He assumed from us that the Incarnate Son is one with the Father. Therefore the hypostatic union cannot be separated from the act of assumption of our fallen human nature, from the living sanctification of our humanity, through condemnation of sin in the flesh, and through rendering from within it, perfect obedience to God. In short: if we think of Christ as assuming neutral and perfect humanity, then the doctrine of the hypostatic union may well be stated statically, but if it is our fallen humanity which He assumed, in order to heal and sanctify it, not only through the act of assumption, but through a life of obedience and a death in sacrifice, then we cannot state the doctrine of the hypostatic union statically, but must state it dynamically, in terms of the whole course of Christ's life and obedience, from His birth to His resurrection.[73]

This citation encapsulates the essence of Torrance's understanding of the human person of Jesus Christ. From the statement we may suggest that Torrance underpins three important points as the distinctiveness of Christ's humanity. First, the humanity that Christ assumes is a fallen one, as the unassumed is unhealed. Second, the humanity of Christ is dynamically related to the divinity of Christ. Third, the humanity of Christ is marked by Christ's perfect obedience to the Father. The distinctiveness becomes noticeable when Torrance defends the human person of Jesus Christ from the perspective of the resurrection. That is to say, Torrance regards the resurrection instead of the virgin birth as the proper starting point of our theological reflection in relation to the human person of Christ. Torrance says, 'It is in the resurrection that we have the unveiling of the mystery of the incarnation'.[74] To take cognisance of Torrance's remark, we would attend to his argument within the context of resurrection.

To Torrance the teaching of the New Testament makes it clear that we cannot isolate Christ's resurrection from the whole redeeming purpose of God. The event of

[72] Unpublished lecture note of Torrance, 'The Patristic Doctrine of Christ', 6. Cited in Kruger, 123-24.
[73] Ibid., 3. Cited in Kruger, 161-62.
[74] *STR*, 56.

resurrection must be considered in the light of who Jesus Christ is 'in his own Person, in his own intrinsic *logos*, and indeed in the light of his divine and human natures.' This double consideration constitutes the double duality of the humanity of Christ; the duality of hypostatic union and the duality of Christ's holiness and the human corruption. The double duality is the inevitable reality of the incarnation 'because he who lives and acts in this situation is divine and human *in one Person*, that all he does in our fallen existence has a dark side and a light side, a side of humiliation and a side of exaltation'.[75] Torrance explicates that the humiliation and exaltation of Christ are not simply two events of which one follows after another, but both occur to a great extent at the same time through the incarnate life of Christ. The coming of the Word of God into our mortal human existence is itself the exaltation of human lowly existence into union and communion with God. However, the exaltation of humanity is the obverse of the humiliation of the Son of God. Torrance says that it is in this light that 'we must think of the mutual involution of mortality and immortality, death and life, the crucifixion and the resurrection of Christ.' Therefore, 'Seen in this way the resurrection is not to be understood merely as something that follows upon the crucifixion but as the other side of it'.[76] In alluding to Hilary, Torrance underlines that it is only in the light of the resurrection that the whole mystery of faith becomes visible. The mystery of faith that Torrance underpins is closely associated with the very nature of the humanity of Christ. To Torrance the humanity of Christ is nothing less than 'living the life which Jesus Christ lived in our midst, the life of complete obedience to the Father and of perfect communion with him, the life of absolute holiness in the midst of our sin and corruption, and by living it through the whole course of our human existence from birth to death, he achieved within our creaturely being the very union between God and man that constitutes the heart of atonement, effecting man's salvation and restoration to communion with God the Father.'[77] Simply put, the humanity of Christ is about the passive and active obedience of Christ to the Father from the virgin birth to the resurrection in order to mediate the revelation and reconciliation of God to the fallen world.

The passive obedience of Christ to the Father in the context of resurrection is about the act of raising Christ from his death by the Father. The emphasis is placed upon the fact that in death the fully human person of Jesus Christ submits himself

[75] Ibid., 46. Author's italic.
[76] Ibid., 48.
[77] Ibid., 47.

unconditionally and completely to our fallen condition of utter weakness and powerlessness. 'It was real and complete death,' Torrance says, '*our* death into which he entered, and where he was so powerless that he had to be raised up by God himself.'[78] Torrance claims that '*Passive* resurrection is the counterpart to that abject passion, and corresponds to the "anhypostatic" aspect of the Incarnation and the dramatic aspect of redemption in which we are saved by the sheer act of Almighty God.' And since 'this passive obedience of Jesus was essentially a voluntary act and deliberately vicarious act in accepting the Father's will,' Torrance underlines that 'it was also a *positive* and indeed a *creative* act, and as such is the counterpart to the "enhypostatic" aspect of the Incarnation and the priestly aspect of redemption in which we are saved through the human mediation of the incarnation Son.'[79] Torrance regards the passive and active obedience of Christ as the perfect human obedience to God in fulfilling the movement of revelation and mediation. It is in Christ's passive and active submission from birth to resurrection that he reveals to the estranged world the God of creation and mediates reconciliation between them. On this note, resurrection is the creative and positive outcome of Christ's atonement.[80] It is the final affirmation of humanity and the assuming of humanity by grace into union and communion with the eternal life and love of God. The resurrection of Christ to Torrance is not merely a historical event in the life of Christ, it corresponds intimately as well to the being of Christ as fully man and fully God; as Torrance aptly says, '*what Jesus Christ is in his resurrection, he is himself.*'[81] Torrance regards the whole human life of Christ from his birth to his resurrection as the manifestation of the ultimate creative act of God among humanity in human history. Although as a complete human being Christ can be approached and comprehended in his humanity,

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[78] Ibid., 50. Author's italic. Torrance explicates that the passive obedience of Christ to the Father is in line with his whole mission. In alluding to the event of Christ's temptation soon after his baptism, Torrance says, 'Son of God though he was he declined to use his divine power in order to help himself in the hunger to which he had been reduced in vicarious fasting and penitence, for he had come to appropriate our weakness and meet and overcome all the assaults of evil in our abject condition.' In addition, Torrance says that the same temptation comes again when Jesus Christ faces his death on the cross; he refuses to escape from his vicarious mission, remains still and passive until death overtakes him. See 50-51.

[79] Ibid., 51. Author's italic.

[80] Torrance says, 'Since Jesus Christ is himself the resurrection and the Life, he is himself also the reconciliation and salvation of men. The risen Jesus Christ is the living Atonement, atonement in its glorious achievement not only in overcoming the separation of sin, guilt and death, but in consummating union and communion with God in such a way that the divine life overflows freely through him into mankind…. In this accomplishment it is evident that the atonement wrought by Christ, and Christ himself its Agent, cannot be separated from one another---he emerges as the living Atonement eternally prevailing in its advocacy before God and eternally availing in its propitiation for man with God.' *STR*, 55.

[81] *STR*, 60. Author's italic.

Torrance underpins that 'as soon as we confront him in the power of his resurrection our understanding of his humanity must be set within the fact of the *whole Christ*, as God manifest in the flesh, the Creator in our midst as human creature, come to effect the recreation of human nature from within its existence in space and time.'[82] Thus, we may comment conclusively that to Torrance the humanity of Christ is not merely about the human person of Christ living among us and with us, it is also about who Christ is in himself in relation to the Father as the ultimate revelation and mediation of God.

We have analysed, particularly from the standpoint of resurrection, Torrance's thought on the humanity of Christ. Our analysis shows that the conceptual tools of *anhypostasia* and *enhypostasia* are crucial to Torrance as they undergird his argument to a great extent. In Torrance's view the proper understanding of the human person of Christ cannot be achieved apart from the hypostatic union. As critical as the divinity of Christ, the theological task of safeguarding the humanity of Christ cannot be compromised before the hypostatic union suffers any misapprehension. The truism to Torrance is that any attempt to disturb the cornerstone will indubitably impinge on our perception of divine revelation and mediation. The crux is there is no mediator apart from the one who is fully God and fully man.

The Christological Foundation of Revelation and Mediation

If to ask who is the Jesus of Nazareth would eventually lead us to the truth that he is the Son of God, the one who bridges the gap between God and humanity because in him is found both fully God and fully man in one person, the next question about how as the Mediator he is able to fulfil the role of revelation and mediation is one that cannot be ignored. As we continue the discussion it is therefore our aim to analyse Torrance's answer to this consequential question. We would focus on Torrance's account of Christ as the fulfilment of the two-way movement of divine adaptation to humanity and human adaptation to divinity.

The fulfilment of the revelation and mediation of God according to Torrance is to be found in the person of Jesus Christ. He, the incarnate Son of God, the 'true God and true Man' who arrives out of the womb of Israel, is the 'only one Mediator

[82] Ibid. Author's italic.

between God and man' and 'the objective reality of God's revelation'.[83] Torrance underlines that by his coming 'the Word of God has become man in the midst of man's estrangement from God, committing himself to human understanding and creating communion between man and God.'[84] To Torrance the sphere of communion created in Christ although it is built upon the foundation of the covenantal relation between God and Israel,[85] it is through the union in Christ that one would find the divine initiation and human participation of revelation and mediation meet in perfection. Torrance says,

> [T]he incarnation is to be understood as the mighty act of God in which His Word has become event in our flesh in such a way that the event corresponds perfectly with His Word. Jesus Christ is the Truth of God actualised in our midst, the incarnate faithfulness of God, but He is also man keeping faith and truth with God in a perfect correspondence between His life and activity in the flesh and the Word of God. In Him there is utter consistency between God the Word revealing Himself to man and man hearing, believing, obeying, and speaking His Word. Not only is He the incarnation of the divine faithfulness but the embodiment and actualisation of man's faithfulness in answer to God's; but as such He offers to God, and is toward God in His own person and life, our human responses of faith and obedience to God. If it was in His humanity in entire solidarity with us that Jesus Christ stood in our place, and gave to God and to man, then this includes the fact that He believed for us, offering to God in His vicarious faithfulness, the perfect response of human faith which we could not offer.[86]

It is in Jesus Christ that the self-revelation of God and the perfect understanding of God's self-revelation are fully and indivisibly united. In Torrance's words, 'Jesus Christ is at once the complete revelation of God to man and the correspondence on man's part to that revelation required by it for the fulfilment of its own revealing movement.'[87] 'Jesus Christ stood forth,' Torrance says, 'not only as the controlling centre of the mediation of divine revelation in and through Israel, but as himself the personal *self*-revelation of God to man, the eternal Word of God made flesh once for all within the objective and subjective structures of human existence.'[88] Thus, Torrance underscores that in Christ the self-revelation of God achieves its end

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[83] *TRst*, 128-29.
[84] Ibid., 128.
[85] Torrance underlines that Israel as God's servant points ahead of itself to the fulfilment in the incarnation of the Son. Thus, 'the whole of prehistory of that mediation was gathered up and brought to its consummation in Christ in such a way that while transient, time-conditioned elements fell away, basic, permanent ingredients in God's revelation to Israel were critically and creatively taken up and built into the intelligible framework of God's still and final revelation to mankind.' *MC*, 22.
[86] *GR*, 154.
[87] *TRst*, 129.
[88] *MC*, 22-23. Author's italic.

of bridging between God and humanity via fulfilling the two-way movement of divine adaptation to humanity and human adaptation to God. On this note, the incarnation of Jesus Christ is of essential importance in setting the normative pattern of revelation and mediation because in the incarnation we have 'the actual Way which the divine Word has taken and takes in our human communion with it and our human knowing of it.'[89] The humanity of Christ provides us with '*the actual medium* in and through which God acts upon our thinking and speaking, giving them an inner obedience to his Word through our participation on the holy communion of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.'[90] The importance of the union and communion of divine and human action of revelation and mediation in Torrance's theological framework is clearly evidenced here. Divine initiation and human participation form the bipolarity of revelation and mediation in the incarnation. Any elevation of one at the expense of the other will disrupt the steady bipolar relation and undermine Torrance's argument. If the involvement of both the divine and human action is critical in this regard, we need to examine how in Torrance's discourse the incarnation of the Word realises divine revelation and mediation. In other words, we are asking about Torrance's justification of the claim that the incarnation is indeed the fulfilment of the two-way movement of divine and human adaptation. Fundamentally it is a question about the nature of revelation and mediation of the incarnate Son of God. We would begin first with Torrance's discourse of the God-manward movement that underpins the adaptation of divine revelation to the human mind, and subsequently the man-Godward movement that focuses on the adaptation of human obedient understanding to divine revelation.

The God-manward Movement

Torrance says that the articulation of the Word of God is not about the human talk about God. It is, however, God's own Word about himself as he has lived the life of humanity and spoken about it to humanity in the word of humanity. Without the personal God who comes and reveals himself to us as the Word, we can neither speak nor talk about God. Torrance says, 'We do not begin, then, with God alone or with man alone, nor even with God speaking on the one hand and man hearing on the

[89] *TRst*, 133-34.
[90] Ibid., 134. My italic.

other hand, but with God and man as they are posited together in a movement of creative self-communication by the Word of God.'[91] It is on this basis of togetherness and openness between God and humanity that Torrance argues for the reality of God's self-revelation in Jesus Christ. There is in the incarnate Son a profound reciprocity between the revealing of the Word in human form without subverting its divinity, and the reception of the Word without undermining its humanity. Torrance claims the nature of such reciprocity is that the responding movement of humanity towards God is itself constitutive of the revealing movement of the Word towards humanity. 'Thus,' he says, 'the Word of God communicated to man includes within itself meeting between man and God as well as meeting between God and man, for in assuming the form of human speech the Word of God spoken to man becomes at the same time word of man in answer to God.'[92] Torrance asserts that our understanding of God in this regard does not derive from any analysis of the social and religious life of Israel or the early church. It comes directly from the activity of the Word that has penetrated into our human estrangement and established a 'two-way connexion' between God and humanity. As Torrance aptly says, it is through 'the Interpreter and Mediator between man and God' that the Word has 'spoken to man from the highest and heard by him in the depths, and spoken to God out of the depths and heard by Him in the highest.'[93] If the Word of God is to be spoken and heard, the unavoidable question Torrance needs to address is the effectiveness of human communication in articulating the Word of God to humanity.

In order for any effective communication to take place within human conversation, Torrance says that one cannot do without the use of created rationality. Created rationality according to Torrance is the gift God has bestowed upon the contingent reality through the act of creation. Torrance underlines that the contingent rationality of creation is different from, but dependent on, God's transcendent rationality that essentially gives it the inner law. The adaptation of God to humanity is the movement of God 'into this created rationality (or *logos*) that the Word (or *Logos*) of God enters, assimilating it to Himself in the incarnation, in order to become Word to man through the medium of human word'.[94] But, Torrance avers, when Jesus Christ comes into this contingent world the challenge he faces is not only about

[91] *GR*, 137.
[92] Ibid., 138.
[93] Ibid.
[94] Ibid., 139-40. Author's italic.

the appropriation of the created rationality to articulate the Word of God. The main problem lies in the inconsistency of human speech and act in communication. The point Torrance attempts to make is that while in God the Word, Person and Act are one and undivided, they all fall apart in humanity. Torrance says,

> With us word is different from act. We speak, but have to exert additional power in order to fulfil what we say in deeds. We act, but our acts are not personal in themselves. Our speech and our actions do not coincide in the unity and power of our person. Act and person, word and person, word and act are all separate---they are not unrelated, but their relationship is conditioned by physical existence and is refracted and strung out in time.

However, with God the situation is just the reverse. He continues,

> [God] encounters us as One whose Word and whose Act belong to the self-subsistence of His Person. What He speaks takes place of itself, for it is filled with the power of His Person, the power by which He is what He is and by which He lives His own personal Life in absolute self-sufficiency and freedom. His power to act is not other than the power of His Person or the power of His Word. He is in Person identical with His Word, and His Word is itself His Act.[95]

Torrance claims that when the Word of God condescends to the situation of humanity in order to mediate the revelation of God, he encounters a division of word, person and act. Yet the brokenness of human condition and its inability to utter an appropriate word by itself about God could not deter the movement of God to humanity. Torrance says,

> He comes as genuine man, physically conditioned in space and time, in whom willing, speaking and doing are different, who thinks and forms judgments, whose acts follow upon his decisions, whose words are in addition to his person and whose works are in addition to his words, but who in none of these things is self-sufficient, for as man he lives and thinks and speaks and acts only in inseparable relation to his fellow-men and in dependence upon the physical creation.[96]

For the purpose of mediating God's revelation, the Word comes and becomes a physical event in space and time to share in full the limitations of the fallen creation. However, by appropriating the finite human form within the frailty of earthy life, the Word does not cease to be God but in doing so is able to speak God to us. 'The unity in God,' Torrance says, 'between Person, Word and Act has been

[95] Ibid., 141.
[96] Ibid., 142.

made to overlap and gather within its embrace the differences between person, word and act in the creature, so that they are allowed to mediate God's Word to man in time through a oneness between Christ's human utterance about God and God's self-utterance to man.'[97] In other words, 'in revelation we have the divine assumption of our human word into union with God's own Word, effecting it as the human expression of the divine Word, and giving it, as such, real and full place as human word in obedience to the divine.'[98] The brokenness of human communication is surmounted through the 'union between uncreated and created rationality and between uncreated and created word' so that human articulation is able to serve the Word in mediating God's revelation.[99] The human word is fully established as the 'appropriate tool' through the regenerating and humanising work of the incarnate Word. Human expressions in the form of word, person and act then become the divinely ordained 'earthen vessels' used by God to speak about God. On this note, the movement of God's adaptation to humanity is fulfilled in the incarnation of the Word. And it is at this point that one locates as well the movement of humanity towards God; the adaptation of human understanding to divine revelation.

The Man-Godward Movement

One thing unmistakably clear about the incarnation to Torrance is that there is an essential bi-polarity in God's revelation to humanity. He says that 'God is God and not man, and yet in the incarnation God has become man… as truly divine and truly human, to become the final Word of God to man and the one Mediator between God and man.'[100] That is to say, 'the incarnation shows us that God reveals himself (God) in terms of what is not-God (man), that revelation is given to us only in terms of what it is not, in the humanity of those whom it is given, so that from first to last we have to reckon with an essential bi-polarity.'[101] The implication of this bipolarity of revelation is that we cannot get behind the 'what he is not to the what he is in himself, any more than we can get behind the back of Jesus to the eternal Son of God'. Torrance therefore claims that 'Revelation is not only act from the side of God but

[97] Ibid.
[98] Ibid., 131.
[99] *RET*, 91. In other words, the hypostatic union between God and man in Jesus Christ includes a union between the Word of God and the word of humanity.
[100] *TRst*, 130.
[101] Ibid.

also from the side of man'. He asserts that the act from the side of humanity towards God takes place fully and solely 'in the form of the Humanity of Christ which is of the very substance of revelation.'[102] Torrance is adamant that humanity alone has no understanding of God's revelation. We cannot come to God and talk about him apart from the Word made flesh. To Torrance the event of incarnation evidences the fact that we know nothing of the Word of God except that which is revealed to us by the Word in the incarnate Christ. Torrance says,

> Revelation involves, then, the freedom of God to be present to man and to open up man for God and to realise from the side of man his understanding of revelation and his obedient respond to it, to effect in man real meeting with God in revelation and to give him capacity for revelation.[103]

Torrance underlines that this capacity for revelation is not to be judged by humanity. The realisation of it depends fully on God who by the activity of the Spirit enables humanity to receive it. It is the Spirit who 'effects from the side of man and issuing out of man's life a really human understanding of revelation and a really human obedience to it.'[104] It is noteworthy that in Torrance's thought the element of human obedience is intimately related to the movement of humanity towards God in revelation. Revelation to Torrance is not merely an act of God in humanity, but the act of perfect human obedience achieved by the Word of God in and from humanity. Because the act of perfect obedience is unattainable by fallen humanity, it has to be achieved by God. Torrance says, 'Incarnation was wholly act of God but it was no less true human life truly lived in our actual humanity.' 'Jesus Christ is not only Word of God to man, but Believer'; in 'his obedient life he yielded the perfect response of man to the divine revelation which is that revelation in human form.'[105] The act of perfect obedience of the incarnate Word is integral and essential in the man-Godward movement because it achieves for humanity what humanity could not do if being left alone. Torrance pointedly says, 'We are not concerned simply with a divine revelation which demands from us all a human response, but with a divine

[102] Ibid. Torrance claims that as the substance of revelation, Jesus is identical with the Truth of God. He says, 'Jesus Christ is the Truth, Truth as God is Truth, and that same Truth in the form of Man, Truth answering itself, Truth assuming its own true form from the side of man, but the Truth for man and in man, and therefore the Truth of man.'
[103] Ibid., 131.
[104] Ibid.
[105] Ibid. Torrance says that the doctrine of *anhypostasia* and *enhypostasia* could be applied to our understanding of revelation. He says that in revelation we are not concerned simply with *anhypostasia* revelation and with human response, but with *anhypostasia* revelation and true human response *enhypostatic* in the Word of revelation.

revelation which already includes a true and appropriate and fully human response as part of its achievement for us and to us and in us.'[106]

One important aspect of Torrance's thought with regard to the movement of humanity towards God is about the mediation of reconciliation. Torrance says that divine revelation and reconciliation are inseparable, 'as revelation does not achieve its end as revelation apart from reconciliation, for only through reconciliation can revelation complete its own movement within man, bringing out of our humanity the obedient reception of revelation which is an essential part of its very substance.'[107] Revelation thus necessarily 'involves a communion through the reconciliation of the estranged parties, a reconciliation of the will and mind of man with the will and mind of God.'[108] In this regard, we may comment that the reconciliation of will and mind as mentioned here in someway reverberates our earlier discussion of the embracement of human brokenness by the unity of God's Person, Word and Act. They both pivot on the redemption and restoration of humanity in Christ. Torrance aptly says,

> By being completely and unreservedly God's Word incarnate in the fullness of grace and truth He was able from within our estranged and impaired existence to deliver man from subjection to futility and negation, recreate his relation to God, realise perfect humanity on the earth, and to offer in and through Himself man's true response in person, word and act to God the Creator.[109]

The key concept here is the reconciliation of humanity to God through the revelation of the incarnate Word involves a transformation of human existence and being in such a way that there gives rise to a true and appropriate response of obedience from the side of humanity to God. The outcome is the birth of a new humanity, or a new human existence, in Christ. In this new creation the adaptation of

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[106] Ibid., 132. With regard to the normative pattern of revelation in Jesus Christ, Torrance says that 'Jesus Christ the Word made flesh is not only the object of our theological knowledge but he is the Lord of it: as the Word becomes man, he is the criterion of our knowing and as the man assumed into oneness with the Word he is the pattern of our knowing. He is not only the content of our theological knowledge but he provides for us in himself the way which our theological knowledge must take.' According to Torrance, all of that is said in the light that 'I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No man cometh unto the Father but by me.'

[107] Ibid., 132-33.

[108] Ibid., 133. Torrance claims that the reconciliation of human will and mind with divine will and mind in the incarnation has implication on dogmatic theology. He says that in the reconciliation of the incarnate Word we have a divine-human Word that one cannot be separated from the other. It is of this reason Torrance says that 'the Humanity of Jesus Christ is of inescapable and essential importance for dogmatic procedure and method: for it sets before us the actual Way which the divine Word has taken and takes in our human communion with it and our human knowing of it.'

[109] *GR*, 143.

human understanding to divine revelation is realised through 'his distinctive response toward God in the fullness of his creaturely freedom and integrity.'[110] The actualisation of the true response of humanity to God is part of the fulfilment of divine revelation, since the movement of humanity towards God is constitutive of the bipolar relation of revelation. Thus, through the participation of divine revelation, the renewed humanity is able to mediate and articulate the revelation of God. However, having said that, we need to underscore that, to Torrance, the mediatory action of the renewed humanity is one wholly and solely dependent upon the vicarious act of Christ through the work of the Spirit. That is the purpose of the coming of the Word in flesh, to set the normative pattern of the union and communion of divine and human action of revelation and mediation. No one comes to the Father except through the Son, and no one comes to the Son except by the Spirit. Thus Torrance says conclusively,

> Such was the life and mission of Jesus Christ the Word made flesh who mediated between God and man, reconciling them in and through Himself, and so established a correlation and correspondence between God's self-giving and man's receiving within which alone God's revelation could be actualised in man and a true faithful response could be yielded by man to God.[111]

We have thus far analysed Torrance's thought on the importance of Jesus Christ as God's revelation and mediation. We argue that Christ to Torrance is the sole Mediator between God and humanity, and it is only in and through him that one could locate the complete reality of God's giving and man's receiving of revelation. In relation to our first section on Israel as the womb of the incarnation, certain correlation may be drawn between the mediation of Israel and the mediation of Christ. In alluding to Torrance's analogy, we may say that Christ is the 'ultimate and perfect tool' that God has forged out of Israel. The two-way movement of Israel's covenantal relation with God is culminated in Christ's fulfilment of the God-manward movement and man-Godward movement of revelation and mediation. It is clear from our discussion that the activity of the Word of God to Torrance does not begin only in the moment of incarnation. The normative pattern of revelation and mediation that is initiated by the Word of God in Israel finds its ultimate completion in Jesus Christ, the one from Nazareth who is both fully God and fully man in one

[110] Ibid.
[111] Ibid.,144-45.

person. On this note, it is evident that the argument of Torrance necessarily hinges on the hypostatic union of Christ. Any attempt to disturb the cornerstone, that inner constitutive divine and human action, would inevitably cause the understanding of Christ as the sole Mediator between God and humanity and all that it entails to disintegrate and collapse.

One more issue awaits our attention before we end the section. It concerns the human person of Jesus as the medium of God's revelation and mediation. We would like to ask Torrance that since Jesus in his short span of life on earth has fulfilled the purpose and accomplished the task of mediating God's revelation, would Jesus as the medium of revelation then be effaced from the economy of God? This question is not unlike the one we post earlier in relation to Israel as the medium of God's revelation. The answer of Torrance here is as unequivocal. He says,

> It is thus in the form of sheer humanity in all its lowliness, weakness and darkness that God's Word has reached us and made provision for free and adequate response on our part, *but in such a way that far from being a dispensable medium to be discarded as soon as the target is reached*, the humanity of the Word, God's condescension to be one with us in our humanity, remains the proof that in His own eternal Being He is not closed to us, and the manifestation of His freedom to unveil Himself to man and share with him His own divine Life.[112]

From the citation it is manifest that Torrance is consistent in his understanding of the validity of the media of divine revelation. Like Israel, the human person Jesus is not a dispensable medium. Thus, it may be said that any move by Torrance to discard or efface the medium soon after it has served its mediatorial function will go against the grain of his argument. The media of divine revelation indeed play a significant role in Torrance's scheme that could not be swept away lightly.

Conclusion

This chapter has underpinned our claim that God's self-disclosure in Torrance's theology takes the form of mediation instead of immediacy. Our analysis suggests that as the Mediator, Jesus Christ to Torrance is the culmination and fulfilment of God's revelation and mediation. The election of Israel as the mediation of God is an integral part of Christ's revelation and mediation, the revelatory movement of the

[112] *GR*, 138-39. My italic.

pre-history of the incarnation.[113] The former is the womb of the latter, and the latter is the recapitulation of the former.

Torrance's discourse of the two-way movement of Christ brings to light the significance of the union and communion of divine and human action in revelation and mediation. The crux is revelation in Torrance's scheme is far from being any type of divine monologue. Revelation to Torrance involves God and humanity, the subject and the object, the giver and the receiver, the speaker and the hearer. It is a form of 'relational-revelation', if we may coin a term for it. It explains, as we our argument shows, Torrance's endeavour to approach the issue from the covenantal relation between God and Israel. In the case of the incarnate Son, within the Mediator of the new covenant who bridges perfectly between God and humanity, there are the perfect subject-object relation, the perfect giver-receiver relation, and the perfect speaker-hearer relation.

Our discussion also suggests that Torrance indeed possesses a rich understanding of multiple mediations. His exposition of the painstaking covenantal relation between God and Israel in forging the 'right tools' evidences the point without which God's self-revelation in human history would be impaired. Approaching Christ in this light, the incarnate Word of God is to Torrance the *actual medium*, or the 'perfect tool', because in him we have the complete unity of Person, Word and Act in revelation and mediation.

An aspect of Torrance's thought that has also contributed to the richness regards the embodiment of revelation in the media. We highlight that Torrance uses the Old Testament texts as example to support his argument. This leads us to the question about the term of participation. The question of which we have put to Torrance twice is whether the medium would efface itself soon after it has served its function. The answer of Torrance, as our discussions clearly indicate, is unambiguous. If Torrance is consistent in claiming that the medium of Israel and the medium of the human person of Jesus would not efface themselves after they have served their mediatory function, there is no cause to make the medium of scripture the exception; here involves the second claim of the thesis that would be addressed in full in chapter five and six. Thus, we may conclude our argument by stating that God-reveals-Godself is essentially about mediation and not immediacy in Torrance's theological scheme. As Christ is the sole Mediator of God, it is in and through him

[113] *CAC1*, 288. See *MC*, 10-11.

that the human and earthly media by the work of the Spirit continue to mediate divine revelation to humanity in the course of human history.

Chapter Two

Dualism: The Eclipse of Divine Revelation

In the preceding chapter we discuss Torrance's christological formulation of revelation and mediation. Our discussion shows that in Torrance's theological scheme Christ is the sole Mediator of God and it is in and through him that divine self-disclosure is fully revealed and mediated. Because Jesus is who he is in himself as the Son of God, he completes the revelatory and mediatory works that God has initiated painstakingly with Israel in the course of human history. Being fully man and fully God in one person, Christ fulfils and establishes the normative pattern of the union and communion of divine and human action of revelation and mediation. Torrance is adamant that the christological foundation of revelation and mediation has to be guarded unreservedly against any distortion, as our apprehension of divine self-disclosure and the integrity of the Gospel stand or fall by it. Approaching Torrance in this light one could appreciate the reason of his relentless criticism of dualism. On this note, it is the purpose of this chapter to argue that Torrance's conviction to safeguard the revelation and mediation of Christ is best evidenced in his persistent attacks on dualism.

However, what is dualism? Or, to be precise, what is dualism to Torrance? This question in the first instance may appear to some as superfluous. Is not it conspicuous? Dualism is so much an important theme that Torrance has addressed immensely throughout his corpus; the compass is vast as he covers almost the whole spectrum of Western thought spanning from ancient Platonic dualism to modern Newtonian dualism. There is some justification to the comment that one of the main aims of Torrance's theological reconstruction is to bring to light and correct the ramifications of dualism that are so much embedded in current Western theology.[1] Notwithstanding dualism commands such a centre-stage in Torrance's theological enterprise, to one's surprise little effort has been put in to define the term. The meaning of dualism and its implications within the context of Torrance's theological works particularly in relation to divine revelation and mediation remain to be explored. To attend to these issues is inseparable to achieving the purpose of the

[1] John D. Morrison, *Knowledge of the Self-Revealing God in the Thought of Thomas Forsyth Torrance* (1997), 28-30.

chapter. Thus, to set the stage, we would first briefly touch on from the standpoint of Torrance the historical thrust of dualism and his short definition of the term. We then attempt to delimit Torrance's understanding of dualism and its implications within the theological context of his criticism of Arian dualism and Newtonian dualism. We hope, in the course of discussion, to argue in one way or another that the intent of Torrance's criticism is to safeguard the integrity of God's revelation and mediation in Jesus Christ.

Historical Thrust and Meaning of Dualism

The purpose of this section is twofold. First, it is to set the stage by sketching, in a brief fashion, the historical terrain of dualism from the perspective of Torrance. Our aim is to show that what Torrance has gathered under the rubric of dualism is indeed vast and complex. Second, we attempt to demonstrate that Torrance's definition of dualism is inadequate in supporting his theological endeavour, and the appropriate way to go is to delimit the term within the context of his theological discourse.

The main concern of Torrance about dualism is that regardless of the form it takes, it has the undesirable outcome of distorting the revelation and mediation of God in Jesus Christ. This concern is conspicuous in Torrance's criticism of some modern theology for distorting the revelation of God by gravitating the understanding of it from the centrality of God to humanity. Torrance calls this shift of apprehension the 'eclipse of God', a concept he borrows from Martin Buber who uses it to underline the failure of 'new theology' in distinguishing God from human subjectivity.[2] Torrance says, 'An eclipse of the sun, Buber reminds us, is something that occurs between the sun and our eyes, not in the sun itself. So it is with the eclipse of God that is now taking place, for something has stepped between our existence and God to shut off the light of heaven, but that something is in fact *ourselves*, our own bloated selfhood.'[3] The identification of 'ourselves' as the primary cause of eclipsing God is indicative of the wrong starting point of

[2] *GR*, 29.

[3] Ibid. Author's italic. In congruence with Buber, Torrance claims that the theological impairment of 'new theology' with regard to the knowledge of God is about the 'boasted selfhood' being in the way between human existence and God. The 'new theology' that Torrance generally refers to is the theology of John Robinson, Harry Williams, Paul Van Buren and Werner Pelz. To certain degree, that includes the 'God is dead' theology of Thomas Altizer and William Hamilton as well.

apprehension if divine revelation is to be properly understood. To Torrance if our understanding of God's self-disclosure does not repose upon and is not controlled by the reality of God in Jesus Christ, but something that is thought out or devised out of our *a priori* conceptualisation, distortion is inevitable. Torrance remarks that this form of modern dualism takes its definitive shape especially through the thought of Descartes, Newton and Kant.[4] To Torrance the separation of the mental and material realms has led Descartes to the epistemological dualism of separating the subject from the object, locating truth in the pure reason of the knowing subjectivity. In Torrance's view, Newton's dualism that separates the absolute and relative time and space has given rise to the receptacle notion of God rendering the revelation of the incarnate Word impossible. Kant's imposition of subjective conceptual order to objective reality, according to Torrance, has created a hiatus between the phenomenal and noumenal world. By limiting the qualification of scientific knowledge to observable phenomena, Kant dichotomises faith from science and deprives faith of its objective and ontological reference. To Torrance the dualisms of Descartes, Newton and Kant have adverse impact on successive thinkers such as Schleiermarcher, Ritschl and later, Bultmann.[5] However, Torrance underscores that the problem of dualism in fact goes back through the centuries to the foundations of classical Western culture in Greece. Torrance says, 'I refer here to the irreducible dualisms in the philosophy and cosmology of Plato and Aristotle, which threw into sharp contrast rectilinear motion in terrestrial mechanics and circular motion in celestial mechanics, which were related to the dualisms between the empirical and the theoretical, the physical and the spiritual, the temporal and the eternal, the mortal and the divine.'[6]

As indicated, the terrain Torrance covers is an enormous one that spans almost the whole history of Western thought. According to Torrance three main periods of change could be highlighted to demarcate the major cosmological

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[4] *GGT*, 21.

[5] With regard to Bultmann, Torrance considers him among the modern theologians the one who is deeply caught in dualism. Torrance says that the dualistic mindset of Bultmann has kept God outside of this world of objective reality and rendered the revelation and mediation of Christ in human history impossible. The story of Incarnation and Resurrection, and other miraculous stories as recorded in scripture are being demythologised and deprived of their ontological relevance 'on the ground that they would rupture the continuum of historical happenings through the alleged inference of supernatural, transcendent power.' Torrance says, 'The effect of all this was to make Bultmann offer an existential reinterpretation of the Christian message, in which it would be made safe from the critical investigation of science---or, otherwise expressed, in which the advances of scientific understanding of the universe would be quite irrelevant for Christian existence and faith.' See *GGT*, 18-19.

[6] Ibid., 21.

mutations. The first change takes place between the second and fourth centuries when the primitive cosmology of the Greeks mutates into the Ptolemaic cosmology; to Torrance it is the period when the dominant dualisms of Plato and Aristotle congeal into the comprehensive dualism of Ptolemaic cosmology. Torrance says, '[A] new astronomical system was elaborated in conjunction with a theory of radical disjunction between the heavenly and the earthly realms. A vast shift in outlook took place to which there corresponded an equally great shift in meaning and in the reference of statements. In such a period of profound mutation the really basic epistemological questions come to the surface and decisions have to be taken.'[7] Indeed critical decisions have to be made especially within the church with regard to the dualisms of Gnosticism and Arianism. The second mutation takes place from the fourteenth century and reaches its zenith in the seventeenth century. The period is marked by the change from Ptolemaic cosmology to Newtonian cosmology. Torrance says that it is the time when 'the new era ushered in with Galileo continued to be characterised by an inveterate dualism that was given its philosophical expression by Descartes and Locke and its scientific expression by Isaac Newton---who built into his great system of the world the massive dualism between absolute mathematical time and space and relative apparent time and space that was to become paradigmatic for all modern science and cosmology up to Einstein.'[8] This leads us to the third change that, according to Torrance, occurs in the twentieth century, when Newtonian cosmology gradually makes way to Einsteinian cosmology. Torrance regards this as the 'great mutation' because the impact of relativity and quantum physics has caused a change from the old dualistic perspective of the world to the new understanding of the rational unity of the universe.[9] However, it is within this context of profound transition that Torrance criticises modern theology in general for failing to appreciate its significance.[10] The main problem to Torrance lies precisely in the fact that the entrenched dualistic mindset is still having a strong grip over its subjects, as shown in the phenomenon of 'the eclipse of God'. Nevertheless, Torrance is not without hope. He believes that the modern return to realism in scientific advancement will be the beacon of light to theology. In other words, he believes that theology will go back to the realist approach of grounding our

[7] *GR*, 29-30.
[8] *GGT*, 23.
[9] *GR*, 29-31. See *GGT*, 21-27.
[10] *GGT*, 17.

understanding of divine revelation in God as he has revealed to us in Jesus Christ. Torrance says, 'This is the soil in which the "new theology" has sprung up, but it must be regarded as a symptom of change and confusion that will pass, for we shall find our faith more adequately grounded and our apprehension of God in Christ more clear and rational than before.'[11]

The panoramic historical sketch suggests that dualism is a complex term to Torrance. It may be said that the term is a conceptual tool for Torrance to articulate certain bipolar division ranging widely from theology to philosophy and to cosmology. Torrance's general use of it is not without difficulty.[12] The main problem lies in the fact that Torrance has often failed to account accurately the nuance of the term in the light of its complexity and diversity, especially when it is used in association with the works of Plato, Aristotle, Descartes, Kant or Newton. However, to be fair to Torrance, it has to be pointed out that the term is one that cannot be defined easily. R. M. McInerny remarks that 'although it is possible to reduce the uses of the term dualism to a finite number of meanings, the term remains vague and of wide carrying application.'[13] The difficulty is apparent particularly when it is associated with compound concepts such as Platonism, Aristotelianism, Cartesianism, or Kantianism. Thus, it is not surprising to know at times one may say that 'it is easier to find different usages of the term while still finding the concept itself hard to explain.'[14] In *Belief in Science and in Christian Life*, under the section 'Notes on Terms and Concepts', Torrance briefly defines dualism. He says,

> *dualism*---the division of reality into two incompatible spheres of being. This may be cosmological, in the dualism between a sensible and an intelligible realm, neither of which can be reduced to the other. It may also be epistemological, in which the empirical and theoretical aspects of reality are separated from one another, thereby giving rise to the extremes of empiricism and rationalism. It may also be anthropological, in a dualism between the mind and the body, in which a physical and mental substance are conceived as either interacting with one another or as

[11] *GR*, 31.
[12] Luoma comments that Torrance's definition of dualism is too general and imprecise. He says that Torrance seems to presume that his reader is well aware of what he is talking about concerning the meaning of the term. Luoma is not alone in this regard. Muller pinpoints the same problem by saying that Torrance's ambiguous use of dualism has led to misleading outcomes. In alluding to Muller's criticism of Torrance, Luoma remarks that Torrance's problem has caused Muller to claim that Torrance is actually a dualist because he draws distinction between God and the creation. See Tapio Luoma, *Incarnation and Physics: Natural Science in the Theology of Thomas F. Torrance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 86, 192. And Richard A. Muller, 'The Barth Legacy: New Athanasius or Origen Redivivus? A Response to T. F. Torrance,' *Thomist*, no. 54 (1990): 673-704.
[13] R. M. McInerny, 'Dualism' in *New Catholic Encyclopaedia* vol. 4 (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967), 1073-75. Cited in Luoma, 82.
[14] Luoma, 82.

> running a parallel course without affecting one another. In the Judaeo-Christian tradition man is regarded as an integrated whole, who is soul of his body and body of his soul.[15]

Few points could be noted. The explanation of dualism as 'the division of reality' indicates that the reality to Torrance is inherently one even thought it is being perceived as 'two incompatible spheres of being.'[16] With regard to the 'two incompatible spheres of being', Torrance does not elaborate adequately the nature of incompatibility. From the definition, however, we may say that in relation to cosmological dualism, the relation between the two spheres is that of irreducibility. In relation to epistemological dualism, it is one of disassociation. And, to anthropological dualism, it is either interaction or parallelism. Our preceding sketch shows that out of the three dualisms identified, cosmological and epistemological dualisms are the central ones Torrance consistently deals with in his theological discourse.

One observation regards the nature of formulating the definition deserves some attention. Tapio Luoma indicates that the definition is taken from a book 'with a greater interest in theological implications for science and vice versa than in theology itself.'[17] In other words, the definition may serve well as 'a secondary definition with a special interest in modifying theological intentions to a more readable form for scientifically orientated readers.'[18] It is insufficient to represent fully Torrance's understanding of dualism from a theological standpoint. In this regard, what is needed is a theological understanding of the term. While some dictionaries are helpful in offering definitions such as 'Any view that is constituted by two basic or fundamental principles such as spirit and matter or good and evil',[19] or 'The philosophical system which presupposes two original and independent principles in the universe, one good and the other evil',[20] they are too general for our cause. The appropriate way to go, as we suggest, is to approach the term from within Torrance's theological discourse that has given rise to it. By doing that we hope

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[15] *BSCL*, 136.
[16] Luoma comments that the 'two incompatible spheres of being' means that the separation is not an inherent feature of reality itself but a consequence of a mental attitude in which the reality is seen through a framework of two spheres. See Luoma, 86.
[17] Luoma, 87.
[18] Ibid.
[19] Donald K. McKim, *Westminster Dictionary of Theological Terms* (London: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996), 83.
[20] Alan Cairns, *Dictionary of Theological Terms* (Greenville: Ambassador Emerald International, 2002), 140.

Torrance's understanding of dualism and its implications may become clear, and his conviction to safeguard the revelation and mediation of God in Jesus Christ through his persistent criticism would be apparent as well. As indicated, dualism is a big topic in Torrance's works. We would, among all his discussions, focus mainly on his criticisms of Arian dualism and Newtonian dualism. Arian dualism is crucial to our discussion because through criticising it, Torrance addresses the problem of God's revelation in Christ. Newtonian dualism is selected because to Torrance it shares similar detriment of Arianism.

Arian Dualism

In this section we attempt to delimit the meaning and implications of dualism by analysing Torrance's criticism of Arianism. Through the analysis we would argue explicitly and implicitly that the intent of Torrance's criticism is to safeguard the revelation and mediation of God in Jesus Christ. It should be noted from the outset that Torrance avoids making a clear distinction between the teachings of Arius and his supporters. To Torrance they are both taken indiscriminately as one representing Arianism and the problems of Arian dualism. Whether one would agree with Torrance's generalisation is an issue outside the limited compass of the current section. Nevertheless, it does serve the purpose of allowing Torrance to focus on the issues that matter to him most.

In an important statement Torrance says, 'Athanasius' full doctrine of the Son is developed over against the radical dualism between the *cosmos noetos* and the *cosmos aisthetos*, and between God and the creation, that lay at the heart of Arian theology.'[21] Torrance claims that the basis of Arius' teachings essentially originated from a particular disjunctive view of dividing the cosmos into the intelligible world and the sensible world, and thus separating God from the creation. That is to say, to Torrance, the root of Arianism does not come from the Judaeo-Christian mode of unitary thinking that Athanasius would regard to have scripture as its foundation, but from the Hellenistic framework that builds primarily upon Platonic dualism.[22]

[21] *TRci*, 224.

[22] According to Torrance the main challenge the early church faces is the cultural clash against the Graeco-Roman civilisation that is fundamentally dualistic in religion, philosophy and science. The dominant philosophical teachings of Plato and Aristotle according to Torrance govern the mindset that

Torrance's juxtaposition of Athanasius and Arian in the statement is indicative of what he perceives as the irreconcilable conflict between the two modes of thinking. Torrance maintains that Arian dualism has provided the theological backdrop for Athanasius and the Nicene Fathers to develop the orthodox doctrine of the Son. The conflict between the two is clearly shown in the sustained struggle of the church with Arianism that eventually leads to the formation of the Creed of the Council of Nicaea in 325. A struggle that would not only bring to light the theological debates about the nature of Christ and his relation with the Father, it also enables Torrance to recognise the entrenched dualism as the main hindrance to a proper theological understanding of God's self-revelation in Jesus Christ. As indicated by Torrance, the theology of Arius is essentially dualistic because it is built philosophically upon the foundation of Platonic dualism that postulates the radical division between the *cosmos noetos* and the *cosmos aisthetos*. The separation between God and the creation is the inevitable outcome of perceiving the single *cosmos* into two irreconcilable spheres. If this is the heart of Arian dualism, we could say that it has both epistemological and cosmological implications in terms of how we understand God and his revelation in Christ. And in both cases they have the same undesirable results to Torrance.

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leads to the separation of the empirical from the theoretical, the temporal from the eternal, and the material from the spiritual. The challenge becomes acute when certain quarter of Judaism that is influenced by the Hellenistic culture begins to postulate a transcendentalist notion of God which leads to the accentuation of the gulf between God and the creation. For example, the influential teaching of Philo of Alexandria that advocates the need of an intermediate realm of ideas to correlate the vast distinction between the Creator and the creatures has directly and indirectly underscored the dualistic mindset of the time. The transcendentalist notion advocates that God is so utterly otherworldly that he is virtually ineffable and unknowable in his own being. It rules out the possibility of knowing God as he is in himself. In other words, God could not be known other than his external relation to the creation. To Torrance, epistemologically, knowledge of God on this ground contradicts the self-revelation of God in Jesus Christ because it is based on a detached and abstract way through a contrast between the Creator and the creatures. According to Torrance the 'yawning chasm' that is the outcome of the disparate separation of God from the world is also evident in the mythological system of Gnosticism. The Gnostic sects, generally considered to be heretic by the Church Fathers, such as Irenaeus, hold the view of dualistic realm which Torrance regards to be 'a suprasensual, utterly transcendental realm of eternal and divine realities and a very earthly, material realm of transient and murky existence.' The chasm is so wide that the Gnostics believe any interaction between the desperate realms is only made possible by the mediation of mythological hierarchies of sub-divine agents. The influence of Gnostic mythology is seen within the church. What is at stake to Torrance is the mythologisation of the act of God in biblical history among the semi-Christian Gnostics indeed renders the impossibility of a real physical incarnation and resurrection of Christ. The mythologisation and its 'high-flown philosophical' interpretation of scripture which Torrance reckons as negative products of radical dualism threaten the understanding and the knowledge of God's revelation. In this regard, Platonic dualism in Torrance's view is the main problem faced by the early church both externally and internally. See *TF*, 47-48, 66 and *GGT*, 38. For fuller reading of Gnosticism, see G. Vesey and P. Foulkes, *Dictionary of Philosophy* (Glasgow: Harper Collins Publishers, 1990), 127; Denis Minns, *Irenaeus*, (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1994), 15; Terrance L. Tiessen, 'Gnosticism as Heresy: The Response of Irenaeus,' *Hellenization Revisited*, ed. by Wendy E. Hellenman (Lanham: University Press of America, 1990), 340; Pheme Perkins, *The Gnostic Dialogue: The Early Church and the Crisis of Gnosticism* (New York: Paulist Press, 1980), 167.

We would first focus on the epistemological implication of Arian dualism. Torrance underlines that the radical separation of the intelligible and sensible world as advocated by Arians has the consequence of making true knowledge of divine revelation in Christ inconceivable in two ways. First, if Arians were right to claim that God is inherently separated from the creation, it would mean that God has no personal relation with the world. If God is voided of any possible interaction with the world, then, according to Torrance, divine self-disclosure would be unthinkable and 'theology in the strict and proper sense is impossible.'[23] Torrance maintains that the outcome of dualism could only be mythology. He says, 'Mythology is possible only on the axiomatic assumption of a radical dichotomy or *chorismos* between God and the world, for then our attempts to think of God are only *epinoetic* acts grounded in our own this worldly self-knowledge and projected into God across the great gulf between us.'[24] To Torrance the projection of human thought and imagination into God is theologically unscientific because it lacks verification and correction from the revelation of God.[25] The situation however would be very different if the gulf between God and the creation is removed. Torrance says, '*dianoetic* way of thinking is possible, in which our thoughts, while remaining fully human, nevertheless reposes upon the reality of God himself and are determined by his hypostatic self-

[23] *TRci*, 240. To Torrance the economy of God in the world is the basis of our theological knowledge. He says, 'Theology must moves from discerning the orderly structure of the saving *oikonomia* to the inner relations of God in himself.' The importance of the correspondence between *theologia* and *oikonomia* cannot be undermined. Essentially to Torrance what dualism has done is to impair the very theological structure and render *theologia* impossible. On this note, LaCugna is in agreement with Torrance. LaCugna comments that Arius' views are most vulnerable in his interpretation of the relationship between the *oikonomia* in Christ and *theologia*. She says, 'Arius affirmed that even though God cannot suffer, still God suffers in the person of the Logos, though it is a lesser God who suffers. In this respect Arius disjoined *theologia* from *oikonomia*.' However, LaCugna continues, 'The pro-Nicenes argued in the opposite fashion…. In this respect they operated out of a correlation between *oikonomia* and *theologia*. At the same time, they could not countenance the idea of God suffering, and since for them Christ was not a lesser God but true God, the Logos could not be said to suffer. In this respect the pro-Nicene solution to the Arian problem also created a gap between *oikonomia* and *theologia*.' LaCugna argues that it is the schism between *oikonomia* and *theologia* that eventually leads to the downfall of the doctrine of Trinity. LaCugna's emphasis of the correspondence between *oikonomia* and *theologia* is in congruence with Torrance's assertion. See *TRci*, 250. Also Catherine Mowry LaCugna, *God for Us: The Trinity and Christian Life* (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1993), 35.

[24] Ibid.

[25] It has been the main aim of Torrance's theological science to safeguard the integrity of the revelation of the Gospel. Torrance says that his intention is 'to clarify the processes of scientific activity in theology, to throw human thinking of God back upon Him as its direct and proper Object and thus to serve the self-scrutiny of theology as a pure science.' Kruger aptly remarks that Torrance 'is concerned with the purity of Christian theology.' See *TS*, xvii. Also C.B. Kruger, 'Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation: Participation in the Self-Knowledge of God: The Nature and Means of Our Knowledge of God in the Theology of T.F. Torrance' (The University of Aberdeen, 1990), 12.

communication to us in this world.'[26] Second, by insisting on the dualism between God and the world, Arians are rejecting the possibility of the incarnation of God. Because God to Arians is transcendental and ineffable, God could not be condescended in Jesus Christ. If God could not be incarnated in Jesus Christ, the truth of God's revelation and mediation in Jesus Christ is rendered null. That is why according to Torrance the radical dualism between the *cosmos noetos* and the *cosmos aisthetos* inevitably points to the contentious issues of the nature of Christ and his relation with the Father as the Son. The matter is both christological and epistemological. Torrance underlines that Athanasius, in order to reprimand the dualism of Arians and to defend the orthodoxy of the church, insists on the deity of the Son and his oneness with the Father.[27] Torrance says, 'Jesus Christ himself, the Word made flesh, is here not only the Life and the Truth but also the one *Way* to the Father: "through Jesus Christ we have access to the Father in one Spirit." That is why the relation between the Incarnate Son and the Father constitutes the epistemological heart of Athanasius' theology'.[28] In responding to the dualistic separation of God and the world, and the postulation of the transcendental and ineffable nature of God, Torrance defends the validity of Christ's revelation and mediation by underpinning the importance of the conjoint participation of the divine and the human in revelation. He says, '[W]e through the same Spirit may participate in the relation of the Son to the Father and of the Father to the Son… even though he infinitely transcends our conceiving and speaking of him.'[29]

To Torrance the cosmological implication of Arian dualism takes its manifestation in Arians' understanding of the being of Christ and the nature of his mediation. Torrance underlines that the separation of God from the creation has the setback of drawing a line of division between the unknowable Being of God the Father and the knowable Logos or the Son. He says, 'And so they [Arians] held in their doctrine of creation, that God first created the Logos or the Son as the principle by which he created the rest of the universe; in other words, they interpreted Christ in terms of cosmological principle'.[30] That is to say, according to Arians' cosmology as Torrance reads it, God is so other-worldly that he needs first to create the Logos as his agent, the highest of God's creature, and then through him to bring about the

[26] *TRci*, 240.
[27] *TF*, 121-22.
[28] *TRci*, 240. Author's italic.
[29] Ibid., 241.
[30] Ibid., 224-25.

creation of all things.[31] 'The Logos,' Torrance says, 'was thus regarded as occupying the status and role of a created intermediary between God and the world'.[32] Torrance remarks that the cosmological argument of Arians in this regard is not without logical basis. If Arians were right to claim that God is utterly unknowable and undifferentiated, such nature of God would necessarily make the idea of the incarnate Christ as God inconceivable. However, if Christ were divine, it would logically mean that apart from the Father there is another divine being existing along with him, and that to Arians would mean that God's being is divisible and even plural. The thought that God's being is divisible is one Torrance says the Arians would unquestionably reject. Thus, if a being really exists beside the Father, it is only acceptable to Arians if the Father brings it into existence out of nothing.[33] That is why Arians are able to say that 'There was a time when the Son was not.'[34] And they claim that the incarnate Son of God has to be created out of nothing through the will of the Father even though he is adopted as the Son. Since the Son is created through an act of God's will, Arians conclude on the basis of logic that he cannot share the same being of God and his deity is therefore denied.[35]

To Torrance the argument of Arians is essentially philosophical. He underlines that because Arians interpret Christ in terms of cosmological principle, the Platonic dualism that is embedded in their cosmology leads them to undermine Christ's deity by cutting the essential bond between the Son and the Father.[36] It is noteworthy that in their rejection of Christ's deity the Arians are not without biblical proof. They appeal to biblical verses that particularly indicate the poverty and weakness of Christ and his need to offer obedience and prayer to the Father to substantiate their arguments of Christ's createdness.[37] While Arianism rejects the deity of Christ, Torrance says that it underpins the Logos as 'a creature, but not as

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[31] Ibid., 115, 85.
[32] *TF*, 136-37. By relegating the Son to a mere creature, Torrance claims that Arian dualism deeply distorts the orthodox teaching of the mediation of Christ that is defended relentlessly by the Nicene Fathers. See *TF*, 118-20.
[33] Ibid., 118.
[34] *TRci*, 62.
[35] Ibid., 48.
[36] *TF*, 1121-125.
[37] The popular text used by Arians is taken from Proverb 8:22 which says, 'The Lord created me a beginning of his ways for his work'. Concerning the weakness, poverty and obedience of Christ, the common verses cited are Philippians 2:9 f. and Hebrews 3:1 f. Although Arians use the biblical verses to argue for the creaturely nature of Christ, Torrance says that Athanasius, in countering Arians, has interpreted the texts within the general scope of scripture and in the light of 'the Apostle mind'. Athanasius claims that the human nature of Christ has to be interpreted in terms of the condescension of the Logos to be one of us for our sake. Thus, Christ's taking up of the human flesh is done in such a manner that he may act in our place and on our behalf before God. See *TF*, 62; *TRci*, 151.

one of the creatures; a work, but not as one of the works, an offspring, but not as one of the offsprings'.[38] The endeavour to elevate the Logos above all creatures has unintentionally made the Logos neither fully divine nor fully creaturely, and the outcome to Torrance could only be a distorted hypostatic union of Christ.[39] Without question, the interpretation of Arians is entirely rejected by Athanasius.[40] And the rejection is significant to Torrance because Arians' cosmological interpretation of Christ indeed has a twofold undesirable repercussion. First, as indicated earlier, it makes the revelation of God in Christ impossible. If Christ is the created Logos of whom all things are subsequently made, he does not inhere eternally in the Being of God. Like all creatures the Logos is alien and is different from the being and propriety of the Father. Thus, his knowledge of the Father could only remain external because the 'Son or Word cannot have or mediate any authentic knowledge of God, for he can know and understand only what is "in proportion to his own measure" as a creature.'[41] In the final analysis, he constitutes only a detached and a changeable image of God.[42] This leads us to the second point that if Arians' concept of Christ remains unchallenged, it would impair, in Torrance's opinion, the doctrine of soteriology. Torrance aptly says, '[T]he atoning sacrifice of Christ would then be understood only in terms of some kind of superficial socio-moral or judicial transaction between God and mankind which does not penetrate into the ontological depths of human being or bear savingly upon the distorted and corrupt condition of man's actual human existence'.[43] If we recall Torrance's stress of the closeness between revelation and reconciliation in our preceding chapter, any distortion of Christ's revelation to him would indubitably lead to the impairment of our understanding of Christ's salvation.

We have thus far analysed Torrance's understanding of dualism in the theological context of Arianism. As discussed, dualism to Torrance, as represented by Arianism, is about the separation of *cosmos noetos* and *cosmos aisthetos* that inevitably leads to the logical conclusion of separating the Creator from the creation. By separating God irreconcilably from the world, Arian dualism deprives God of

[38] *TF*, 118.
[39] Ibid., Torrance comments that according to Epiphanius and Theodoret, Arius has a defective conception of the humanity of Jesus; it is shown in his idea that the Logos in the incarnation has assumed a body without a human or rational soul, and has replaced the soul with itself.
[40] *TRci*, 224-24; *TF*, 118.
[41] *TF*, 118.
[42] *TRci*, 224.
[43] *TF*, 158.

having any interaction and relation with the world and thus renders the incarnation of the Son impossible. On this note, the hypostatic union of Christ and his *homoousion* with the Father are impinged. When God's action could not take place in the creation, the normative pattern of the union and communion of divine and human action of revelation and mediation is damaged; as there is an absence of divine participation. When what is left is only human action, or the action of the created Logos, Torrance asserts that the definitive outcome could only be the projection of human thought and imagination into God; it could only be mythology and not the hypostatic self-revelation of Christ. To put it succinctly, Arian dualism to Torrance is the nullification of the revelation and mediation of Christ. It is for this reason that among the discernible heresies Torrance regards Arianism to be the archenemy of the church, 'forcing' the church subsequently to crystallise its faith in the form of creed.[44] The reprimand of Arian dualism by Athanasius and the Nicene Fathers is seen by Torrance as the critical theological defence of the church. If we approach Torrance's criticism of dualism in the same light, we may comment that his intent to address the issue today is to defend the essentiality of Christ's revelation and mediation from being eclipsed by what he perceives as 'some modern theology'. Fundamentally the problems of dualism that confront us today are not completely new to Torrance. Torrance says, 'Today too we have the same sort of confusion… The real issues are basically the same as in the third and fourth centuries, while we have the same kind of popular theology that in Gnosticism and Arianism gripped the imagination of the popular mind but menaced the foundations of the Christian Church'.[45]

One issue demands our attention. Torrance's definition of dualism, as mentioned in the preceding section, is general and philosophical, and is inadequate in supporting his theological usage. It is therefore our aim to elicit some result from the current discussion to complement his definition theologically. Three main points may be drawn from our analysis. First, it concerns the irreconcilable relation between the poles in dualism. The dualism of Arians clearly underpins that the *cosmos noetos* and *cosmos aisthetos* are two poles of existence. The relation between the two poles is one of opposition, or even contradiction. The irreconcilable relation between God and the creation is indicative of the opposing bipolar relation in

[44] Ibid., 42. Torrance says that although heretical teaching is no stranger to the church, it is 'at the critical junction in its history brought about by the Arian heresy which called in question the unity of the Holy Trinity by asserting the creatureliness of the Son, thereby separating him from the being of the Father and introducing inconsistency into Godhead.'
[45] *GR*, 31.

dualism. It is noteworthy that the hypostatic union of Christ that involves the bipolarity of God and man is not considered as dualism by Torrance. The crux is that the nature of relation between the two poles of God and man in Christ is not seen as opposing or contradicting, but union. The problem of Arian, Ebionite or Docetic version of Christ lies precisely in its dualistic propensity to see the two poles as irreconcilable. Thus, we may suggest that the key problem of dualism to Torrance is not about the existence of bipolar poles, but the irreconcilable, opposing and contradicting relation between the two poles. Second, dualism is not merely a technical term appropriated for the description of the phenomenon of opposing poles; it is also about an internalised mindset that shapes a person's perception of reality. The Arian controversy shows that the issue is much more than a debate over a definition or conception. It involves one's entrenched pattern of thinking and mode of conceiving reality.[46] Third, dualism posts a threat to realism. From our discussion it is apparent that dualism in Torrance's mind represents certain form of destruction or distortion. The reality of one cosmos is distortedly perceived as two opposing poles of *cosmos noetos* and *cosmos aisthetos*. The relation between God and the world is misstated by the irreconcilable separation. The knowledge of God, revelation, mediation and salvation in Jesus Christ are all destructed by dualistic interpretation. Thus, from the analysis, we may define dualism in Torrance's theological context as an internalised mode of perceiving reality into two opposing poles of the Creator and the creation, negating any real relation between them and rendering God's revelation and mediation in Christ null.

A question has to be raised as we approach the end of the section. We need to ask how accurate is Torrance's reading of Arius and his supporters. We have mentioned from the outset that by taking their works indiscriminately as one, Torrance is giving his critics the occasion of criticism. And the inducement to comment critically is there especially when reading Torrance's account, one could not but to feel that on certain occasions his interpretations appear simplistic. The fact is Torrance has developed his line of argument against Arianism fully and uncritically from the discourse of Athanasius without taking any historical context, textual difficulty or current patristic scholarship into consideration. John Webster comments that Torrance's premises may or may not be correct, but the 'arguments against those

[46] Luoma, 92. Luoma's discourse has been a source of stimulation in formulating our delimitation here.

premises are sufficiently strong to warrant very serious attention: recent work on the theology of Arius, for instance, suggests both that the issues are more complex than Torrance allows and that early Christianity may have much less theologically firm'.[47] Torrance, however, is not without defence. He clearly spells out his methodology in *The Trinitarian Faith*. Torrance says, 'I have tried to let the patristic theologians concerned, almost entirely from the Greek East, speak for themselves, without the intrusion of material derived from later sources. I have deliberately refrained from discussing the interpretation of modern authors, while such references to their works as I have made are mostly of an incidental kind.'[48]

Notwithstanding Torrance's clarification, one may question the workability of his methodology. The issue is not merely about the 'patristic theologians concerned' are able to speak for themselves 'without the intrusion of material derived from later sources'. It is as well whether modern readers 'without the intrusion of material derived from later sources' could adequately apprehend the message given the incompleteness, complexity and particularity of the works of the patristic authors and their contexts. Even if we could claim to know the 'plain sense' of the texts without being too occupied with historical issues as advocated by John Barton,[49] one may still need to ask if Torrance's exposition of the materials by itself should be or should not be considered as an 'intrusion of material derived from later sources'? The question is particularly relevant in the light that some critics, such as John Morrison, have commented that to some extent the Greek Fathers are mere reflections of Torrance's own larger theological program.[50] In addition, Torrance has some questions to answer in relation to his use of Athanasius against Arius. On this note, the caution of

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[47] John Webster, 'Review: The Trinitarian Faith: The Evangelical Theology of the Ancient Catholic Church,' *Themelios* 16 (1990): 32. Webster remarks that Torrance seems to rely on two premises. First, there is a straight line from the New Testament to the theology of Nicaea. Second, the distinction between orthodoxy and heresy in the early patristic period can be drawn very clearly.

[48] *TF*, 2.

[49] When giving the Croall Lectures at the New College in the year 2005, John Barton argues that textual studies have often over underscored the importance of historicity at the expense of the plain meaning of the text. He advocates that the text should be interpreted as it is in order for the plain meaning of the text to surface without being interfered too much by historical issues. In responding to a question raised, Barton says that when the text leaves the pen of the author, it then becomes a dynamic entity free from domination and is able to 'speak' its plain meaning to the reader; thus, 'plain sense'. Although the main focus of Barton's thesis is on the discipline of biblical criticism, the fundamental principle concerning the relation between the text and its 'plain sense' is universally applicable. For argument of 'plain sense' and overview of the key factors and developments in recent biblical studies, see John Barton, *The Nature of Biblical Criticism* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007).

[50] John D. Morrison, 'The Trinitarian Faith: The Evangelical Theology of the Ancient Catholic Church,' *Calvin Theological Journal* 25 (1990): 120.

Rowan Williams desires our attention. He says, '[T]he writings of Athanasius, have to be handled with caution---not total scepticism, indeed, but with the recognition that, divorced from their own original literary context, they are, in the works in which they are now found, very far from presenting to us the systematic thought of Arius as he himself saw it.'[51] Not unrelated to the present discussion, we need to ask as well the legitimacy of Torrance in associating Arius with Platonism in the discourse. This is a worthy question in the light that Torrance seems to project the impression that Arius' argumentation, particularly on the mediatorial role of the Son, is built upon the ground of Platonic philosophy. On this issue, Rowan Williams provides us with an alternative view. He says, 'Arius' cosmos is not that of "Middle Platonism"; ascent to the first principle by graded sequence of images, knowledge of God through the created works which show his wisdom and through the primary *eikōn*, the Son, are not at the heart of Arius' understanding… he is not a philosopher, and it would be a mistake to accuse him of distorting theology to serve the ends of philosophical tidiness.'[52]

An observation picked up by Luoma about Torrance's selective use of materials has to be highlighted. Luoma comments that while Torrance associates Platonism and dualism, he suggests at the same time that Athanasius has no such Platonic influence. Luoma says, 'This interpretation is, however, quite limited and not at all as simple as Torrance would have us believe. It has been convincingly shown that Platonic thought had a remarkable influence upon Athanasius and the other Greek Fathers to such an extent that the sharp distinction Torrance draws between Platonic dualism and the thought of the Nicene Fathers can hardly be justified.'[53]

The above are valid remarks and questions that Torrance indeed cannot avoid. However, we should not neglect the fact that while Torrance could be more complete in substantiating his arguments, his ultimate concern is to safeguard what he regards as the most fundamental in theological construction; namely, the revelation and mediation of God in Jesus Christ. The Arian controversy as stated by Athanasius provides Torrance with a window to identify dualism as the formidable threat that has to be harnessed resolutely. Torrance's association of the 'eclipse of God' with some modern theology, his criticisms of Descartes, Newton and Kant, and Aristotle and

[51] Rowan Williams, *Arius: Heresy and Tradition* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 95.
[52] Ibid., 230.
[53] Luoma, 88-89.

Plato, as shown in our historical sketch, are indicative of the understanding. By working with a general definition, it enables Torrance to gather easily under the rubric of dualism any threat to Christ's revelation and mediation that is operating along the bipolar division. In someway that accounts for Torrance's difficulty, as our argument shows.

We have in this section defined dualism theologically and ascertained its detrimental implications within the context of Torrance's criticism of Arianism. Our discussion suggests that the main motive of Torrance to attack Arianism lies in the defence of the realism of God's revelation and mediation in Christ. Torrance's endeavour, however, is not without problem. As we turn to his criticism of Newtonian dualism, it would be clear that the intent of safeguarding Christ's revelation and mediation continues to shape Torrance's argument and his reading of the works of Newton.

Newtonian Dualism

The aim of the present section is to examine Torrance's criticism of Newtonian dualism. We attempt to argue, after delimiting dualism within the theological context of Torrance in the preceding section, that the motive of safeguarding God's revelation and mediation in Christ is constitutive of his reading and judging of the work of Newton as dualistic.

The relation between Newton and Descartes according to Torrance is one of 'hate and love'. In spite of Newton's apparent dislike of Descartes, he is unquestionably indebted to him. J. Herivel says, 'The arguments here advanced, if sound, point to a very important influence of Descartes on Newton in dynamics, direct in the case of the principle of inertia, circular motion, and collisions, indirect in the case of Newton's concept of force.'[54] Notwithstanding the influence, Newton rejects Descartes' rationalistic abstraction of mathematics and his method of deriving positions by pure intellection. Newton takes up a more realist conception of mathematics that is closely coordinated with experience. Torrance observes that Newton's reaction against Descartes has led him into a stronger notion of causality,

[54] John Herivel, *The Background to Newton's Principia* (Oxford Clarendon Press, 1965), 53. Cited in *TCFK*, 13.

and a more rigidly mechanical conception of the universe.[55] Besides mechanics, the metaphysics of Descartes has also left an indelible impact on Newton. Torrance comments, '[Newton] took over more or less uncritically the Cartesian development of Galileo's phenomenalism as something that belonged, almost axiomatically, to the new science which he championed and of which he became the supreme exponent.'[56] Although Newton underpins the relatedness of scientific concept with sense experience, he essentially builds the Cartesian dualism of the independent mind and matter deeply into his scientific system. This is the root of Newton's dualism to Torrance.

To be in line with his rejection of Cartesian's 'pure mathematics', Newton conceives nature as a mechanism operating according to natural laws.[57] His main focus is to give a mathematical account of the intelligibility and rationality of the universe. Newton rejects questions of hypothetical nature. Questions that cannot be mathematically deduced from phenomena have no place in his scheme.[58] For example, with regard to the question about the origin of gravity, Newton makes this axiomatic statement, 'I frame no hypotheses'.[59] Torrance could appreciate Newton's claims that the scientific principles of mechanical causes in the universe could not be extrapolated to account for the origin of the universe; as a different kind of explanation is required for the 'cause' of its existence.[60] If hypotheses and speculations are disallowed in Newton's scientific system, the inevitable question is what 'different kind of explanation' could we have for the cause of the ultimate and inherent intelligibility of the universe? It is here we judge that Torrance has manoeuvred his way deftly to relate science and theology within the scheme of Newton's discourse. According to Torrance, Newton perceives the universe as a mechanical system complete and consistent in itself only if it is related to the *counsel*

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[55] *TCFK*, 13.
[56] Ibid.
[57] Ibid., 16. Einstein has commented that nature to Newton is like an open book that he can read without effort. He says, 'The conceptions which he used to reduce the material of experience to order seemed to flow spontaneously from experience itself, from the beautiful experiments which he ranged in order like playthings and describes with affectionate wealth of detail.' See A. Einstein, foreword to the *Opticks* as reprinted in 1931. Cited by Torrance.
[58] Ibid., 18.
[59] Ibid., 16. To Newton a mechanical account of the behaviour of contents in the universe does not need to question the ultimate nature of the contents, such as gravity. Scientific operation should limit itself mainly to the system of phenomenal connects and avoid speculative and hypothetical assumptions that are not mathematically deducible from phenomena.
[60] Ibid., 24, 27.

of a voluntary and *intelligent Agent* beyond it.[61] Neither chance nor necessity could suffice an intelligent answer for its operation and existence. In the final analysis, Newton says that we are thrown back to the ultimate will of God, the Creator who creates and sustains the stability and regularity of the universe. This indeed is an important point because it implies that the universe is an open system towards God and dependent on God in spite of its deterministic and mechanical character. On this note, we may comment that Torrance has no difficulty in concurring with Newton as he himself recognises as well the importance of creation contingence; a crucial thought of Torrance in his understanding of the relation between science and theology that will be explored in greater length in chapter six.

There is, however, in Torrance view, a problem in Newton's idea of associating God with the universe. Although according to Newton the limitation of mechanical causes could reveal nothing about God, he believes that 'it may yield exact and coherent knowledge of things only in terms of an absolute reference-system constituted in the inertial conditioning of all things by God.'[62] This brings us to what Torrance believes to be the crux of Newton's discourse; namely, the dualistic distinction between the absolute and relative time and space, and the identification of the absolute time and space with God as the inertial system of reference for the phenomenal reality. Torrance maintains that time and space in Newton's notion are on the one hand absolute, undifferentiated, unchanging and bear no relation to anything external, on the other hand they could be experienced through the coordination of sense and motion. However, the latter (relative time and space) should not be confounded with the former (absolute time and space) because it is essentially the inference of our sense experience. Torrance claims that the undergirding principle that is at work here is derivative of the Cartesian dualism in separating the real nature of the universe from our relative observation of it. In the final analysis, the independent role that is given to absolute time and space inevitably implies an irreducible gap between the way we explain the mechanical world and the mechanical world itself is to be explained.[63] This is the precise reason to Torrance why God is needed in Newton's scientific framework to be 'the kind of explanation' for the cause and origin of the contingent creation.

[61] Ibid., 25. Author's italic.
[62] Ibid., 27.
[63] Ibid., 24.

In alluding to General Scholium, Torrance underlines that Newton has grounded the independent ontological status of the absolute time and space in the eternal and infinite God who, 'by existing always and everywhere, constitutes duration and space.'[64] That is to say, in Torrance's reading, 'Newton seems to have identified absolute time with the eternal duration of God and absolute space with the infinite presence of God.'[65] The outcome of such identification is the receptacle notion of understanding God as the 'container' containing all events and objects in objective reality. Torrance claims that in this way Newton is able to account for the rationality and intelligibility of the mechanical world as 'the movement of thought from God to the world'.[66] But to relate the mechanical world to God as the absolute referential point as indicated is not without difficulty. Torrance asserts that the immediate theological challenge is the possibility of a synthesis between the Creator and the creation, the 'grand mythological synthesis'.[67] The outcome of such synthesis is detrimental as it leads to either the debasement of divine transcendence or the elevation and deification of the material world beyond its creatureliness. The question is could this truly be the view of Newton?

In responding to the question, Torrance's argument at this point makes a striking turn. He says, 'Certainly Newton himself would have denied this, for he clearly intended to guard himself against such a charge. He explicitly wrote in the General Scholium that God is not identical with eternity and infinity, i.e., with infinite time and space.'[68] Torrance's discourse on this note appears ambiguous, especially in the light that he is drawing from the same source to substantiate two opposing points. However, to be fair to Torrance, it should be said that even in Newton's own words the phrases are not without problems. Luoma comments that Newton certainly writes '[God is] eternal and infinite, omnipotent and omniscient; that is his duration reaches from eternity to eternity; his presence from infinity to infinity.'[69] 'But,' Luoma says, 'Newton determinedly rejects any idea that the adjective *eternal* or *infinite* could be used as subject predicates referring to God in phrases like "God is eternity" or "God is infinity"---he is just eternal and infinite.'[70] If Luoma is right in his analysis, one could either say that Newton has or has not

[64] Ibid.
[65] Ibid.
[66] *STI*, 38.
[67] *GGT*, 24.
[68] *TCFK*, 25.
[69] Luoma, 95.
[70] Ibid. Author's italic.

identified the absolute time and space with God. It all depends on how God's eternal duration and presence are being interpreted in the context of Newton's writings. Taking Torrance's work in its proper setting of criticising Newtonian dualism, we are not inaccurate to judge that he inclines to subscribe the view that Newton does identify God with absolute time and space, and hold a receptacle view of God's duration and presence. Our judgment is also based on the following analysis.

One thing, however, is unequivocally clear. Torrance definitively claims that Newton has identified the absolute time and space with the mind of God. He says, '[T]his fixed frame of reference---absolute, mathematical time and space---Newton identified with the mind of God, which contains and imposes objective order upon the universe. God contains the universe, however, without being affected by it impassibly and immutably---that is what Newton meant by the term *absolute* in this connection.'[71] By establishing such a link, Torrance perceives in Newton's concept an implication that reaches not just the realm of science but also theology. It is important for us to recall that the root of Newton's concept, as Torrance indicates, lies in his acceptance of Cartesian dualism that advocates the separation of the mind of the observer and the objective structure of nature.[72] Thus, to make a statement that the mind of God is identified with the absolute time and space, Torrance is pinpointing the dualistic division between the absolute and relative time and space has now been transposed into the dualistic separation between God and the world. In this regard, God's relation with the world becomes tangential. There is an absence of dynamic interaction between God and the world because the dualism of Newton has mutually excluded one from another, and made the God of scripture esoterically incomprehensible. God in Newton's scheme has become impersonal and ineffable. Torrance says,

> But if God inertially contains and regulates the universe without being affected by it, there is no interaction between God and the universe in the biblical or patristic sense---that is why Newton found himself having to reject the incarnation, and even to support Arius against Athanasius.[73]

And,

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[71] *GGT*, 68. Author's italic.
[72] *TCFK*, 13. Torrance says that Newton's mechanics is the fruit of his inheritance in Galilean phenomenalism and Cartesian dualism adapted and recast in the distinction between the absolute and relative time and space. Also see *TCFK*, 20.
[73] *GGT*, 68.

> If God Himself is the infinite Container of all things He can no more become incarnate than a box can become one of the several objects that it contains. Thus, Newton found himself in sharp conflict with Nicene theology and its famous *homoousion*, and even set himself to defend Arius against Athanasius.[74]

From the arguments it is self-evidenced that Torrance regards the dualism of Newton as problematic and objectionable as the dualism of Arian. The identification of God with the absolute time and space that indubitably leads to the receptacle notion of God has the serious setback of separating God from the world. It renders incarnation and *homoousion* impossible. To Torrance that would only mean one thing---the nullification of God's revelation and mediation in Christ. By associating Newton with Arius, the move of Torrance is indicative of why Newton is to be taken seriously as the proponent of dualism; namely, he perceives in him a mirror of Arius. The crux is Torrance believes he has detected similar dualistic patterns between Arius and Newton. To Torrance the Platonic dualism of Arius has given rise to a highly transcendental view of God that separates God impassibly from the interaction of the world. Similarly, the Cartesian dualism of Newton brings forth the identification of God with the absolute time and space, and creates an unbridgeable schism between God and the phenomenal world. Arius believes incarnation is impossible because the ineffable God cannot become an object of creation. Likewise, the notion of God as the Container will rule out the possibility of incarnation; as Torrance says, the Container cannot become an object of its contents. Thus, it should not come to us as a surprise that Torrance indeed regards the dualism of Newton as the 'revival of the old Hellenistic dualism'[75] that should be handed with utmost severity, just as Arius was critically challenged by Athanasius in his days.

Our analysis thus far touches on the reasons for Newton to use God as the explanation for the rationality and intelligibility of the universe. One aspect of Torrance's reading has to be highlighted here. Torrance says notwithstanding the notion that God is the absolute inertial system to which the deterministic and mechanical world refers to, God is also needed in Newton's scheme on scientific terms to manage certain 'irregularities' in the universe that 'require constant divine intervention in order to preserve harmony and stability within the solar and stellar

[74] *STI*, 39-40.
[75] Ibid., 40.

system.'[76] In other words, there are deficiencies in the chain of mechanical causes that require God to play the regulative role in order to guarantee consistent harmony and perpetual on going of the universe. Torrance claims that Newton's appropriation of God in this regard entails significant implications. First, it implies a rejection on Newton's part of a complete deterministic and mechanical world. Second, God is seen as an active Agent whose 'divine causes are made to operate in interconnection with and on the same level as mechanical causes.'[77] On this note, the transcendence of God as identified with the absolute time and space is compromised. Torrance comments that that could not be the desire of Newton as it contradicts the arguments of the separation of God from the world, as indicated earlier. Torrance thus concludes that Newton 'appears to have confused, or mistakenly run together, the all-important comprehending and containing role of God in relation to the creation of the universe and its continuance as an entire system, and the role of God in regulating the chain of mechanical causes and coping with the emergencies resulting from irregularities within the universe.'[78]

Is there really some confusion between the two roles of God by Newton? Is Torrance's assessment justifiable? Luoma comments that this problem troubles Torrance a fair deal because he has based his arguments on the presumption of Newton's deterministic views and restricted understanding of the contingency of the universe. The remark of Torrance about Newton's confusion is, according to Luoma, a 'satisfying explanation' for Torrance to justify his interpretation.[79] We however believe the key lies in the accuracy of Torrance's reading of Newton. We have, in the earlier discussion, mentioned the association of God's duration and presence with the absolute time and space. Now the question concerns the mind of God and the absolute time and space. In order to know the answer, we need to go back to the meaning of Newton's *sensorium Dei* to which Torrance has translated as the mind of God. The translation is not unambiguous because the significance of Newton's *sensorium* in this context is a matter of debate. In relation to Newton's controversy with Leibniz, it has been argued that the term should be understood as an analogy and not literally, as it refers to God's ability to be intimately aware of the world and

[76] *TCFK*, 27. See *GGT*, 69.
[77] Ibid.
[78] Ibid., 28.
[79] Luoma, 103.

events in it.[80] In addition, according to Edward Craig's analysis in *The Mind of God and the Works of Man*, he says that the *sensorium* according to Newton is 'where the brain meets the mind, where the physiological processes give rise to a representation of the world in consciousness,'[81] not quite the 'actual' mind of God as Torrance would have us believed. Notwithstanding the issue of translation, what is important is that Newton himself has given the impression that he is after all not too keen of the association, and the *sensorium* of God has only been mentioned once by Newton in the wider context of his works, as Luoma indicates.[82] This is a significant observation. If Luoma is right on this note, it would mean that there is no 'confusion' on the part of Newton because, in the first place, there is no strict identification between 'the mind of God' and the absolute time and space in his framework. Thus, there is no contradiction here for Newton to give God the regulative role to mend irregularities in the phenomenal world.

If that is the case, the vital question now is why would Torrance in his reading of Newton put so much stock in the identification of the mind of God with the absolute time and space? A possible answer, as suggested by Luoma, is that Torrance's interpretation of Newton's works is superficial as he has not only made the direct identification on behalf of Newton, he has also read more into the thought of Newton than is justified.[83] While there is certainly some truth in the explanation, we suspect there is more to it than meets the eye. We would argue that when Torrance approaches Newton with his frame of dualism and detects in someway that Newton did associate the mind of God (and God's duration and presence, as shown in our earlier discussion) with the absolute time and space, he believes he has found the root of Newton's dualism. By firmly pounding on the association, Torrance could gain mileage and establish a case out of it. The main reason for Torrance to pin on the association is that dualism is too much a formidable threat to God's revelation and mediation in Christ. To Torrance the account of Newton runs the risk of separating

[80] Luoma underlines that Torrance is inaccurate in saying that Newton has linked *sensorium* of God to the absolute time and space. The fact is, according to Luoma, only space is involved. It is clearly evidenced in the *Opticks*, the work that gives rise to the discussion, when Newton says, 'And these things being rightly dispatched, does it not appear from Phaenomena that there is a Being incorporeal, living, intelligent, omnipresent, who in infinite Space, as it were in his Sensory, sees the things themselves intimately, and thoroughly perceives them, and comprehends them wholly by their immediate present to himself.' See Luoma, 96.
[81] Craig, Edward. *The Mind of God and the Works of Man* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), 31. Cited in Luoma, 96.
[82] Luoma, 96
[83] Ibid., 97.

God from the world by creating an irreconcilable schism between the two; it deprives God of having any real interaction with the world and thus makes the incarnation of God in Christ questionable; it distorts *homoousion* and hypostatic union. When divine action could not take place in the world, the normative pattern of the union and communion of divine and human action of revelation and mediation is impaired. Christ's revelation, mediation and salvation are annulled, as implicated in Arian dualism. The stake is simply too high for Torrance to ignore, even though the association in this regard is tenuous.

We have in this section centred on Torrance's criticism of Newton. Our discussion suggests that the main cause of his disapproval lies in perceiving the dualistic threat that is embedded in the works of Newton; which, to Torrance, would inevitably lead to the subversion of God's revelation and mediation in Christ. Torrance's intent is manifest when he relates Newtonian dualism with Arian dualism, and to regard the former as the revival of the old Hellenistic dualism. Thus, it may not be inaccurate to conclude that Torrance's intent to safeguard the realism of Christ's revelation and mediation in the contingent creation has motivated him to read more than what is required into the work of Newton and to regard it dualistic.

Conclusion

This chapter focuses primarily on Torrance's perception of dualism as the detriment to the proper understanding of God's revelation and mediation in Christ. By sketching the historical terrain of dualism via the lenses of Torrance, we show that what Torrance has gathered under the rubric is vast and complex. Notwithstanding Torrance's immense effort to engage the issue, little has been put in to define the term theologically. Our first endeavour therefore is to delimit dualism theologically in accordance with Torrance's understanding so that it may complement his philosophically inclined definition. We then identify the ramifications of dualism in Torrance's criticism of Arians and Newton. We argue that the main problem of dualism to Torrance lies basically in its *a priori* approach in separating God irreconcilably from the world, and depriving God of having any actual relation with it. By rendering the incarnation of God impossible, dualism distorts the hypostatic union of Christ and his *homoousion* with the Father. It impairs the normative pattern

of revelation and mediation by denying Christ of his divinity. On this note, Torrance's criticism of Arian dualism and Newtonian dualism, as our argument shows, is carried out principally in the interest of safeguarding God's revelation and mediation in Christ. The task of defence is of paramount importance to Torrance particularly in the light of what he perceives to be the problematic eclipsing of God in some modern theology. Unquestionably Torrance regards the problem as the inappropriateness of human action in understanding divine self-disclosure. However, it would be an oversight for one to take Torrance's criticism as a debasement of human participation, for human action is as important as divine action in this regard. The crux is human action has to be carried out in accordance with divine action, as Torrance would argue. How could human action achieve its proper and rightful role in Torrance's theology of revelation and mediation is the primary question we endeavour to answer in the next chapter.

Chapter Three

The Epistemological Realism of Theological Science

The primary purpose of this chapter is to examine Torrance's appropriation of scientific realism as the repair of dualism in apprehending divine self-disclosure in Jesus Christ. We attempt to show that by advocating the importance of the scientific nature of theology, Torrance underscores the appropriateness of scientific inquiry as the human action of the normative pattern of revelation and mediation in mediating the knowledge of God in Christ. Thus, to set the backdrop of his arguments, we would begin with Torrance's understanding of the realism of the Einsteinian-Polanyian science. Torrance's postulation of theology as a valid discipline of science and the essentiality of scientific inquiry as the human action of theological science will be analysed. As Torrance's approach could be described as critical realism,[1] we would discuss the relation of objectivity and subjectivity in the process of inquiry. Finally, question about the reasonableness of Torrance's scientific approach would be touched on in the conclusion.

The Realism of Einsteinian-Polanyian Science: A Perspective of Torrance

Torrance claims that we are now living in a great transition in the history of Western thought. To him a deep paradigmatic change in the development of science is taking place as the realist perspective of objective reality is replacing the dualistic approach of perceiving the world cosmologically and epistemologically. In this unitary understanding of objectivity of which theorem and experience are integrated to set the basis of the attainment of knowledge, it opens up, as Torrance says, 'a dynamic, open-structured universe, in which the human spirit is being liberated from its

[1] McGrath comments that the position adopted by Torrance is best described as critical realism, a term defined in accordance with the description of N. T. Wright. See Alister E. McGrath, *Thomas F. Torrance: An Intellectual Biography* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999), 217-18. Also see Sue Patterson, *Realist Christian Theology in a Postmodern Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge, 1999), 12-32; P. M. Achtemeier, 'The Truth of Tradition: Critical Realism in the Thought of Alasdair Macintyre and T. F. Torrance,' *Scottish Journal of Theology* 47, no. 3 (1994): 355-74; John D. Morrison, 'Heidegger, Correspondence Truth and the Realist Theology of Thomas Forsyth Torrance,' *The Evangelical Quarterly* 69 (1997): 139-55.

captivity in closed deterministic systems of cause and effect'.[2] Such profound transition in modern scientific advancement is one Torrance claims that theologians in general cannot ignore.[3] According to Torrance the shift from Newtonian to Einsteinian-Polanyian science is characterised by the conviction of the self-disclosure of objective reality and a realisation of the need for scientific inquiry to be apposite to the nature of the contingent rationality of the created world. On this note, Torrance recognises that the scientific return to realism could serve as a reminder to theology, calling it back from the entrenched dualism to an appropriate human action of realist thinking of God's revelation and mediation in Christ. Before we continue, it has to be made known from the outset that the present section is meant neither to be a comprehensive study of the relation between science and theology in Torrance's framework nor in itself an exhaustive analysis of the science of Einstein and Polanyi; as either attempt warrants a magnitude that is beyond our current compass and aim. The purpose of the section, however, as the heading suggests, is to touch on the essential characteristics of Einsteinian-Polanyian science from the standpoint of Torrance so to set the backdrop of his theological science as the legitimate scientific activity of human action of the normative pattern of revelation and mediation, a proper corrective to dualistic distortion of God's self-disclosure in Christ. Thus, we will primarily touch on the self-disclosure of objective reality of Einstein and the personal knowledge of Polanyi.

Albert Einstein and the Self-Disclosure of Objective Reality

To Torrance one of the greatest contributions of Einstein lies in his success in finally going beyond Newtonian science by postulating the realism of scientific

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[2] *RST*, ix .

[3] *GGT*, 17. For that matter, Torrance argues that the development of natural science has long been associated with Christian tradition. There is 'a deeper interaction between theology and science than is often realised', and 'Christian theology has had both beneficial and harmful effects upon the rise and progress of empirical and theoretical science.' Torrance relates the rise of empirical science to the contribution of Greek patristic theology of which the radicalised ideas of contingence and contingent order lay the foundation of the unitary understanding of the universe. However, according to Torrance, the unmoved Mover of the pervasive mediaeval doctrine of God has injected the dualistic mode of thinking and caused the derailment of science from its integrated foundation. The Arian concept of the impassibility and ineffability of God becomes to Newton an explanation of the inertial relation between God and the universe. When God is understood as only the referential point to the phenomenal world, it inevitably gives rise to a deterministic and mechanistic notion of the universe. The Newtonian dualism rules the scientific world until the late nineteenth century when true scientific thinking, according to Torrance, begins to take steps to restore cosmological and epistemological realism. See *TCFK*, 218-19.

epistemology, and thus opening up the way for theology to return from the entrenched dualism to a realist approach of understanding God's revelation and mediation in Christ. Torrance is unequivocal that the achievement of Einstein is not possible without the significant influence of a great Christian scientist, Clark Maxwell. Torrance regards Maxwell's works as the major breakthrough in the era of Post-Newtonian mechanics as they steer the development of science progressively back to realism.[4] To Torrance Maxwell's emphasis on the integration of form and being of scientific inquiry reorients the conception of knowledge in a new way departing from that of dualism. Torrance claims that Maxwell's formulation of field theory has left an indelible impact on the following generation of scientists by opening up a new frontier of relational understanding towards the objective reality. Because Maxwell has prepared the ground for a realist form of scientific thinking, Torrance says that Einstein is able to stand on his shoulders and continue to advance scientific realism. It is in Einstein's works that Torrance regards the transition from mechanical thinking to relational or 'field' thinking started by Maxwell reaches its culmination. The realist characteristic of Einsteinian science according to Torrance is best demonstrated in the theory of relativity. Building upon the field theory, Torrance says that it operates with the integration of empirical and theoretic components of science, and lays bare the dynamic structures and self-disclosing nature of the objective reality. The development is of particular significance in the light of the increasing failure of mechanistic science to account satisfactorily new discovery made possible by the advancement of science.[5] To Torrance it essentially brings forth the erroneous basis of dualism and affirms the validity of realism in approaching the objective reality. On this note, we may briefly discuss Torrance's accounts of Einstein's mathematical formulation, *theory* and *principia* in order to substantiate the suggestion that it is from scientific realism that Torrance finds the useful apparatus for theology.

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[4] *CTSC*, 50-51. Also see Torrance's introduction to the book by Maxwell, *A Dynamical Theory of the Eelectromagnetic Field* (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1982), ix.

[5] *TCFK*, 272. This 'enormous stride' of moving forward in Einsteinian science according to Torrance involves 'a step back to Newton.' That is to say, in Torrance's view, although Einstein appropriates the deduction of classical science, his cognitive instrument is free in the sense that it has no prior logical control from fixed premises. He allows the objective comprehensibility in the nature of things that is independent of our observation to 'speak intuitively' to us. Thus, with regard to the notion of time and space in the theory of relativity, Einstein is able to reject Newton's postulation of the absolute time and space and to define them in terms of their relation to the human observer's physical frame of reference. To Torrance, Einstein is deeply convinced of the independence of the objective reality. See *TCFK*, 273 and *CFM*, xx.

By rejecting traditional dualism that separates 'the logic formal' from 'the objective or intuitive content' of mathematics, Torrance says that Einstein, in following the heels of Maxwell, has turned his thought from abstract to embodied mathematics. Torrance comments, 'This was the all-important switch from Euclidean to four-dimensional geometry and the physical but dynamic space-time concepts it entailed, which meant working with ontological grounded objectivities and intelligibilities that can never be completely reduced to conceptual explications or mathematical formalisations.'[6] However, instead of debasing the validity of mathematical components in physics, Torrance underlines Einstein's claims that they have a more basic and heuristic role to play in scientific discovery when they are in intuitive contact with the objective reality. By underpinning the importance of integrating form and being, Torrance asserts that Einstein has overcome the old dualism of Kantian phenomenalism by fusing together the logical-formal aspect and the intuitive content of mathematics. Thus, Torrance claims that Einstein has changed radically our perception of reality from the enclosed dualistic-mechanistic model to an open realist-disclosure model. The outcome is the consequential awareness that the constancy of objective reality, as represented by mathematical invariance in physics, is essentially contingent and self-disclosing, and cannot be imposed upon or reduced to anything simply by *a priori* principle. Torrance regards the epistemic change as an important step in leading the way of a needed repair of what dualism has done not only in science but also in theology, especially in relation to our understanding of the revelation and mediation of God in Christ.

The new approach towards the understanding of *theory* and *principia* in Einsteinian science is one theology cannot overlook especially with regard to its apprehension of revelatory knowledge as the conjoint action of the divine and the human, and its construction and revision as dogma. Torrance remarks that in the context of the new scientific development, *theory* is no longer considered as the working hypothesis which involves 'convenient arrangement of our observational concepts for certain pragmatic or technological ends' that has no metaphysical relation to the inherent order of the natural world.[7] Theory, in its proper sense, is 'a speculative penetration into the structure of things' and to 'allow it to disclose itself to us.'[8] Similarly, *principia* are not fixed but fluid axioms. They are cognitive

[6] *CTSC*, 57.
[7] *TCKF*, 273.
[8] Ibid.

instruments used to penetrate into the objective comprehensibility of the universe. Torrance says, 'We are not concerned here, then, with axioms in the old sense of fixed premises or principles in which we argue from certain accepted position to necessary conclusions…. What we have here are open flexible structures used postulationally, and therefore with fluid revision the further they penetrate into and lay bare the "inner logic" of the field under investigation.'[9] With the discovery of the inner logic or the inherent order of the intelligible nature, Torrance says that 'we realise that we "invented" or came upon them because they came at us from the side of the universe itself, compelling us to formulate them as "laws" through the astonishing correlation between our human thinking and empirical reality.'[10]

The significant redefinition of *theory* and *principia* could be said to have a twofold impact to Torrance. First, it reveals the weakness of Newtonian and Kantian epistemological dualism by showing that the main problem of *a priori* approach in making scientific statement is nothing more than empty conceptual schemata that build upon the dichotomy of knowledge and the objective reality.[11] With the

[9] Ibid., 274.
[10] Ibid.
[11] Torrance regards Einstein's works as the antidote to the deterministic dualism of Newtonian science and Kantian epistemology. To Torrance absolute time and space in Newtonian physics are considered as the inertial system to which the phenomenal event and experience take reference to in order to make logical sense the casual structure of the world. Torrance claims that Newton has derived the concept out of the need to establish a fixed point for determining position, since no object is at rest in the universe and all coordinate systems are to be thought of as movable systems in time and space. On this note, Torrance underlines that Einstein is quick to point out this 'fictitious character' of Newton's postulation because it arises not by empirical observation but by 'free inventions of the intellect'. Thus, Torrance remarks that Newtonian science has been operating with fundamental axioms that are 'placed at the beginning of the theory as formal premises'. In Torrance's view, the problem of Kant to certain degree is not unlike that of Newton. Torrance says that Kant, when responding to Hume's analysis, has 'transferred' absolute time and space from the mind of God to the mind of the knower in order to maintain their absolute character and to argue that they are not affected by sense experience. Through his theory of 'synthetic a priori', Torrance says that Kant, instead of reading law of nature out of nature, ultimately imposes conceptual order upon nature through the processes and structures of active reason. Like Newton, the outcome of Kant's epistemological approach is a closed system with its premises being detached from the process of inquiry. To Torrance this inevitably leads to axiomatic abstraction and imposition of theoretical presupposition upon the object of investigation. However, with the advent of relativity theory, Torrance underlines that the deterministic dualism has to make way for the rediscovery of the contingent freedom and objective reality. Scientific premises according to Einstein could not be preconceived in advance; they need to be the integral parts of scientific inquiry, postulation and verification if they are to be relevant. They can only be *a posteriori* and are accepted 'on the ground of that they give intelligible and unifying form to the inferential relations in which they are incorporated.' The key point of Torrance is about the reciprocal dynamic between the scientific-axiomatic formulation and the inherent rationality of things that is beyond our comprehension. And it is at this point Torrance finds the relevance of Einstein's theory of relativity in providing the integrative solution that the Newtonian mechanistic postulation or Kantian epistemological presupposition has failed to do. Thus, to Torrance, the achievement of Einstein lies in initiating a new way of axiomatic thinking in physics, eliciting the inner logic of contingent order, and laying bare the premises embedded in the intrinsic connections of objective reality. See *TCFK*, 23, 272-73; *GR*, 99-100; *GGT*, 25-26.

meaning of *theory* and *principia* redefined, Torrance argues that relativity theory has made possible the advancement of scientific knowledge through the remarkable epistemic correlation between the inherent thought patterns of the human mind with the intelligible order of nature embodied in objective reality. As Torrance aptly says, 'for if nature is not in itself that which we claim to know of it in its relations toward us, then we do not really know nature but are merely operating with convenient symbols or useful arrangements of observational data.'[12] Second, since the development of theological knowledge is not completely unlike that of science, the redefinition that underscores the correlation between the self-disclosing nature of objective reality and the appropriateness of scientific inquiry has implication in our understanding of God's self-revelation in Christ as involving necessarily the union and communion of divine and human action, if it is to be genuine. In addition, because revelatory knowledge of God attained by this act of union and communion between the divine and human is essentially fluid and not static, the forming of it as dogma by the church thus logically calls for constant revision and correction under the on going compulsive influence of the revealing God in Christ by the Spirit. This is the vital argument that undergirds Torrance's criticism of the aberrance of dualism especially in the context of defending not only the sovereignty of God, but also the appropriateness of human participation as scientific inquiry in the revelation and mediation of divine self-disclosure in Christ. Thus, it may be said that the Einsteinian revolution has provided Torrance with what he would regard as the 'appropriate tool' to argue for the imperative return of theology from its epistemic course of dualism to realism in understanding divine revelation and mediation.

We may end our discussion with a short demonstration of the effectiveness of the 'tool'. When commenting on Einstein's stress of grounding scientific knowledge on the self-disclosing nature of objective intelligibility, Torrance says, 'This all important point, theologically speaking, may be called the *homoousion* of physics, the basic insight that our knowledge of the universe is not cut short at appearance or what we can deduce from them, but is a grasping of reality in its ontological depth, and that we are unable to pierce through appearances and apprehend the structures of reality unless we operate with the ontological integration of form and being, or of structure and matter, which is, after all, what $E = MC^2$ entails.'[13] Just as the concept of

[12] *GGT,* 162.
[13] Ibid.

homoousion comes about through the Nicene Fathers' theological realisation of the inherent truth of God's self-revelation and mediation in Christ, the concept of the '*homoousion* of physics' emerges through Einstein's scientific discovery of the revelatory nature of objective reality. Both, as Torrance argues, pivot on the undeniable fact that the true nature of things essentially is what they are inherently in themselves. 'Nature does not deceive us or play tricks with us,' Torrance says, 'it is everywhere trustworthy and reliable. Thus the *homoousion* of physics represents an epistemological revolution of very far-reaching significance for natural [and theological] science.'[14]

[14] Ibid. Notwithstanding the groundbreaking achievement of his scientific works, Torrance says that Einstein is not blind to the fact that science has its limitation. At least, according to Einstein, science is unable, as a process of inquiry itself, to establish independently the basic belief of the objective rationality of reality. Thus, Einstein is convinced that without profound faith that derives from religion and revelation, science would be inconceivable. In congruence with Einstein, Torrance would argue that the essential breakthrough of modern science arises out of that fundamental conviction of belief and faith. Torrance says that both Einstein and Maxwell hold the view that the fundamental beliefs are intuitive and religious in character. The intuitive character of belief is associated with the 'pre-established harmony' between human thought and the independent empirical reality. It makes possible the human mind to discover and understand the intrinsic structure of natural order; as Einstein claims that it is only through intuition, resting on sympathetic understanding of experience, that we are able to derive the basic laws that govern the nature. It is important to note that, like Maxwell, Einstein does not consider these fundamental beliefs 'primitive guesses'. They are however rational insights impressed upon the human mind by the compelling and disclosing nature of the contingent reality. This leads Einstein to comprehend the religious character of such belief. Einstein says, 'To the sphere of religion belongs the faith that the regulations valid for the world of existence are rational, that is comprehensible to reason. I cannot conceive of a genuine scientist without that profound faith. The situation may be expressed as an image: science without religion is lame, religion without science is blind.' What about the reciprocal dependence of religion on science? Torrance underlines that religion is dependent on natural science to purge it of 'the dross of its anthropomorphism'; particularly, the abstract form of anthropomorphism found in the projection of idealised concepts into God by the liberal theology. It would be mistaken in this regard for one to think that Torrance is rejecting anthropomorphism totally. In fact anthropomorphism has a role to play in Torrance's theological reconstruction if it is appropriated on the basis that it derives from a profound reciprocal relation with a personal God who interacts with the world through his Word. Torrance is able to underpin the relation between anthropomorphism and Christian doctrines because God to him is essentially relational and personal. However, could the same be said of Einstein's God? What is this 'God' that Einstein refers to on certain occasions as 'the Old One'? Arguably the most famous saying of Einstein concerning his understanding of God's nature is that 'God does not play dice'. The statement is made in the context of expressing his disagreement with the idea of 'indeterminacy', or 'uncertainty', that is associated with a form of contemporary quantum theory. If 'God does not play dice' is about Einstein's profound belief in the regularity of nature, 'God does not wear his heart on his sleeve' stands for the conviction that the deep secret and beauty of contingent nature cannot be deduced simply from phenomenal appearances. When referring to 'God is deep but not devious', Torrance says it expresses the complexity and subtlety, ultimate simplicity and reliability of the universe. The question is what can we make out of these? How are these sayings to be interpreted? If one is suspicious of an element of pantheism, he may find supports as Einstein indeed has equated 'the rationality or intelligibility of the world' with 'a superior mind that reveals itself in the world of experience' to express his concept of God. In addition, by associating himself with Spinoza's notion of God, Einstein seems to subscribe the idea that God is the 'impersonal infinite Being immanent in the universe'. In this regard, it is not surprising to know that Karl Popper in fact regards Einstein's thought as 'theistic'. Notwithstanding his theological position, the important point to Torrance is that Einstein, standing on the shoulders of Maxwell, has held firmly to the end the importance of fundamental belief and faith in scientific inquiry. See *CTSC*, 7-8, 58-60; *GGT*, 112, 119, 127.

Michael Polanyi explains in *Personal Knowledge* that when he sub-titled the book 'Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy', he had in mind now is the 'critical moment' for us to challenge the validity and superiority of rationalism. Citing from St. Augustine, he argues that all knowledge is a gift of grace and 'we must strive under the guidance of antecedent belief: *nisi credideritis, non intelligitis.*'[15] To emulate Augustine's success in bringing the history of Greek philosophy to a close by inaugurating, for the first time, a post-critical philosophy, Polanyi underpins that fundamental belief, as the source of all knowledge, is critical and essential in scientific endeavour. Such acknowledgement is, according to Polanyi, a realisation that 'we can voice our ultimate convictions only from within our convictions.'[16] The problem of rationalism and the need to return to the fundamental belief in science as Polanyi underscores point to that which Buber regards as the eclipse of God in theology to Torrance. Unquestionably, belief, or faith, arises out of personal conviction.[17] However, unlike

[15] Michael Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge: Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969), 266. Hereafter abbreviated as *PK*. Polanyi cites from St. Augustine, *De libero arbitrio*, Book I, par. 4: 'The steps are laid down by the prophet who says, "Unless ye believe, ye shall not understand".'

[16] Ibid., 267.

[17] Torrance underlines that although belief or faith arises out of personal conviction, it is not merely an individualistic activity. The quest for knowledge is not a solitary occupation. It involves 'inter-personal relations with one another'. It is when people are open to sharing the intimate experience of reality that a communal conviction can be reached. It is in the context of a believing community that certain common beliefs can be shaped and upheld. Polanyi asserts that since 'no body knows more than a tiny fragment of science to judge its validity and value at the first hand… he has to rely on views accepted at second hand on the authority of community of people accredited as scientists.' This implies that in every scientific community, there exists a form of organised authority and tradition. They function as touchstones to facilitate both the value and growth of knowledge. Polanyi and Torrance recognise the role of authority and tradition in setting boundary for scientific field. They are there to assess and verify the outcome of research. However, with the intent to enlarge and deepen its content, Torrance claims that authority and tradition cannot have the final verdict because they (like the outcome of research) are subject to the actual disclosure of reality and are consistently being relativised by the truth. As Torrance says, 'This does not imply that we must operate uncritically within the knowledge or wisdom accumulated in our cultural tradition, just because we are unable to extricate ourselves from involvement in it. On the contrary, it is because our thought is so powerfully influenced by culture that we must bring its latent assumptions out into the open and put them to the test.' Polanyi makes the same point as well. However, in adding an 'essential qualification' to the principle of authority, Polanyi goes beyond Torrance in claiming that 'Every acceptance of authority is qualified by some measure of reaction to it or even against it. Submission to the consensus is always accompanied to some extent by the imposition of one's views on the consensus to which we submit.' While both agree on the importance of application and modification of authority and tradition, the implication of Polanyi's view is that he acknowledges the possibility of fundamental changes within science. Polanyi believes that a reasonable conception of science 'must include conflicting views within science and admit of changes in the fundamental beliefs and values of scientists.' While Torrance clearly identifies the common ground between science and theology, he would certainly be

the belief and conviction of dualism that essentially work with *a priori* principle, Torrance stresses that the postulation of Polanyi involves basic acts of acknowledgement in responding to the revealing intelligibility that is inherent in the nature of things and thus cannot be reduced to mere subjectivity.[18] Regarded in this way, Torrance claims that fundamental belief and contingent rationality are intrinsically bound together, and the correlation between them forms the basis for Polanyi to focus on the importance of belief as the source of rational knowledge.[19] Thus, Torrance says that Polanyi, together with Maxwell and Einstein, have rejected the positivist emphasis on abstract and detached forms of thought, and attacked dualistic separation of mind and matter.[20]

A crucial area Torrance believes Polanyi has moved significantly beyond Maxwell and Einstein regards the argument that there can be no knowledge of material realities apart from the personal activity of the knower.[21] The argument is of particular importance to Torrance not only because it brings to light the place of personal judgement in scientific epistemology, it also affirms Torrance's claim of the indispensable role of human participation as scientific inquiry in theology. Having said that, it is unequivocal to Torrance that the acknowledgement of personal participation does not sweep the import to free scientific knowledge from personal biases and subjective prejudices as argued by the positivists under the carpet. Citing the argument of Polanyi, Torrance asserts that the positivists have overlooked the vital fact that it is only 'person' who is capable of self-criticism and of distinguishing what he knows from his subjective states.[22] Essentially, as Polanyi says, 'the discernment of a coherence, the appraisal of order, the assessment of a probability, the choice between two theories, the ability to see and to guess rightly the informal

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hesitant in applying this to the fundamental beliefs of the Christian faith. See *RST*, 111-112; *RET*, 17; *CTSC*, 13, 68; *PK*, 163, 167, 208; Colin Weightman, *Theology in a Polanyian Universe: The Theology of Thomas Torrance* (New York: Peter Lang, 1994), 227-28.

[18] *CTSC*, 68. As Maxwell and Einstein have underlined that it is the ontological anchoring of belief in transcendent reality that prevents it from being subjective or arbitrary, Torrance points out that truth to Polanyi is essentially about the external pole of belief. Thus, belief is about the obedience of the mind to the truth in the recognition of its universal claims and normative authority.

[19] Ibid., 62. According to Torrance no one has given more explicit discussion to the priority of belief in rational knowledge than Polanyi.

[20] Polanyi is concerned to free science from the dominance of positivism. In particular, according to Torrance, Polanyi has in mind the conventionalist and positivist notions of science advanced by Ernst Mach. See *TCFK*, 110-111.

[21] *CTSC*, 62. Weightman underlines that in his stress on the need for natural scientists to keep free from selfish desire, Einstein apparently associates the personal with a negative self-centredness. This seems to prejudice him against personal, resulting in an impersonal model of thought. See Weightman, 219

[22] Ibid.

decisions that enter into the process of verification, and so on, are all personal acts in which the scientist is constantly engaged throughout his inquiries.'[23] By underpinning the necessity of personal participation, Torrance claims that Polanyi does not reject objectivity but objectivism in personal knowledge. His emphasis on personal elements does not entail any subjectivism, but a refusal to it. Indisputably certain degree of detachment is needed in order to maintain necessary impartiality. Yet a total detachment is impossible as personal participation is an integral part of the knowledge process. The discourse of Polanyi has immense significance to Torrance. It provides Torrance with the needed support in arguing that personal belief and conviction in theology are legitimately objective and scientific. It endorses Torrance's claim that personal participation in theology is essentially the human action of scientific inquiry in responding appositely to the divine action of self-disclosure in Christ.

To continue to set the stage, we would mainly focus on three aspects of Torrance's use of Polanyi in theology that are related to our discussion. First, it is the principle of 'indwelling' of which Torrance regards to have an epistemological overlap between science and theology. Polanyi explains that 'indwelling' is about the use of a framework for unfolding human understanding in accordance with the indications and standards imposed by the framework.[24] It is an interactive process whereby we as the subject interiorise the object we seek to know and make ourselves dwell in it in order to develop new facilities.[25] Torrance paraphrases it as 'the activity in which we let our minds dwell within some context of experience, using the framework which it supplies to help us gain access to deeper and fuller meaning.'[26] To both Torrance and Polanyi this is the way primary concepts that are intuitively

[23] *TCFK*, 135. Polanyi concedes by saying that there is always a 'residue of personal judgment involved in deciding whether to accept any particular piece of evidence, be it as proof of a true regularity, or, on the contrary, as a refutation of an apparent regularity. This is how I saw and accepted the fact that, strictly speaking, all empirical science is inexact. And as I came to realise that all integration is, like perception, based largely on tacit elements, of which we have only a vague knowledge, I applied this also to science, and decided that science was grounded on an act of personal judgement, and called this knowledge, therefore, a *personal knowledge*.' In congruence with Polanyi, Torrance delineates, 'In the nature of the case, however, this is not a logical or impersonal movement of thought carried out merely through formal operations according to definite rules, but one that can be undertaken only by a rational agent in the exercise of critical appraisal and judgment as well as intuitive discernment and apprehension. Formal rules and impersonal instruments do, of course, play a considerable and indeed an utterly essential role in scientific activity, but they have to be directed and controlled by the scientist, as from an active personal centre of intentionality, if they are to fulfil their purpose.' See *TCFK*, 123, 134.

[24] Michael Polanyi, *Knowing and Being: Essays by Michael Polanyi*, ed. Marjorie Grene (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd, 1969), 134. Hereafter abbreviated as *KB*.

[25] Ibid., 148.

[26] *TCFK*, 93.

connected with the object take shape in our minds and transform our thoughts. It enables Torrance to argue scientifically that the compulsiveness of God's self-disclosure takes place in shaping human inquiry as it participates in ascertaining the knowledge of God in accordance with the intent of divine revelation and mediation in Christ. The principle is of particular importance as Torrance claims that 'Polanyi should use here the language found in the Fourth Gospel, where Jesus speaks of the mutual indwelling between himself and his disciples, their dwelling in his Word and his dwelling in them through the Spirit, enabling them to enter into more intimate knowledge of his mind as the revelation of the Father, and so be led forward into the truth.'[27] However, Torrance's use of Polanyi in this regard is not without criticism. Colin Weightman comments that Torrance is keen to underscore the objective character but undervalue the subjective aspect of indwelling as understood by Polanyi.[28] The inescapable bodily-rootedness of personal indwelling is not mentioned as well in Torrance's explication.[29] Instead Torrance focuses on the indwelling of the object and not on the equally significant indwelling of the knower and his culture. Weightman's observation is not inaccurate. Nevertheless, the matter in question may not be that Torrance has 'ignored' this crucial aspect of Polanyi's thought. Torrance, in his discussion of the personal and social coefficient of knowledge, clearly demonstrates that he has in mind as well the importance of the subjective aspect of indwelling, both bodily and culturally.[30] However, in his appropriation, Torrance is sometime caught up with the concern to safeguard the absolute objectivity or the sovereignty of God in Christ's revelation and mediation and thus, unlike Polanyi in natural science, unwilling to maintain the equilibrium; but to put more weight on the objective reality. In other words, Torrance's appropriation of Polanyi is selective and critical; as McGrath says, 'Torrance himself regards his use of Polanyi as a means of developing and strengthening his own fundamental theological ideas, and is empathic that those ideas are not grounded in Polanyi's writings.'[31] The upholding of God in Christ's revelation and mediation to Torrance is the critical task beyond any negotiation in theology, as any compromise in that

[27] Ibid.
[28] Weightman, 220-22.
[29] Ibid. According to Polanyi, knowing fuses our subsidiary awareness of the particulars belonging to our subject matter with our subsidiary awareness of our own bodily and cultural being. Thus, he emphasises that all thought is incarnate or embodied. This aspect, however, has not been the focus of Torrance's discussion.
[30] For detailed discussion, see Torrance's article of 'The Social Coefficient of Knowledge' in *RST*, 98-130.
[31] McGrath, 229.

department would run the risk of falling into the pitfall of dualism, particularly the Arian dualism and Newtonian dualism. On this note, we would argue that Torrance's theological consideration has circumscribed him from appropriating Polanyi lock, stock and barrel.

The second aspect of Polanyi's discourse that is significant to Torrance concerns the tacit character of personal knowledge. Torrance remarks that this is the distinctiveness of Polanyi in providing an important answer with regard to the relation between human thought and experience.[32] Polanyi claims that 'we know more than we can tell, for in addition to our "focal awareness" and the explicit knowledge to which it gives rise, we always operate with a "subsidiary awareness" and an implicit knowledge on which we rely in all our explicit operations.'[33] Polanyi underlines that this tacit dimension is evident in the scientific discovery through 'an unaccountable intuitive apprehension of a structure in reality', and in the development of knowledge through 'a process of integration in which largely unspecifiable clues are organised in response to the intimation of a true coherent in nature.'[34] In appropriating Polanyi's thought, Torrance claims that all explicit knowledge, be it scientific or theological, arises out of the tacit dimension. On this note, Torrance has no difficulty in incorporating tacit dimension to his discussion of ultimate beliefs, such as the belief of order, rationality, simplicity, and contingency.[35] However, one area of Torrance's appropriation has to be addressed. It regards his claim that the tacit dimension provides the continuous epistemological field that integrates the sciences and arts, and overcomes the dualisms that have led to the fragmentation of human culture.[36] Although Torrance's intent is clearly to argue for a solution to the entrenched dualism, he would have to face two issues in relation to his use of Polanyi here. First, Polanyi although affirms the presence of tacit dimension in knowledge, he does not state that the respective tacit dimensions are continuous from one field to another. No doubt all explicit knowledge is rooted in tacit dimension in a subsidiary-focal manner for Polanyi, this however does not imply

[32] *TCFK*, 112. In Torrance's view, Polanyi has moved beyond Einstein in thinking out further the coordination between idea and phenomenal reality.
[33] Ibid.
[34] Ibid.
[35] For example, with regard to applying tacit dimension to the discussion of simplicity, Torrance says that it will neither yield specific information in itself nor a particular view of reality, but provide a framework through which the reality can be glimpsed. For this reason, simplicity could be seen as a form of cognitive means required in Torrance's social coefficient of knowledge. For detailed discussion see *TCFK*, 191-214.
[36] *BSCL*, 145.

by default a principle of continuity. Moreover, Polanyi does not affirm continuity between science and religion.[37] This leads to the second point that Torrance, in his discussion of the social coefficient of knowledge, does make a distinction between social coefficients of theological and non-theological knowledge. He says, 'There is an inescapable need for a social coefficient of knowledge in order to establish and maintain semantic relations with reality…But of course our special concern here is with the *social coefficient of theological knowledge*, and with the way in which our basic theological concepts arise in the dynamic and empirical correlation of our human life to the self-revealing interaction of God with us in the world.'[38] By making the distinction that has an unintended consequence of implying a discontinuity in the tacit substructures of religion and natural science, Torrance indeed cannot escape from receiving criticism that he has contradicted himself in his use of the principle of tacit dimensions.[39]

The third aspect of Polanyi's thought that is of service to Torrance regards the acknowledgment that without the independent existence of a transcendent rationality, scientific knowledge cannot be pursued. Polanyi says that he is often caught up in the pursuit of a reality that is only partially disclosed, and yet he is convinced that it has an independence and power for manifesting itself in unthought-of ways in the future.[40] Torrance claims that this is the contingent nature of objectivity that science and theology share, as both are open to what is beyond to which they have no control. Because of the overwhelming nature of the transcendent rationality, Torrance underscores that any scientific formalisation of the universe must retain not just an open structure character, it must also to be ready for consistent revision in the light of a continuous interaction with contingent reality so that 'human reason becomes enlightened from beyond the limits of created rationality'.[41] On this note, the acknowledgement of Polanyi reinforces Torrance's use of Einstein's redefinition of *theory* and *principia* in substantiating the argument of the fluid-axiomatic nature of theological statement and dogma. Notwithstanding the significance of human participation as involving personal decision in scientific inquiry, the conviction of Polanyi corroborates Torrance's claim that the overwhelming presence of

[37] Weightman, 214.
[38] *RST*, 102.
[39] Weightman, 214.
[40] *GR*, 96. Torrance although is unequivocal that 'the independent existence of a transcendent rationality' cannot be confounded with God, it does point to the ultimate reality that provides the basis for social coefficient of knowledge. *BSCL*, 145; *RST*, 102, 103-04, and Weightman, 214.
[41] Ibid., 97. See *PK*, 384.

preternatural element, which demands a sense of transcendent awe in us, a point we will return to later, indeed is to be found in every discipline of science. Torrance, however, clarifies that 'this transcendental element in the sciences of nature is not of course to be identified with God, for it comes at us out of the immanent rationality of nature, but it does cry aloud for God if only because the immanent rationality in nature does not provide us with any explanation of itself'[42] (see chapter six). To Polanyi the concept of transcendent reality is not merely an object of academic pursuit in science. It is also the fundamental guiding belief of science.[43] The creative life of a scientific community rests upon the belief in the possibility to discover the still hidden truth. And, according to Polanyi, it is also a belief in 'spiritual reality' and the 'reality of emergent meaning and truth'.[44] As noted from the outset, Polanyi's conviction of the ultimate belief is neither irrational nor subjective fancies to Torrance. It is in fact a genuine commitment of the mind to the objective reality in distinction to the regulative principles of Kant.[45] It is as well a matter of faith[46]. Although Torrance is justifiable to underpin the objective ground of belief and faith, he is rather quiet about Polanyi's understanding that truth and transcendental ideas are human ideas as well, since both arise only within an articulate framework provided by society.[47] Furthermore, there is a dynamic between object and subject in this accessibility of truth and Polanyi has given both even attentions. However, in Torrance's discussion, as noted earlier, his attention on the object outweighs the subject because of his theological consideration. Thus, Langford comments that 'Torrance certainly wants to keep the subject and object in dynamic tension. But he moves in an entirely different way from Polanyi when he stresses the initiative and

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[42] Ibid.

[43] Michael Polanyi, *Science, Faith and Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), 76. Hereafter abbreviated as *SFS*.

[44] Ibid., 17.

[45] *TCFK*, 196-97.

[46] When commenting that no one has written more trenchantly about the need for faith than Polanyi, Torrance says, 'Any account of science which does not explicitly describe it as something we believe in is essentially incomplete and a false pretence. It amounts to a claim that science is essentially different from and superior to all human beliefs that are not scientific statements---and this is untrue…for the great scientists realise that behind and permeating all scientific activity, reaching from end to end of their inquiries, there is an elemental, intuitive, unshakable faith in the significant nature of things in the universe, faith in the intelligibility of the universe, faith in its pervasive and unitary character, faith in its regularity and stability and constancy and simplicity; but faith also in the possibility of grasping the real world with our concepts, together with the faith that the intelligibility of the real world holds good when it transcends our conceptions and formulations, faith in the truth over which we have no control, but in the service of which our human rationality stands or falls.' See *TCFK*, 195-96.

[47] Michael Polanyi, *The Study of Man* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959), 60-70. See Weightman, 223.

controlling character of the object in question. Polanyi's position rests upon the complete interrelatedness of the two.'[48] Nevertheless, the difference on this matter could not undermine the importance of Polanyi to Torrance, especially in relation to how he understands and uses Polanyian science for theology.

To set the stage we have in this section touched on the main features of Einsteinian-Polanyian science from the standpoint of Torrance and their implications in his theological endeavour. Our discussion shows that Torrance, in recognising the importance of the self-disclosure of objective reality and the necessity for human participation to be genuinely scientific and personal in the attainment of knowledge, affirms the realist epistemology of the integration of form and being, and underscores the intrinsic reciprocity between the object and the subject in the process of scientific inquiry. Torrance sees the dynamic interaction between the scientific inquiry of the subjective knower and the compulsive self-disclosing nature of the objective reality in Einsteinian-Polanyian science as analogous to that of the normative pattern of revelation and mediation in theology which maintains the importance of the dynamic union and communion of divine and human action in the knowing of God in Christ. On this note, the inherent similarity between science and theology has provided the ground for Torrance to appropriate science for the service of theology. The advancement of modern science, as our argument shows, has enabled Torrance to regard it as the beacon of light in directing theology from the entrenchment of dualism to a realism of knowing God in accordance with the revelation and mediation of Christ. It essentially provides the needed endorsement for Torrance to make the legitimate claim that the human action of the normative pattern of revelation and mediation of theology is essentially scientific and personal, and is carried out appropriately in accordance with the nature of divine self-disclosure. As Torrance says, 'Theological and natural science each has its proper objective to pursue but their work inevitably overlaps, for both operate through the same rational structures of space and time… each is what it its as a movement of human inquiry because of the profound co-ordination between human knowing and space-time structures of the creation.'[49] On this note, the importance of Einstein and Polanyi to Torrance in his theological reconstruction cannot be underestimated.

[48] Thomas A. Langford, 'T. F. Torrance's Theological Science, a Reaction,' *Scottish Journal of Theology* 25 (1972): 196.
[49] Thomas F. Torrance, 'Newton, Einstein and Scientific Theology,' *Religious Studies* 8 (1972): 233.

Theology as Scientific Discipline

In the preceding section we have touched on the essential characteristics of Einsteinian-Polanyian science that Torrance reckons to be of significance to theology. Our aim of this section is to bring the discussion a step further by analysing Torrance's perception of the scientific nature of theology; namely, his understanding of theological science.

In the preface of his magnum opus, *Theological Science*, Torrance refers to A. E. Taylor and says, 'If knowledge is to be more than personal opinion, he argued, there must be control of our personal intellectual constructions by something which is not constructed but received. In our human knowledge of God this is humbly to acknowledge that what is genuinely given has unquestionable right to control our thinking and acting, just because it is so utterly given to us and not made by us… [Thus] Professor Taylor held that we might entertain hope for the future of theology as "a genuine, assured, and yet progressive science of God."'[50] According to Torrance the teaching of Taylor aptly encapsulates the essence of theological science. Fundamentally theological science is a philosophy of the science of God. The core engagement here is the independent reality of God and the authority of the givenness of God's self-revelation. As God is the object of our theological knowledge, scientific theology is our cognitive response to God in obedience to the demands of his objective reality and self-revelation. In other words, it is an attempt 'to allow God's own eloquent self-evident to sound through to us in His Logos so that we may know and understand Him out of His own rationality and under the determination of His divine being.'[51] On this note, we begin properly with God's self-disclosure in Christ and seek to clarify this knowing by rigorous scientific inquiry. Regarded in this way, theological science is the science of God, or, the science of God's revelation and mediation in Christ.

Theological science demands us in this process of clarification to be open to God so that we may respond faithfully and truly to his self-disclosure. 'It is through this disciplined obedience of our mind to God as He give Himself to be known by us that we advance in knowledge of Him,' Torrance continues, 'in the course of this

[50] *TS*, viii. See A. E. Taylor, *The Faith of a Moralist* (London: Macmillan, 1930), 235-241.
[51] Ibid., ix.

inquiry that we raise the question of the possibility of the knowledge of God'.[52] Torrance claims that this process is critical in the light that our understanding of God's self-disclosure often suffers from 'double vision'.[53] The problem mainly lies in our erring attempts to bring to its apprehension preconceived ideas that are not appropriate or wrongly extrapolated from another field of experience.[54] Torrance says, 'It is always the nature of things that must prescribe for us the specific mode of rationality that we must adopt toward them, and prescribe also the form of verification apposite to them, and therefore it is a major part of all scientific activity to reach clear convictions as to the distinctive nature of what we are seeking to know in order that we may develop and operate with the distinctive categories demanded of us.'[55] Hence, Torrance says that theological statements and concepts are characteristically analogous to the Einsteinian theory of relativity as they refer to the ultimate invariance of objective reality and are constantly relativised by it. Torrance elucidates,

> Its task [theological science] is to bring to view the new and distinctive kinds of connection that obtain in the relation of God to man within space-time structures of the creation, and to generate, under the objective of scientific pressure of the divine self-revelation, appropriate modes and systems of thought, as open and as simple as possible, through which those distinctive connections can come to expression in our human representations of them, and yet to do that in such a way that the constancies of the divine economy, invariant for any and every believer, stand out in their distinction from and are yet served by, the variant formulations and interpretational systems which we develop in the progress of our inquiry. Thus, theological concepts and statements have a feature similar to that implied in relativity theory, for they refer to what is greater than we can ever conceive, and are themselves relativised precisely by the revelation of that transcendent reality which they serve.[56]

This is the cardinal principle. It undergirds theological science if it is to overcome the 'double vision' and to faithfully mediate the self-revelation of God not by any preconceived idea, but in accordance with its intrinsic nature and order.[57] The

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[52] Ibid., 9.
[53] Ibid., x. Torrance explicates that although God does not cease to disclose his reality, humanity on their own are unable to trace the thought of God back to God without suffering from distorted vision. He says, 'All a man may be able to do then in his sense of the presence of God is to give it oblique, or symbolic, meaning only to discover that he has to thrust himself into its content, or he may try to straighten out the connections of his thoughts and make them point beyond him, only to find that they break off and point into emptiness and nothing, even though he remains haunted, as it were, by the ultimate rationality of God around him.'
[54] Ibid., xi.
[55] Ibid., xii. See *GGT* , 7-9.
[56] *TCFK*, 276.
[57] *TS*, x-xii. However, one point remains rather puzzling when Torrance claims that the attainment of knowledge involves a 'give and take' between the subject and the object, and that 'all knowledge is by

Gifford lectures delivered by Taylor in 1927 may have helped Torrance to recognise the importance of scientific thought in theology. However, it is in his later encounter of Barth's *Church Dogmatics* that convinces him that it is 'here one could really get at a scientific theology.'[58] Barth has provided a reformed theological structure for Torrance to relate theology to science in a profound way.[59] The emphasis of Barth that theology is the scientific self-test of church language determined by the object which is God revealed in Jesus Christ makes an indelible impression on Torrance. In order for us to have a better grasp of Torrance's thought, we need to touch on the foundation of which he builds upon and the reasons that cause him later to move beyond Barth in order for theology to truly engage with science in the understanding of God's revelation and mediation in Christ.

We have mentioned that Torrance rightly shares with Barth the view that theological science is the evaluation of the language of God grounded in his self-revelation in Jesus Christ. 'The question of truth,' Barth says, 'is the question as to the agreement of the Church's distinctive talk about God with the being of the Church.'[60] The test of the agreement, which is the character of scientific exercise, ranks theology as theological science independently along with other sciences. Barth says that theology does not by default possess 'special keys to special doors,' it has not at its disposal an extraordinary knowledge that is beyond the attainment of other sciences.[61] In fact it has been criticised by many such as historian, educationist, philosopher and so on, within the framework of other sciences.[62] And the outcome is an increase in self-alienation of the church and a degeneration of the language about God.[63] Barth is adamant that the task to criticise and revise theological language

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the way of being a compromise between thought and being'. He says that our knowing is like 'a sort of lens through which we allow nature in its intrinsic patterns to reveal itself to our apprehension', and through 'the process of refining the lens or theory, our basic images and concepts undergo radical change'. In other words, the correction of 'double-vision' falls on the part of the beholder to do the necessary adjustment as he focuses on the object. Should the vision remain unclear, then, in Torrance's word, 'If something is inherently rational, and not merely accidental or surd-like, then it is our fault and not that of the thing itself if we fail to understand it.' Torrance reiterates, 'Although God does not cease to disclose His power and deity to them [inquirers] the truth becomes stifled, for at the very roots of their knowledge, as St. Paul said, they twist it into untruth.' If our reading of Torrance is right, he does not seem to suggest that with regard to the attainment of knowledge, God is going to compromise or to 'give and take' when we are off focus.

[58] John I. Hesselink, 'A Pilgrimage in the School of Christ---An Interview with T. F. Torrance,' *Reformed Review* 38 (1984): 53. See Mary Doyle Morgan, 'A New Vision of Wholeness,' *Presbyterian Survey* (1980): 22.

[59] *TCFK*, vii.

[60] *CD*, I/1, 4.

[61] Ibid., 5.

[62] Ibid., 5-6.

[63] Ibid., 6.

cannot be done apart from the standpoint of the principle peculiar to the church. Theology is scientific as it sets itself to this task determined solely by the yardstick of 'the being of the Church, of Jesus Christ as its basis, goal and content.'[64] Although Barth ranks theology along with other sciences, he is adamant that such juxtaposition should not, in the slightest possible way, accommodate theology to the concepts of other sciences. He has made it clear that by bearing the title 'science', theology does not 'allow itself to be disturbed or hampered in its own task by regard for what is described as science elsewhere.'[65] In fact he argues that in order for theology to perform scientifically, it must completely subordinate and sacrifice every single consideration of what 'science' means elsewhere.[66] Barth's firmness on the issue, which Torrance fully subscribes, could not be made more explicit in the rather heated discussion after the delivery of a paper by his friend, Heinrich Scholz.[67] The incident deserves our attention for two reasons. First, it accentuates Barth's perception that Torrance ardently supports. Second, although Torrance was unquestionably on the side of Barth, the influence of Scholz is detectable in his later development.[68]

The issue of contention essentially is about the nature of the scientific status of theology. To Scholz the decisive factor to scientific (*wissenschaftlich*) qualification is fundamentally not about the subject but the method 'which it applied, which required to take the form of an axiomatic and deductive approach, based upon clearly formulated propositions.'[69] Out of the six conditions of Scholz's proposition, the first three are the essential ones that have considerable bearing on theology as a scientific discipline. First, all propositions constructed by the subject in question have to be free from contradiction. Second, the unity of all propositions has to be observed. Third, all propositions formulated must be capable of test and examination.[70] Barth's rejection is expected. Apart from the first condition that 'is acceptable by theologian only upon the very limited interpretation', Barth says, 'Not an iota can be yielded here without betraying theology, for any concession here

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[64] Ibid., Barth underpins three criteria for theological science. Like other sciences, theology is firstly a human effort enquiring into a specific object of knowledge. Secondly, it follows a definite, self-consistent path of knowledge. Finally, like other sciences, it has the duty to be accountable for its own justification.
[65] Ibid., 8.
[66] Ibid.
[67] Barth has recorded the discussion in *CD*, I/1, 8-9.
[68] The incident is narrated by Torrance in the preface of *STR*. The impression of Scholz on Torrance is evident.
[69] McGrath, 141.
[70] Heinrich Scholz, 'Wie Ist Eine Evangelische Theologie Als Wissenschaft Moglich?,' *Zwischen den Zeiten* (1931): 8-53.

involves surrendering the theme of theology.'[71] Barth argues that if theology is to be in its own right a subject of science, it cannot simultaneously succumb itself to 'the obligation of submission to standards valid for other sciences.'[72] Barth delineates that if theology were to be placed in a systematic relationship with other sciences, it would have to regard its own existence, like other sciences, as fundamentally necessary within an ordered cosmos. That, he asserts, is unacceptable as theology is not a member of the ordered cosmos but a 'stop-gap' in an unordered one. With that argument, he claims that it is not possible to have a concept of science common to theology and other sciences.[73] To certain extent Barth's argument is the opposite of Scholz. The criterion is not the method but the subject. The 'scientific starting point' in theology has to be the resurrection of Christ and not epistemology.[74] To Barth even the good intent of formulating a better definition of science has to be rejected by theology. His keynote, which is shared by Torrance, could be identified here,

> The only way which theology has of proving its scientific character is to devote itself to the task of knowledge as determined by its actual theme and thus to show what it means by true science. No science has any manorial rights to the title, nor does any theory of science have absolute power either to grant or withheld the title… Theology has no reason not to call itself a science.[75]

In order to do justice to Scholz, we must say that he indeed does not impose the conditions to theology.[76] Scholz however undoubtedly believes that theology should justify more of the assertions it has made. Pannenberg, when commenting on the controversy, expresses that 'Barth's argument for the scientific status of theology on grounds of appropriateness to its object is sometimes used to justify far-reaching assertions with no mention of Scholz's disagreement with him and the problems it has raised.'[77] Notwithstanding the difference, Scholz's arguments make an impression on Torrance.[78] We could detect, in addition to the influence of Einstein,

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[71] *CD*, I/1, 9.
[72] Ibid., 10.
[73] Ibid.
[74] *STR*, x.
[75] *CD*, I/1, 10.
[76] Weightman, 133-34.
[77] Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Theology and the Philosophy of Science* (London: Longman and Todd, 1976), 270. Pannenberg accepts Scholz's proposition. He believes if theology is to be called a discipline of science, it has to meet the conditions as Scholz underlined. See Weightman, 134-35 and McGrath 207-08.
[78] *STR*, ix-x. The influence can be seen in Torrance's eagerness to discuss with Barth the philosophy and logic of science taught by Scholz in their last meeting in Basel, 1968. It could also be detected in Torrance's review of *Mathesis Universalis*, a collection of Scholz's essays published in 1961.

Scholz's propensity for axiomatisation in Torrance's mature works where he argues for the correlation between theology and science. Torrance writes,

> The claim is put forward that theology is a pure of a realist kind operating on its own proper ground and governed by its own proper object, and comparison are drawn between theological science and natural science in these respects. Thus understood theology is a positive and progressive inquiry into the knowledge of God proceeding under the determination of his self-revelation…. It is a human enterprise working with revisable formulations in a manner not unlike that of an axiomatic science operating with fluid axioms.[79]

One may comment that Torrance appears to have taken 'on board the precise position which Barth rejected in his encounter with Scholz.'[80] However, it is not the case as the fluid axioms that Torrance refers to are open to change and modification in relation to the object in question.[81] Torrance says, 'The kind of scientific theology that arises in this way may be called *fluid dogmatics*… because it is objectively oriented in the living God, operates with fluid axioms, i.e., axioms that are progressively modified in the light of the realities that are disclosed to us in God'.[82] In other words, scientific theology could be axiomatised into concepts without compromise as long as they are open and subject to further renewal in the light of the deepening knowledge of God's revelation and mediation in Christ. Torrance is prepared to take the argument a step further by claiming that 'even when it attains the status of a physical law, is rather like a refined lens through which we discern ontic structures in the universe'.[83] With that assertion, it may be said that Torrance, as he matures in his thinking, has gradually moved beyond Barth in his understanding of scientific theology. While Barth claims that theology 'has nothing to learn' from other sciences,[84] Torrance has shown otherwise without sacrificing the quintessence of the objectivity of God in his self-disclosure.

Arguably the theological tension between Barth and Torrance lies in Barth's attitude towards natural science. Torrance clearly identifies it as he says, 'Rigorous as that concept of dogmatics as a science might be, as it was in Barth's own *Church Dogmatics,* it appeared to be little more than a formal science and fell somewhat

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[79] *RST*, xiv; *RET* 48-51.
[80] Weightman, 135.
[81] Ibid. See *RET*, 50.
[82] *RET*, 49-50. Author's italic.
[83] Ibid., 50.
[84] *CD*, I/1, 7.

short of what I had been seeking.'[85] In Torrance's view, scientific theology needs to 'advance through and beyond Barth' on two accounts. First, notwithstanding Barth's significant contribution in substantiating theological dogmatic in its own right as a critical science, he has not tried or succeeded in formulating an appropriate cognitive instrument to bring forth theologically what Torrance regards as the 'profound harmonies and symmetries of the divine grace in which is enshrined the inner logic of God's creative and redemptive operations in the universe.'[86] If scientific theology is to be faithful to its object, Torrance claims that it must move beyond what it is and come up with an apparatus that is analogously corresponding to the four-dimensional geometry of Einstein. Second, theology as a scientific discipline cannot be a form of monism, especially in the light that modern scientific advancement has called for a cross-fertilisation and synthesis of disciplines. Torrance says, '[T]he future will be altogether different---that we can already see: it will be a synthesis of new structures, hierarchically ordered in multiple levels, and infinitely open to the transcendence of the living God.'[87] The importance of reciprocity between theology and science leads us to the point that 'a closer relation must be established between natural theology and revealed theology', if theological science is to account seriously the relation between the incarnation and creation in God's wholistic plan of salvation.[88] It, however, could not be done in the old traditional form of natural theology, as Barth rightly criticised (see chapter six).[89] Thus, in full recognition of the need to 'advance through and beyond Barth', Torrance could not regard Barth's notion that theology has nothing to learn from science as an acceptable one.

In fact the relation between theological science and natural science takes a turn for the better when Torrance focuses on basic problems both face. Torrance claims that the constant challenge awaiting theology and science is threefold: 'how to refer our thoughts and statements genuinely beyond ourselves, how to reach knowledge of reality in which we do not intrude ourselves distortingly into the picture, and yet how to retain the full and integral place of the human subject in it

[85] T. F. Torrance, 'My Interaction with Karl Barth,' in *How Karl Barth Changed My Mind*, ed. Donald K. Mckim (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 53.
[86] *TCFK*, 282.
[87] Ibid.
[88] Ibid., 281.
[89] Ibid. Torrance claims that Barth's attack of natural theology is based on a twofold reason. First, Barth disapproves traditional natural theology because it establishes an independent *a priori* system of conceptual idea and distorts revealed theology. Second, Barth claims that the prior epistemological system of natural theology that is detached from the material of God's self-revelation in Jesus Christ is itself methodologically unscientific.

all.' [90] In this quest both theological science and natural science are to be allies as each faces 'the same insidious enemy, namely, man himself assuming the role of the Creator'.[91] Torrance is confident that the prospect for a mutual learning between theology and science is encouraging.[92] Without doubt, Scholz is not the only person who has served as a stimulus to Torrance in his pursuit of the correlation between science and theology, a subject that is close to his heart from young.[93] The early influence of Daniel Lamont[94] and later that of Einstein and Polanyi cannot be overlooked in Torrance's development. Thus, it is not surprising at times to hear the claim that Torrance should not be called a Barthian, given the fact that as a mature theologian he has moved through and beyond Barth.[95] However, McGrath, Weightman and Langford's assessment about Torrance representing the further working-out of the methodology of Barth's theology is likely to be an accurate one.[96] Essentially Torrance anchors his cardinal principle of theological science to Barth's assertion of the objectivity of God in the revelation and mediation of Jesus Christ.

We have thus far analysed the scientific nature of Torrance's theological science. Our analysis shows that although Torrance embraces a different approach, he is much indebted to Barth at least on two scores that eventually become the hallmark of his theology; namely, the conviction that theology in its own right is a discipline of science, and it is in its entirety a science of God's revelation and mediation in Christ Jesus. On this note, Torrance's ingenuity, as we judge, lies in his

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[90] *TS*, xvii.
[91] Ibid.
[92] Ibid., xiii. Torrance says, 'As I see it, this is the great story of modern thought, whether it be in theology, science, or philosophy: the struggle for fidelity, for appropriate methods and apposite modes of speech, and therefore for the proper adaptation of the human subject to the object of his knowing, whether it be God or the world of nature or man; but it is also the story of the struggles of man within himself, for somehow the more he comes to know, the more masterful he tries to be and the more he imposes himself upon reality, the more he gets in the way of his own progress. It is here that positive theology should have so much to offer, for it is concerned with right relations between man and God, with the healing and repairing of the human subject through humility before God, with the control of his convictions by what is ultimately given and real, with emancipation from arbitrary individualism, and thus with genuine objectivity in which man learns to love God and his neighbour, not for his own sake, but for their sakes.'
[93] Torrance's initial thought of a possible topic of his doctoral thesis is in the area of scientific nature of theology. However, after knowing his intention, Barth encourages Torrance to write on the doctrine of grace of the Church Fathers on the ground that he is too young to handle subject of such magnitude. See McGrath, 45-46.
[94] Daniel Lamont lectured in New College when Torrance was a student. Torrance's interest in science and its relation with theology in clarifying the scientific structure of Christian dogma is to no small extent stimulated by Lamont. See McGrath, 33-34.
[95] Richard Gelwick, Review: 'Transformation and Convergence in the Frame of Knowledge,' *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 54, no. 1 (1986): 198.
[96] McGrath, 133-40; Weightman, 132; Thomas A. Langford, 'T. F. Torrance's Theological Science: A Reaction,' *Scottish Journal of Theology* 25 (1972): 155.

theological creativity to espouse and appropriate the epistemic tools of Einsteinian-Polanyian science in theology without sacrificing the quintessence of the objectivity of divine self-disclosure in Christ. By postulating theology as a scientific discipline, Torrance is affirming the importance of scientific inquiry as the human action of the normative pattern of revelation and mediation.

Scientific Inquiry of Divine Self-disclosure in Christ

With Torrance's emphasis of the scientific status of theology in mind, the aim of this section is to examine, as remedy for dualism, the appropriateness of human action as the inquiry of God's revelation and mediation in Christ. We attempt to focus primarily on the factors that determine the inquiry as properly scientific. Thus, we would examine the transcendent awe, the predicament of human existence, and the proficiency of language of the scientific inquiry of Torrance's theological science.

The attainment of knowledge begins with the rudimentary steps of inquiry. This feature is shared by all quests of knowledge including both theological and natural science. In this regard, inquiry, particularly scientific inquiry, to Torrance, has the task of formulating questions that are apposite to the nature of the investigating object in order to derive knowledge that is in accordance with its self-disclosure.[97] When open to the objective reality, Torrance underlines that scientific inquiry takes 'the form of questioning in which we allow what we already know or hold to be knowledge to be called in question by the object.'[98] The pivotal point gravitates from the subject to the object as we allow ourselves to be ordered around the object of inquiry. This change of focus, as mentioned, is the key characteristic of scientific inquiry in Einsteinian-Polanyian science. If theological science is to be considered scientific as natural science, Torrance asserts that it has to develop 'a

[97] *CFM*, 65-66. Torrance underlines that a detrimental shift from objectivity of empirical reality to the autonomy of legislative reason takes place in the era of dualistic and deterministic science has distorted the epistemic nature of inquiry. He says, '[T]here arose the view that the laws of nature are not read *out* of nature but are in fact read *into* nature, along with the claim that we human beings understand and accept as real only what we have fashioned by our reason for ourselves. When we consider this "constrictivist rationalism"… we are in a position to appreciate the serious damage which such a narrow view of scientific inquiry was to do not only to human culture, but eventually to the nature of science and scientific inquiry as such.' To Torrance the distortion persists until the latter half of the nineteenth century when Newtonian science eventually gives way to a mutational change in the foundations of knowledge initiated first by Maxwell's field theory and later culminated in Einstein's relativity theory. See *CFM*, 68-72.

[98] *TS*, 120.

scientific inquiry in which we learn how not to project ourselves into the centre of the picture but rather how to allow the rationality of God to throw its masterful light upon the whole area of human experience and knowledge.'[99] In responding to Polanyi who claims that in every change of scientific value there corresponds a change of maxims of procedure in scientific method,[100] Torrance advocates that this *epistemological inversion* is crucial for theology as a scientific discipline.[101] It has implication in the way questions are being asked. Advancement of scientific knowledge is made possible if we dare to ask new questions. New questions often require a change in language of expression and representation. They require corresponding changes in the framework of concepts and the structure of logic.[102] However, should we fail to design the questions properly, Torrance is certain that they would have a backward effect on us as a form of criticism. The object in question is not responsible for our failure of observation and cognition. Thus, Torrance underpins the importance for scientific inquiry to be 'ruthless and unrelenting, probing into the deepest depths of our knowing in order to uncover and cut away all that hinders us from behaving in terms of the nature, and in order to allow ourselves to be "told" by the object what we cannot tell ourselves about it, and so genuinely to learn what is beyond what we already know or think we know.'[103] Such rigor is inevitable if human action is to be appropriate to the demand of divine revelation. Torrance says,

> [T]heological science is a form of human inquiry in which we can only seek to grasp as far as we can what is communicated to us through orderly constructions of our forming, and in which we have to distinguish the substance of the truth from our scientific formulations of it, so that all dogmas must be regarded as relative to and relativised by what we seek to cognise through them… It would be a grave error to identify them as such with the transcendent form and being of the divine Truth, but it would also be a grave error to treat them as symbolic expressions of our encounter with reality with no ultimate *fundamentum in re*.[104]

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[99] *GR*, vii.
[100] Michael Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge: Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1974),169-71.
[101] *TS*, 131, 121.
[102] Ibid., 122.
[103] Oppenheimer expresses similar view when he says that science is a painful and disciplined process of revealing errors and purging questions that are not appropriate to the reality. He underlines that we need to learn to remove 'those instruments of action and those mode of description which are not appropriate to the reality we are trying to discern, and in this most painful discipline, find ourselves modest before the world.' See J. R. Oppenheimer, 'Physics in the Contemporary World,' *Great Essays in Science*, ed. Martin Gardner (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 212. Cited in *TS*, 122.
[104] *TS*, 287-88

Three key determinative factors could be identified here. In order for the human action of the theological science to be properly scientific, we need to ask whether there is a sense of transcendent awe in the inquiry? Is the predicament of human existence the basis of the inquiry? And finally, could ordinary language communicate and mediate divine revelation in this process?

The Transcendent Awe

Torrance asserts that the interpretive method adopted in theological science and the theological statements it formulates are not unlike that of empirical science. Although Torrance admits that statements in theology are 'heard statements' in the sense that they derive from the self-revelation of the living God, theological inquiry remains very much as human scientific action participating in that divine disclosure. Like natural science, theological science needs to distinguish the substance of the truth from our scientific formulations of it. Models or analogues are only ectypal, and not archetypal. They are always subject to criticism and revision at every moment of revelation so that the ultimate objectivity continues to retain its authority and majesty over them.[105] Torrance's concern of the confusion is not without cause. He is conscious of the power of autonomous reason in the process of inquiry. Although reason can serve us, it can also hinder us. In alluding to lessons learned from Kant, Torrance says that if we fail to understand the proper place of human reason and let it assumes the masterful role, it will insist on shaping what it seeks to know, and so becomes its own the greatest obstacle.[106] Reason is constantly at work in formulating analogues and constructing models in the process of inquiring in order to elicit answers from the reality. Unless reason submits itself to the authority of the ultimate objectivity in its theoretic construction, the danger of confusion and the temptation to replace truth with the abstract formulation of it is still lurking.

To Torrance the confusion is indicative as well of our failure in recognising that there is a line to which human inquiry, however scientific it is, cannot cross without making error or inconsistency. Weizsäcker says that 'we do not know what lies beyond that limit, or else it would not be the limit of our knowledge. Still, we assume that something does lie beyond it. And this alone is already an assumption

[105] Ibid., 288.
[106] Ibid., 121.

about something that we do not know.'[107] Weizsäcker recognises that human inquiry has a limitation, and we have to accept the unknown sphere that is beyond us as something outside the boundary of science.[108] Hence, when facing the unknown, one needs to learn to scientifically maintain a respectful silence.[109] Broglie, in *Physics and Microphysics*, asks, 'Undoubtedly it is a triumph for the human mind to have again able to unravel laws… but can it be asserted that this success is bound to be maintained indefinitely?' [110] Broglie underscores that even in nuclear physics there is a limit as to how much we can comprehend. Inevitably the range of scientific inquiry has to be limited within what is determinable on a phenomenological basis and leave out the aspects of reality that are not assessable.[111] Torrance is in full agreement with Weizsäcker and Broglie. Being a theologian, Torrance's articulation is, expectedly, theological. He says that this is 'the distinction between earth and heaven or between the visible and expressible and the invisible and ineffable'.[112] On this note, it seems that Torrance is drawing a direct comparison between natural science and theological science. However, it is not the case notwithstanding a reasonable parallel between them. Torrance clearly identifies the basic difference. He says,

> There can be no direct comparison between the spheres of the knowable and the unknowable in the natural science and the two realms with which theology operates, but there is a distinct parallel between the relation of the determinable and the indeterminable in exact science and the relation of earth to heaven in theology. By the latter is intended the relation between the realm of objectivity and intelligible intuition and the realm where theological knowledge is given objective but not specifiable reality but where it can only suspend judgement and maintain a respectful silence before the depth and majesty of the objectivity. This is the eschatological frontier which a scientific theology that is faithful to the nature of its given Object is bound to acknowledge in refusing to trespass beyond the limits imposed upon it by the self-revelation of God in His Word as well as by His transcendent Glory and Holiness.[113]

The acknowledgement of our incapability to trespass without making error or inconsistency is not an acceptance of ignorance. To Torrance it is the scientific

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[107] C. F. von Weizsäcker, *The History of Nature* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1951), 61. Cited in *TS*, 291.
[108] C. F. von Weizsäcker, *The World View of Physics* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1952), 176-79.
[109] *TS*, 291.
[110] Louis de Broglie, *Physics and Microphysics* (London: Hutchinson's Scientific and Technical Publications, 1955), 233-34. See *TS*, 291.
[111] Ibid.
[112] *TS*, 290.
[113] Ibid., 291-92.

recognition of the 'forced acceptance of a limit'.[114] While the unknown faced by natural science is in fact unknowable, the unknown faced by theological science is the eschatological frontier that cannot be trespassed beyond what God has ordained in his revelation and mediation in Christ. Be it natural science or theological science, human inquiry, if it is properly scientific, has to accept its finitude and maintain a sense of respectful silence and transcendent awe before the majestic depth of the ultimate. Hence, the scientific inquiry of theological science ought to submit itself to God's self-disclosure in Christ especially when, as Torrance aptly underscores, 'we can only seek to grasp as far as we can what is communicated to us'.[115]

The Predicament of Human Existence

Could doubt be cast upon the unknown as one beholds it in respectful silence? Although Torrance is quick to dismiss the validity of doubt in scientific inquiry,[116] he cannot avoid the question as it leads to the predicament of human existence. Doubt, together with anxiety and uncertainty and the whole range of human experiences, constitute the materials of questioning. When an inquiry is made in the predicament of human existence, where does it lead? Tillich says, 'The existential question, namely, man himself in the conflicts of his existential situation, is not the source for

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[114] Ibid., 291. Torrance explicates that 'it is the finding of a barrier over which we cannot force our knowledge since we are confronted by what is indeterminate either because we cannot transcend the limitations inherent in our scientific methods of observation and conception or because an element of indeterminacy belongs to the nature of things independently of our observing and conceiving of them.'

[115] Ibid., 287-88

[116] Torrance's rejection of doubt is unequivocal as he claims that scientific questioning is not the same thing as doubt. His rationale is that doubt rests upon a form of self-certainty, but scientific inquiry rests upon the certainty of the object in which we are open to question. Torrance cites Descartes as an example. He remarks that the program of Descartes, which builds upon the platonic method of inquiry, is essentially dualistic in nature. The outcome of such inquiry is a division between the ego and the world; the mind and matter. Such division allows the sophisticated doubt to anchor to the certitude of self, to make self-certainty the starting point and basis for methodological doubt. Thus, I think, therefore I am, *cogito, ergo sum*. There is a deep-seated element of false subjectivity in doubt. Bertrand Russell aptly remarks, 'Since the sceptic does not consider it rational to doubt what he himself believes, the advocacy of "rational doubt" is merely the sceptic's way of advocating his own beliefs'. Polanyi makes similar remark and says, 'The test of proof or disproof is in fact irrelevant for the acceptance or rejection of fundamental beliefs, and to claim that you strictly refrain from believing anything that could be disproved is merely to cloak your own will to believe your beliefs behind a false pretence of self-critical severity.' Doubting questions are fundamentally unreal for Torrance as they are posed in self-isolation from the object. Scientific questioning, however, is the exact reverse of it; it posits itself in the certainty of the object. Scientific questions are questions directed toward objectivity and are open to await its disclosure. Torrance emphasises that it is critically important for our questions to be genuinely scientific. Unless our questions are genuine, open and without ulterior motives, they will be blind questions. See *TS* 122-23. Helmut Thielicke, *Modern Faith and Thought* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 51-57. Michael Polanyi, *Scientific Thought and Social Reality: Essays by Michael Polanyi*. (New York: International University Press, 1974), 270-71.

the revelatory answer formulated by theology. One cannot derive the divine self-manifestation from an analysis of the human predicament.'[117] When in predicament, the inquirer is the question and not the answer. He has to ask and inquire. And he cannot stop asking since his very being is the question of his existence. Thus, as Tillich says, 'The question, asked by man, is man himself.'[118]

This is one moment Torrance is in congruence with Tillich. Torrance says, '[I]t is true that in every inquiry question and answer are correlated and that a measure of independence as well as mutual dependence is involved, as Tillich has pointed out. It is also true that in the last resort "the question, asked by man, is man himself"'.[119] Torrance's remark is central for it indicates that he is not unaware of the intrinsic relation between question and answer in the course of inquiry. However, how does this relation work in theological science? How does it work in relation to Tillich's existential approach, especially when Torrance is in agreement with him in this regard? Since Torrance shares Tillich's model of correlation, let us use it to help ascertain the answer.

According to Tillich the first condition of the model of correction is the independence of question and answer.[120] Based on Torrance's agreement with Tillich, he will not have any objection to this condition. The second and more difficult one is the mutual dependence of question and answer. In this regard, Tillich says that two reciprocal factors are at work. First, it is the 'directedness' of the question by the answer, and second, the 'influence' of the existential question on the theological answers.[121] Let us begin with the first factor. Tillich elucidates,

> While the material of the existential question is the very expression of the human predicament, the form of the question is determined by the total system and by the answers given in it. The question implied in human finitude is directed toward the answer: eternal. The question implied in human estrangement is directed toward the answer: forgiveness. This directedness of the questions does not take away their seriousness, but it gives them a form determined by the theological system as a whole.[122]

In other words, the question put forth by the inquirer although is independent of the answer, is 'directed' by the answer in the way that it is being asked. Tillich's

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[117] Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology* vol. II (London: James Nisbet & Co. Ltd, 1960), 14.
[118] Ibid., 15.
[119] *TS*, 120.
[120] Tillich, 14.
[121] Ibid.,15-16.
[122] Ibid., 17.

notion that 'question is determined by the answer' is in fact in line with the principle of theological science, since scientific question ought to be formulated in accordance with the self-revealing nature of the ultimate object. The deterministic effect of the answer, as Tillich says, does not demean the integrity and seriousness of the question. The subjective entity of the inquirer is maintained. The process is not mechanical as the inquirer retains his freedom of choice in making personal decision. Torrance assents to the argument. Essentially when confronted with the answer, Torrance, in alluding to Polanyi, underscores that 'the discernment of a coherence, the appraisal of order, the assessment of a probability, the choice between two theories, the ability to see and to guess rightly the informal decisions that enter into the process of verification, and so on, are all personal, mental acts in which the scientist [inquirer] is constantly engaged throughout his inquiries.'[123] Not unrelated to this, Torrance underlines,

> All true knowledge involves a two-fold operation, a positive relation of attachment in which we submit ourselves to an object, and a relation of detachment in which we discriminate between the object and our awareness of it. As Tillich has expressed it, 'cognitive distance is the presupposition of cognitive union.[124]

Torrance seemingly shares Tillich's proposition. However, if we take a closer look, there is a difference in degree in terms of how they understand the effect of the answer on the question. Tillich although is unequivocal in the tenet of 'directedness', his deterministic emphasis remains very much on the structure of the question. In the last resort, to Tillich, it remains wrong to derive question implied in human existence from the revelatory answer.[125] It is wrong because the revelatory answer is meaningless if no question about it is being asked. According to Tillich one cannot receive an answer to a question that he has not asked because any such answer would be foolish for him.[126] Torrance agrees. But, he is not prepared to stop where Tillich does. He wants to go further. To Torrance it is precisely because when a person in his existential predicament is unable to ask the right question, he renders the answer meaningless. In this regard, the genuine question ought to be thrust upon him from the side of the object so that he is able to ask the right question and to understand the

[123] *TCFK*, 135.
[124] *TS*, 13. See Weightman, 220.
[125] Tillich, 14-15.
[126] Ibid.

meaning of the revelatory answer.[127] Torrance is not rejecting the fact that we determine and shape the questions according to our existential predicament. He however stresses that unless our questions are being questioned down to the roots of our existence before the object, we are not getting anywhere.[128] Thus, Tillich's dictum---the question, asked by man, is man himself---is agreed by Torrance only if it describes the initial steps of inquiry. After that, it ought to be the questioner is essentially a questioned man. It is only when he faces the supreme and ultimate question, he is able to inquire. Torrance underscores,

> He can ask them [questions] responsibly only as he listens and lets himself be questioned by the Truth down to the very roots of his being until he is set free from himself, from his own preconceptions and self-deception, from self-willed and arbitrary thinking, from pride of reason and desire to control the questioning God. It is in theological questioning of this kind that we really learn the meaning of scientific questioning as questioning controlled by the nature of the given objective reality and so learn that the truth or falsity of our questions is determined by whether they arise ultimately from the side of the object or not.[129]

We may comment that while Tillich is allowing one to wonder in the world of existential experience in order to find the possible path leading to the answer, Torrance is trying to get the wonderer out by telling him directly the only way. The factor that determines the approach in fact lies in the substance of question. For Tillich, the substance is the whole of human existential experience; ranging from language, literature, art, philosophy, science, myth, liturgy and other human activities. For Torrance, it is God's revelation and mediation in Jesus Christ. Inevitably the selection of substance determines the epistemological starting point. Succinctly put, one pivots on humanity, the other on God. Thus, as our discussion shows, it should not surprise us that in spite of the common ground, they are rather different in terms of how they comprehend the relation between the existential question and the theological answer in the course of inquiry.[130]

Another important observation about the substance of question is that it also determines the form of the question. In Tillich's scheme, his wide range of

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[127] *TS*, 120.
[128] Ibid. Torrance asserts, 'It is only through the unremitting questioning of our questions and of ourselves the questioners, that true questions are put into our mouths to be directed to the object for its disclosure to us. Formally it is we who put the question, but the material constituent of our question is radically altered through the impress of the object upon our questioning.'
[129] Ibid., 125-26. In theological science, this is what Torrance called the *interrogative* form of inquiry. See *TRst*, 123.
[130] Although the word 'existential' is not quite the vocabulary of Torrance.

existential materials allows the question to take shape in various expressions. Torrance certainly does not have the same liberty. In fact, his emphasis on the substance will filter away all forms of question deem irrelevant except the one that is in conformity to the nature of God's self-disclosure. How Torrance and Tillich understand the correlation between 'substance' and 'form' is an important point of consideration. We have discussed its effect on the first factor, the issue of 'directedness'. We would now turn to the second factor, the influence of the existential question on the theological answer.

Tillich asserts that 'the form of theological answer is *not* independent of the form of the existential question.'[131] He says that in order for the answer to effectively engage the question, the answer has to be given in relation to the question.[132] A contradiction, however, seems to surface between the independent and dependent nature of the answer. How could the answer retain its independence if it has to depend on the question? In this regard, the solution lies in the correlation between the substance and form of the answer. As the substance is independent to the form, Tillich is able to claim that the influence of the question will change only the form and not the substance. Tillich says,

> If theology gives the answer, 'the Christ,' to the question implied in human estrangement, it does so differently, depending on whether the reference is to the existential conflict of Jewish legalism, to the existential despair of Greek scepticism, or to the threat of nihilism as expressed in twentieth-century literature, art, and psychology. Nevertheless, the question does not create the answer. The answer, 'the Christ,' cannot be created by man, but man can receive it and express it according to the way he has asked for it.[133]

To Torrance the relation between substance and form of the answer works just the opposite way; it is one of the inseparability. Tillich's notion that 'the form of theological answer is *not* independent of the form of the existential question' is simply unacceptable, or even nonsensical, to Torrance. Torrance would claim that if theology gives the answer 'the Christ', it does so exclusively with reference to the objectivity of God revealed in Christ Jesus.[134] If there is any influence, it would only be from the answer, both substance and form. Thus, it is apparent that no common

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[131] Tillich, 17. Author's Italic
[132] Ibid.
[133] Ibid.
[134] *TS*, ix.

ground could exist between Tillich and Torrance with regard to the influence of the existential question on the theological answer.

We may conclude our analysis by saying that although Torrance is agreeable to the slogan, 'the question, asked by man, is man himself', his understanding of the correlation between question and answer in human inquiry is rather different from that of Tillich. We would judge that the distinction of Torrance lies primarily in his scientific understanding of the subject in question. As discussed, notwithstanding the accentuation of the subordination of the human action of inquiry to the divine action of compulsive self-disclosure, the relevance of the predicament of human existence is not ignored or undermined by Torrance. Thus, as we argue, human action as scientific inquiry indeed plays an indispensable role in Torrance's normative pattern of revelation and mediation.

The Proficiency of Language

If theological science is a form of human inquiry that seeks 'to grasp as far as we can what is communicated to us',[135] the question whether theological language could measure up to the expectation of communicating and mediating accurately God's self-disclosure in Christ cannot be overlooked. The point of contention is whether theological language, as Ronald Hepburn advocates, is continuous with ordinary language.[136] Differing from Hepburn, Torrance draws on the arguments of Heisenberg to underscore that ordinary language could not serve theological and scientific purpose.[137] Due to its ambiguity and inaccuracy, Heisenberg says that ordinary language could not explain scientific concept with complete precision.[138] The use of mathematical scheme as the supplement to natural language is needed in science to correlate scientific concept to phenomena. In addition, since the arrival of quantum physics, the need to define a language that logical patterns are in complete and accurate conformity with the mathematical scheme of scientific theory has become critical.[139] Torrance argues that same development occurs in theology as

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[135] Ibid., 287-88
[136] Ronald W. Hepburn, *Christianity and Paradox: Critical Studies in Twentieth-Century Theology* (London: Watts, 1958), 84.
[137] *TS*., 292. Torrance is inaccurate in his citation. The article 'Language and Reality in Modern Physics' is not in pages 167 to 186 but in 145 to 160.
[138] Werner Heisenberg, *Physics and Philosophy: The Revolution in Modern Science.* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1959), 145-49, 157-60.
[139] Ibid.

well. He uses the doctrine of Christology to substantiate his argument. Torrance says,

> In our encounter with Christ we meet new realities that cannot be explained in terms of our previous knowledge and reach new conceptions forced upon us by those new realities which require *new language* in which to express them.

Torrance continues,

> In this process scientific theology develops a system of theological conceptions that reaches indefinitely beyond the system in which the observer has a part and which he construes within the limits of his ordinary notions of space and time, but the more this takes place *the more impossible it is to correlate unambiguously the severely theological language that is created with the ordinary language of our every day experience*.[140]

Two factors could be observed from the citations. They are, first, the need to develop new concepts to correlate the new realities, and second, the use of language to communicate the new concepts. The communication of new realities is possible if these two factors are working together side by side. Although Torrance does not give us an example of the new reality in the above citation, we could suggest, for example, the uniqueness of Jesus as God and man. The question is how could we reach a new conception to correlate this new reality? The answer from Torrance would be the concept of *homoousion*.[141] What language is being used to express the concept? The answer is Greek language. Another example of new reality we face in our encounter with Jesus is that he is the Lord. The new concept is Jesus is not merely a prophet, a rabbi, or a lord, but he is the Lord. Presently, the language of description is English. In science, a statement of Heisenberg may illustrate the point. He says, 'However, if one wishes to speak about the atomic particles themselves one must either use the mathematical scheme as the only supplement to natural language or one must combine it with a language that makes use of a modified logic'.[142] In this statement, the factors are at work as well. The scientific discovery of atomic particles poses a challenge for science to devise language to describe it. And the language of

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[140] *TS*, 293. My italic. Since the old system cannot construe the new realities, Torrance underlines that the discussion of the historical Jesus becomes crucial. He says that unless we anchor to historical Jesus, theological knowledge would be without the indispensable relevance or applicability to our existence. Devoid of interaction, language about God would render impossible. Torrance thus argues that notwithstanding the rigor of historico-critical investigation, theological science cannot disregard its historical root in the historical Jesus if it is to be faithful to its object.
[141] *CDG*, 80.
[142] Heisenberg, 160.

description is either 'the mathematical scheme as the only supplement to natural language or one must combine it with a language that makes use of a modified logic.'

What is our point? The point is we believe that Torrance has overlooked a basic difference here. While both science and theology are on the same journey to search for new concepts to communicate the new realities, the languages of description used by them are in fact very different. Notwithstanding that it is an expansion of ordinary language, the language of science has developed into a specialised technical language.[143] The language of theology, although is theologically technical, remains very much as the form of ordinary language. Alasdair MacIntyre reminds us that while some theologians may have their idiosyncrasy to believe that religious language is a specialised language, it 'must not conceal us that such language is nothing more or less than Hebrew or English…. As Sir Edwyn Hoskyns put it, the language of the Holy Spirit is New Testament Greek.'[144] The fact is many theological expressions and utterances derive their sense of use from other religious and non-religious contexts. Expressions such as 'to love', 'to forgive' or 'to be thankful' are found not only in theological language but also in the fabric of our everyday language. When theology appropriates common language for theological expression, it hardly confers new or different meaning on such expression. For example, the new reality of our relation with God in Jesus Christ is that God is our Father. The meaning of 'Father' is unquestionably enriched in theological language. Such expansion however does not alter radically its original meaning in common language. The word *homoousion*, as mentioned, is another good example.[145] Indeed it is along similar trains of thought that Hepburn argues, 'Theological language is, once more, continuous with *ordinary* language.'[146]

Without doubt Torrance, in appreciating the development of language in science, desires to draw a line between ordinary language and theological language. The thought that ordinary language is incapable of correlating the new realities with precise accuracy thus forces theological science to create a 'new language' is certainly in his mind. Torrance subsequently underlines, though unexpectedly, that the new realities in Jesus Christ are different from those of science as what we are dealing here in theology essentially is 'a relationship that is translogical and cannot

[143] For detailed account of the development of scientific language, see Heisenberg, 46-50.
[144] Alasdair MacIntyre, 'Is religious language so idiosyncratic that we can hope for no philosophical account of it?', *Metaphysical Beliefs*, ed. Alasdair MacIntyre (London: SCM, 1957), 176.
[145] *CDG*, 80.
[146] Hepburn, 84. Author's italic.

be logicalised', and 'a relation between language and realities that cannot be resolved into language alone.'[147] In order to comprehend divine self-disclosure, Torrance underpins the essentiality of the work of the Holy Spirit in human action of scientific inquiry. But, he immediately concedes that,

> invocation of the Holy Spirit does not allow us to make light of human experience or *dispense with its natural language* since it is after all only with human knowledge and human speech that we can be concerned… *Unless the most refined theological conception intersect with our ordinary knowledge at decisive points and our theological terms bear some relation to ordinary language*, if only as the tools by which they are constructed, it is impossible for us as men on earth and in history to have any understanding of God or to say anything about Him.[148]

The inconsistency is self-evidenced. Hepburn's argument of theological language as a continuation of ordinary language indeed holds water. As we end this discussion, the reminder of Heisenberg deserves our attention. He says, 'We know that any understanding must be based finally upon the natural language because it is only there we can be certain to touch reality, and hence we must be sceptical about any scepticism with regard to this natural language and its essential concepts. Therefore, we may use these concepts as they have been used at all time.'[149] Torrance's eventual stress of the validity is indicative of the crucial role ordinary language plays in the process of scientific inquiry of theological science.

We have in this section analysed the appropriateness of scientific inquiry. Our analysis suggests that for human inquiry of theological science to be scientific, the key points of not trespassing beyond what has been given, not disregarding the predicament of human existence, and not undermining the effectiveness of ordinary language have to be upheld. Thus, as we end, it may be said that for theological inquiry to be properly scientific is consequential to Torrance because it is only by being that it could then become the 'appropriate tool' not only to surmount the detriment of dualism, but also to know God as he is in the revelation and mediation of Jesus Christ.

Objectivity and Subjectivity in Revelation

[147] *TS*, 294.
[148] Ibid. My italic.
[149] Heisenberg, 172. See *TS*, 294.

In our previous discussion, particularly on the correlation between question and answer, the import of subjectivity and objectivity in the process of inquiry is implicated. As the relation between objectivity and subjectivity corresponds to that of the divine and the human of the normative pattern of revelation and mediation, it is thus the aim of the current section to focus on the dynamic before we close the chapter. We would analyse Torrance's thought on the self-revealing nature of objectivity, the reciprocity of subjectivity, and the subject-object relation in the process of the scientific inquiry of theological science.

The Revealing Nature of Objectivity

Torrance says that in all scientific studies we refer our thought externally to the object of our observation.[150] We no longer look at realities from a distance and to describe them as they are from a detached manner. The attainment of knowledge has to do with our active and passive participation in the way we understand realities.[151] Since we are part of the process of knowing, 'the rigorous formalisations of our knowledge are not to be treated like transcripts of reality but precisely as scientific instruments and demonstrative indications referring us away from ourselves to the thing we seek to know, so that by their nature they are engaged in the relentless service of objectivity.'[152] As we are open to the disclosure, the compulsive nature of reality will force itself upon us through our knowing. It will challenge and revise our knowledge and bring us a step closer to what is beyond, as Torrance says, 'The relativity of our knowledge to external reality and its objectivity are but the obverse of each other.'[153] On this note, our commitment to regular and critical revision is inevitable if our knowing is to be in accordance with the nature of things and not our self-imposed presuppositions. Torrance underlines that this painstaking process of reworking our scientific conception is paramount in modern science as the reality that confronts us is a much profounder objectivity that is non-deterministic and is beyond our comprehension.[154] Thus, Torrance asserts, 'For any natural science, then, to claim finality for the reference of its theories would be tantamount to rejecting

[150] *TS*, 259. Torrance underlines that there are differences in objectivity among various sciences as each special science has its own particular object of investigation. In addition, within one special science there are also various levels of objectivity.
[151] Ibid., 295-96.
[152] Ibid., 296.
[153] Ibid.
[154] Ibid.

objectivity.'[155] To Torrance the task faced by theological science is indeed similar to that of natural science. However, Torrance pinpoints a radical difference as he says,

> In theology our thought does terminate upon what is final and ultimate, the Lord God Himself, who is implacably resistant and objective to our formulations in that He cannot be confined to them. It is because we come to know God in His transcendent Majesty and Truth, and know Him to be greater than we can ever conceive or express, that we acknowledge the limitation and relativity of all our forms of thought and speech about Him. Thus, theological knowledge is profoundly relative because it is relative to the Absolute, and profoundly objective because it has for its primary Object God who can be known only through Himself and not by reference beyond Him.[156]

According to Torrance, the objectivity of theological science has both the transcendent and immanent characteristics. Torrance calls them the ultimate objectivity and contingent objectivity.[157] The objectivity is ultimate because God is transcendent in his encountering with us. It is contingent because he makes himself known to us through the structured objectivities of the world, but at the same time distinguishing himself from them. 'This is the baffling element in theological knowledge,' Torrance underlines, 'the bi-polarity or bi-focality of its truth-reference, but it arises from the unique nature of the Object and the way He has taken in making Himself the object of our knowledge. It would be a failure in scientific exactitude to ignore this or assimilate theological science to any of the other sciences as if it were of no essential significance.'[158] This is the uniqueness of theological science that deserves our attention. In all other sciences the subjects and the objects are both in the realm of creaturely reality. They exist together in the same dimension within the same structure of space and time.[159] But in theological science both the object and

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[155] Ibid., 297.

[156] Ibid. The distinction is remarkable. In natural science no finality of reference can be made because the quest of truth is a journey of making countless references of fact from one to another. Since the objectivity has yet to come to its finality, natural science has to operate with a relative conception of truth. However, knowledge is relative in theological science because it is relativised first by the Absolute through its compulsive imposition, and second from its self-critical method of inquiry. Thus, to theological science, Torrance asserts that the finality of God is its source of relativity and the ultimate of God is its basis of objectivity. While both natural science and theological science share the rigour of methodological progress, the former deals with creaturely realities and beings, the latter has God as its primary object that is the creative source of all beings.

[157] Ibid., 298.

[158] Ibid.

[159] Ibid., Torrance says that scientists are the spokesmen of nature disclosing its wonder and beauty, and bringing its nature into intelligible articulation. To be the prophets of nature, Torrance underlines that we have to presuppose some sort of agreement between our minds and external realities in the light that our thought and language can be the media through which the objectivities of realties are brought into rational disclosure. As humanity and nature belong to the same level of rationality, we

the subject are of different realms. Hence, Torrance is adamant that God can only be known 'in His utter difference from us' and 'know Him where He encounters us within the sphere of our contingent existence'.[160] In other words, our knowledge of God hinges very much on the fact that God in his 'ultimate objectivity' has condescended himself in our creaturely existence as the 'contingent objectivity'. God to Torrance cannot be known through scientific verification or demonstration.[161] Torrance aptly underlines,

> This is the way of Grace, for we know God only through His sovereign and unconditionally self-giving. Natural objects, as we have seen, have to be the objects of our cognition when we know them, but it is only out of pure Grace that God gives Himself to be the object of our knowing and thinking.[162]

Two observations could be made with regard to God's unconditional self-giving as the objectivity of Grace. First, Torrance defends the belief that such non-deterministic nature of theological objectivity is not 'weak objectivity' as some of his contemporaries have criticised.[163] Second, through distinguishing the objectivity of theology and science, Torrance clearly underscores the unique objectivity of God as revealed and mediated in Jesus Christ. God to Torrance essentially is 'the Lordly Object over whom we have no power but whom we may know only through humble

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are able to bring to open the structure and order of creaturely objectivities when we reduce human relations with nature to scientific knowledge.

[160] Ibid., 299. Torrance underlines that we have to clarify 'our knowledge of Him both in terms of the creaturely objectivity which His self-revelation to us has assumed in our world of space and time and in terms of the transcendent objectivity of His own eternal Being.'

[161] Ibid., 299-300. Torrance delineates, 'The experimental investigation through man-made controls, and the corresponding demonstration offered by making things work as we stipulate, are scientifically inappropriate to the living God, for it would not be the Lord God but an idol that could come under our power like that, and it would not be theology but magic that could conjure up and manipulate "the divine" like that.' Torrance cites Polanyi to substantiate his argument that God's acts cannot be verified by scientific verification. Polanyi points out that if the resurrection of the dead could be experimentally verified, this would strictly disprove its miraculous nature, for 'to the extent that any event can be established in terms of natural science, it belongs to the natural order of things. However monstrous and surprising it may be, once it has been fully established as an observable fact, the event ceases to be regarded as supernatural…. It is illogical to attempt the proof of the supernatural by natural tests, for these can only establish the natural aspects of an event and can never represent it as supernatural.' See Michael Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge: Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 284.

[162] Ibid.

[163] Ibid., 296. Torrance underlines that such criticism implies the equivalent of objective knowledge with a deterministic description of things. He asserts that those theologians who advocate the equivalent of objectivity with descriptive objectivism tend to confine God to their own subjectivity. He cites Barth's criticism of Bultmann as an example to illustrate that theologians who are charged by such remark would often claim 'objectivity' for God to indicate that God is a reality apart from human subjective experience. Such 'objectivity' is the equivalent of God's transcendent unknowability. Torrance questions the argument. He asks how could God be known if this is the case. He says that such 'objectivity' is only an empty movement of thought.

service and love.'[164] These observations underpin the importance that while God graciously gives himself to us as the object of our knowledge, the 'Gift is not detached from the Giver' and he retains his transcendence in our knowing of him[165]

The Reciprocity of Subjectivity

Our discussion thus far shows that the inquirer is bound to his object of inquiry. As much as the inquirer in his enquiry should subject himself unconditionally to the object in order to have a true knowledge of things, the unwavering fact is he remains entirely as a free, active, spontaneous, self-determine and personal agent in his epistemic relation with the object.[166] As Polanyi says, 'There is always a residue of personal judgment involved in deciding whether to accept any particular piece of evidence… I applied this also to science, and decided that science was grounded on an act of personal judgement, and called this knowledge, therefore, a *personal knowledge.*'[167] Torrance calls it 'personal-coefficient'.[168] However, by saying that, Torrance does not imply that impartiality is unimportant in scientific inquiry. In fact, to be impartial and objective in scientific inquiry do not eliminate the personal-coefficient. Torrance says,

> This is what we mean by 'disinterested' and sometimes 'impersonal' approach, but far from involving disinterest in the object it calls for such an attachment to the object that we become detached from all alien presuppositions and thus genuinely objective, and far from involving the elimination of personal judgement it calls for such a profound commitment to the rationality of the object that we are able to distinguish it from our own subjective states and conditions.[169]

To Torrance scientific inquiry is a function of the human mind in which spontaneity, imagination and judgement play a significant role. We cannot cut our positive involvement out of the process of knowing nor can we allow our negative presupposition to taint it. This is the unique feature of subjectivity. Torrance claims

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[164] Ibid., 300.
[165] Ibid.
[166] The role of 'person' as the active agent is an important teaching of Calvin. Torrance comments that it has the effect of restoring theological knowledge to the field of direct intuitive knowledge of God in his Word and Spirit, and of giving it an essentially dialogical character instead of the merely dialectical character it has derived from reflecting upon the abstractive ideas.
[167] Cited by Torrance in *TCFK*, 123.
[168] *TS*, 303. Without personal participation, Torrance says that the inquirer would only be a 'mechanical brain' or a 'prisoner of mechanical operations' abstracting and formulating propositions in a detached manner.
[169] Ibid.

that such uniqueness is further underpinned in theological science by the fact that the objectivity indeed demands and creates a reciprocal relation with the subjectivity in the scientific inquiry of knowing God.[170] Our knowledge of God's self-disclosure in Christ from the outset involves a relation of union and communion, and not a disjunction between the subject and the object. Yet, it is not a union and communion in which God is entangled in our subjectivity.[171] Torrance asserts,

> Face to face with the divine Object the human subject is not allowed to draw back into monologue or distinguished reflection, for he himself becomes the object of the active attention and self-giving of the divine Object; rather is he drawn into responsive activity, for he is opened up to the Object in his innermost being and made capable of apprehending Him, not merely in terms of his own acts of consciousness but in terms of the Object Himself as he meets and experiences Him in His undiminished and irreducible nature as the divine Subject, the Lord God.[172]

The argument of Torrance is significance. There is indeed a reversal of relation between the subject and the object in the revelation and mediation of God in Christ. It is in this trans-subjective relation to God that the human subject is taken out of himself and finally made capable of objectivity; thus, becoming the true subject. Torrance is not unaware of the pitfall of objectivism. He argues, 'It is essential to its objectivity since this is the form of rationality that the human reason must adopt if it is to be faithful to the nature of the divine Subject-Object---a merely objectivist approach could not be properly objective for it could not do justice to the divine Reality: it could only abstract from it.'[173] Torrance is not alone in this regard. Buber, in expressing similar note, says, 'Anthropomorphism always reflects our need to preserve the concrete quality evidenced in the encounter; yet even this need is not its true root: it is in the encounter itself that we are confronted with something compellingly anthropomorphic, something commanding reciprocity, a primary Thou'.[174] But it is at this point when the human subjectivity is assuming its full reciprocal role that he is constantly being tempted. The temptation is to take masterfully a creative role and to subdue divine objectivity into subjective models of dialectical abstraction and thus unjustifiably alter the objective knowledge. The ramification in this regard is twofold. First, our objective knowledge has been

[170] Ibid., 307.
[171] Ibid.
[172] Ibid., 308.
[173] Ibid., 308-09.
[174] Martin Buber, *The Eclipse of God* (New York: Harper and Row, 1957), 14. Cited in *TS*, 309.

subjectively subjectivised. Second, the replacement of objective divine encounter with subjective self-encounter. In other words, our autonomous reason triumphs over divine revelation. In congruence with Buber about this false subjectivity, Torrance avers, 'There cannot be any doubt that this confinement of God to human subjectivity is the constant danger of modern Protestantism, and it can only result in what Buber has significantly called the "the eclipse of God" in which we allow ourselves to get between God and ourselves. It is our own bloated subjectivity that shuts off the divine light from the world.'[175] We would judge that the concept of anthropomorphism to Torrance is an explication of the transcendent objectivity. God in his complete otherness gives himself to us by adapting himself to our humanity and at the same time lifts up our humanity into union and communion with him. The objectivity of God anthropomorphised in the incarnation of Jesus Christ summoning us to know him in accordance with the way he has objectified himself. On this note, the objectification of God in humanity disallows us to read our humanity back into God or to confound the objectivity of God with our human subjectivity.

The Subject-Object Relation

We have noted that God to Torrance is both the ultimate objectivity and contingent objectivity. How could the transcendent God retain his objectivity in the contingent reality becomes an acute question. In this regard, the answer of Torrance clearly evidences the influence of Barth. Notwithstanding God to Barth as the 'Subject of revelation is the Subject that remains indissolubly Subject', he concedes that in certain respects 'God is also the Object, if not the object.'[176] The notion that God could paradoxically be both the subject and the object serves as the key to the door for Torrance. James Brown's interpretation of Barth may help us see the influence and connection. Brown says, 'God is Object to His own self-knowledge in the life of the eternal Trinity, Object of faith-knowledge to man in revelation, a disclosure which in turn presents God as Subject, the living Lord who calls for man's obedience, the active Subject in organising man's knowledge of Himself, both as to its form and its manner, its possibilities and its substance. Indeed, Subject and Object are very

[175] *TS*, 309.
[176] *CD*, I/1, 438. Cited in James Brown, *Subject and Object in Modern Theology* (London: SCM, 1955), 140.

ready in Barth to collapse into each other'.[177] Evidently the Subject and the Object do collapse into each other in Torrance's framework. In fact, Torrance is more than ready to declare definitively that the subject of God is indeed the object, the objectivity of God in his transcendence and contingence. The entanglement between the revealer and the inquirer in the subject-object relation is resolved. Torrance is able to declare that when facing the divine object, the human subject will not enmesh the objectivity of God within his subjectivity because he then becomes the object of God as God retains his objectivity.

There is, however, a question. Where is the point of encounter between the objectivity of God and the subjectivity of human counterpart in this reciprocal relation? Or, where is the contact so that true subjectivity and true objectivity could evoke and support each other in the process of knowing? The question may appear superfluous in the first instance. Nevertheless, if we take a closer look, we could say that notwithstanding pieces of jigsaw seem to fall in place, one remains to be found. The missing piece could be what Torrance is trying to get at, but has not fully brought into open. Let us recapitulate the main points that Torrance has highlighted. First, the way of knowing God is one of divine grace. Second, it involves obedience and trust. Third, despite the potential pitfall, reason has a place in our knowing of God. The question is what could be the missing piece in relation to the above points in the subject-object relation between the inquirer and the revealer in the revelation and mediation of Christ?

Let us go back to the Gospel to find the answer. In the Gospel story the saving acts of God are announced as the salvific message to call upon us a personal response. There is an original *kerygma* in the calling and that we are presented with an object to which our subjectivity adjusts itself in accordance with its nature.[178] We do not make or discover the object. Neither do we project our generalisation of experience nor our own subjective world-view upon it. The object is the inconceivable paradox, if we use the expression of Kierkegaard. It is characteristically transcendent, as Barth claims. Apart from the self-revelation of God in Jesus Christ, the contingent objectivity of God, Torrance would agree that no object for faith is possible, as any object created subjectively by us would contradict

[177] Brown, 141.
[178] Ibid., 191.

the authenticity of the Christian faith and the principle of theological science.[179] On this note, faith as the proper response remains very much an act of human subjectivity for it involves personal decision, or personal judgement, as Polanyi underscores. Thus, 'Faith is not wrought *ex opere operato*', 'It cannot be true, as element in a naturally existing tradition: it is *made* true, realised as true, as it is appropriated as truth in a form of living.'[180] In other words, Christianity is not a philosophy but the truth and the way of life in Jesus Christ. We have to make the subjective decision of faith in order for us to live and to know the life of truth that is in accordance with God in Christ, the objectivity of faith. To Torrance God is the indefeasible subject who has condescended to become the object of our knowing so that we may surrender ourselves in the obedience of faith. Our faithful ability of surrendering, or obedience, in itself is the grace of God. Thus, the human subjectivity is now given with new scope and strength by the grace of God.

Could faith then be the missing piece in Torrance's picture of the subject-object relation? One possible reason constituting the inconspicuousness is that the exposition of faith in Torrance's theological science has often been marked as rationalistic. Torrance himself is unequivocal in asserting that our understanding of God is 'essentially a rational event.'[181] In more than one occasion he has stressed the importance of reason in our faith-knowledge of God. For example, he says, 'Faith is the orientation of the reason toward God's self-revelation, the rational response of man to the Word of God',[182] and 'Faith is the relation of our minds to the Object'.[183] Torrance's uncompromising approach has often led his critics to remark that his rationalistic faith is construed at the expense of other faith qualities. On this note, the critique of Thomas Langford is the representative. Langford comments, 'Torrance has an extremely rationalistic or intellectualistic understanding of faith. The dominant character of faith, as depicted, is its rationality and not its qualities of trust or obedience. This is a serious matter and one which must be set forth clearly for its consequences dominate the presentation.'[184] Langford's critical remark is not without ground. However, Morrison's response towards the criticism of Langford

[179] Torrance is in congruence with Barth in relation to the claim that the objectivity of our faith is given by God in Jesus Christ. To Torrance, faith is 'the opening up of our subjectivity to the Subjectivity of God through His Objectivity.' *TS*, 132.
[180] Brown, 192.
[181] *TS*, 11.
[182] Ibid., 33.
[183] Ibid., 132.
[184] Thomas A. Langford, 'T. F. Torrance's Theological Science, a Reaction,' *Scottish Journal of Theology* 25 (1972): 158.

deserves some attention. Morrison says, 'It must be said too that while Torrance has probably overemphasised the cognitive aspect of faith as the proper mode of knowing God, yet Torrance does not forgo the critical aspects of trust and obedience.'[185] We would suggest that Torrance in someway has unknowingly caused it to be a misfit. His emphatic reminders of the pitfall of autonomous reason and the importance of grace and obedience have unconsciously 'marginalised' the role of his rationalistic faith in the object-subject relation. Perhaps, Torrance is subtly caught in a dilemma. While he stands by the importance of the rationality of faith, it vanishes from sight when his discourse turns to more of a personal relation of trust and obedience between the object and the subject. Such disappearance is unnecessary for two reasons. First, faith, as mentioned, has an important role in the subject-object relation. Second, notwithstanding the propensity for rationality, Torrance indeed does not forgo other qualities of faith. In fact, the problem may not even occur should Torrance make explicit other faith qualities. Faith, as underscored as well in our discussion of the Einsteinian-Polanyian science, indeed constitutes a vital aspect of human action of scientific inquiry in Torrance's scheme of revelation and mediation.

We have in this section analysed Torrance's thought on the nature of objectivity and subjectivity, and the reciprocal relation between them in the process of scientific inquiry of theological science. Our discussion demonstrates that Torrance indeed possesses a sophisticated account of justifying the subordination of human action to divine self-disclosure in the process of scientific inquiry. Although Torrance manages to uphold both the subjectivity and the objectivity, the crucial factor of faith in the dynamic reciprocal relation requires some accentuation. Nevertheless, we may conclude by commenting that Torrance has succeeded in building a coherent account without compromising either the human or the divine of the normative pattern of revelation and mediation.

Conclusion

[185] John D. Morrison, *Knowledge of the Self-Revealing God in the Thought of Thomas Forsyth Torrance* (1997), 272.

This chapter pivots on Torrance's use of scientific realism as the corrective to dualism in our understanding of God's self-disclosure in Jesus Christ. Our discussion shows that the Einsteinian-Polanyian science has provided Torrance with the impetus, as he develops his understanding in and through Barth, to argue for the significance of theological science and the appropriateness of human action as the scientific inquiry of God. Notwithstanding the necessity for the knowing subject to subordinate to the revealing object in the reciprocal relation if inquiring is to be properly scientific, such subordination to Torrance does not demean but brings to fulfilment the subjectivity of the human knower. Thus, we would judge that Torrance's subject-object reciprocity indeed coheres with his normative pattern of revelation and mediation.

Before we end the chapter, the pending question is whether Torrance's scientific approach towards theology is a reasonable one. Torrance's endeavour is well received by Robert Palma as he has contributed enormously to 'the prospect of a continuing fruitful interaction' between science and theology. The success of Torrance, according to Palma, lies in the rejection of the old adversary model as he helps us to apprehend 'the dialogue between theology and natural science in terms of complementarity, fortification, and clarification.'[186] As Jim Neidhart, in his commentary of Torrance's works, says, 'a dynamic coinherence between theology and science would preserve the integrity of both disciplines while healing the breach that has opened up between them.'[187] Indisputably theology to Torrance is a scientific discipline, the science of God's self-disclosure in Christ. 'He is to be commended for establishing the scientific nature of theological construction with such force and erudition,' Thomas Langford says, as E. L. Mascall and Alan Willingale concur.[188]

Some, nevertheless, question the relation between science and theology in Torrance's framework. For example, David Galilee, in alluding to a statement of Austin Farrer, says, 'And so if we ask whether belief in God is "scientific", we were bound to answer Yes and No. Yes, for it can be the following out of thoughts started by science; No, for it cannot be a piece of science itself… And since God is not a

[186] Robert J. Palma, 'Thomas F Torrance's Reformed Theology,' *Reformed Review* 38 (1984): 26.
[187] *CFM*, xl. 'Introduction' by Jim Neidhart.
[188] Thomas A. Langford, 'T. F. Torrance's Theological Science; a Reaction,' *Scottish Journal of Theology* 25 (1972): 170; E. L. Mascall, *Theology and the Gospel of Christ: An Essay in Reorientation* (London: SPCK, 1977), 46; Alan Willingale, 'Review: Theological Science,' *The Evangelical Quarterly* (1970): 190.

part of the world, still less an aspect of it, nothing that is said about God, however truly, can be a statement belonging to any science'.[189] Andrew Louth acknowledges that Torrance is not making an attempt 'to assimilate theology to the exact sciences', but rather 'to derive some illumination for the theological task from the way in which modern science (and in particular modern physics) has had to grapple with the problem of epistemology'.[190] However, Louth observes that while Torrance rightly recognises the main difference between theology and science on the ground of theology's object as God's giving of himself to humanity through grace, he has gone 'too far too quickly' and overlooked that it has 'to do with men and women, with persons' as well. Since theology rightly and appropriately distinguishes itself from other forms of scientific knowledge because it has to do with the grace of God in Christ, should not that distinction 'thus lead Torrance himself to class theology among the humanities'?[191] The main divergence between Barth and Torrance in relation to the subject in question, as Louth sees it, lies in while Barth is not keen to develop analogies between theology and science, Torrance regards that as at least one of his central tasks of theological reconstruction.[192] In alluding to Hans-Georg Gadamer's sustained attack on the Enlightenment's fundamental claim that science is the way and the only way to the truth, Louth questions the validity of conceding all concern with truth to the sciences. Louth says, 'Gadamer sees sciences as *one* way of apprehending truth, not *the* way, and he thus situates science within a total approach to truth, rather than seeking to tailor the ways of apprehending the truth to the methods of the sciences.'[193] Whether Torrance is agreeable to the comments is potentially a lengthy discussion that we shall not venture out into without deviating too far from the main concern of the chapter. Nevertheless, the remarks are food for thought particularly in the light of Torrance's declaration that it is out of God's grace and our obedience, the union and communion of divine and human action, that God's own eloquent self-disclosure may 'sound through to us in His Logos so that we may

[189] David Galilee, 'Review: Theological Science,' *Religious Studies* (1971): 377. See Austin Farrer, *A Science of God?* (London: Bles, 1966), 28-29.
[190] Andrew Louth, *Discerning the Mystery: An Essay on the Nature of Theology* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), 52.
[191] Ibid., 53.
[192] Ibid., 51.
[193] Ibid., xii. Author's italic. See Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (New York: Continuum, 2006), xx-xxiv.

know and understand Him out of His own rationality and under the determination of His divine being.'[194]

[194] *TS*, ix.

Part II

Chapter Four
The Communion of the Holy Spirit

In the first three chapters that constitute part one of the thesis, we establish the claim that God's self-disclosure in Torrance's theology, instead of taking the form of immediacy, is the revelation and mediation of the incarnate Son Jesus Christ. We discuss the nature of Christ's revelation and mediation in chapter one. Our discussion shows that Christ, being fully God and fully man in one person, culminates and fulfils the two-way movement, sets the union and communion of divine and human action as the normative pattern of revelation and mediation. We turn to dualism in chapter two, the treacherous threat to Christ's revelation and mediation in Torrance's opinion. Our analysis shows that Arian dualism and Newtonian dualism relegate God's self-disclosure in Christ by separating the Creator form the creation irreconcilably. To Torrance the chief problem of dualism lies in the erroneous approach of interpreting Christ's revelation and mediation; it gravitates the focal point from the centrality of God to humanity. On this note, Torrance advocates realism as the appropriate remedy as it pivots on responding in accordance with the nature of the self-disclosure of the objective reality. By building upon the theological foundation of Barth and taking cue from the advancement of Einsteinian-Polanyian science, a realist epistemology of theological science is postulated. Thus, in chapter three, we examine Torrance's understanding of scientific inquiry as the appropriate human action of knowing God in Christ. As Torrance has provided the answer to the human action, the question now is what would constitute the divine action of the normative pattern of revelation and mediation, particularly after the ascension of Christ? It is with the intent to examine Torrance's response to this question that we enter into chapter four, the beginning of the part two of the thesis.

The main purpose of the part two of the thesis is two-fold. First, we attempt, in chapter four, to analyse Torrance's understanding of the work of the Spirit as the divine action of the normative pattern of revelation and mediation. Second, in chapter five and six, Torrance's thought on multiple mediations with regard to scripture, church, preaching, sacraments, and contingent creation would be studied.

As the chapters involve our second claim of the thesis, Torrance's advocacy of the effacement of scripture would be critically examined in chapter five, and the import of the normative pattern of revelation and mediation undergirding Torrance's framework of multiple mediations would be analysed in chapter six. When the thesis draws near to the end, we would in the final conclusion engage Tillich and Gunton in providing Torrance with alternate views on scriptural mediation. Thus, with the aim to address Torrance's thought on the Spirit of God as the essential divine action of the normative pattern of revelation and mediation, we would now turn to chapter four and focus firstly on the nature of the communion of the Spirit, and secondly on the epistemic dynamic of the Spirit in enabling our knowing of God and validating earthly media as proper forms of divine mediation.

The Communion of the Spirit of God

To Torrance it is only by the communion of the Spirit that humanity could come before God in Christ. On this note, the distinctive work of the Spirit in facilitating the communal process becomes unquestionably crucial. Thus, the primary purpose of this section is to analyse Torrance's thought on the nature of the communion of the Spirit. The guiding question is whether Torrance's explication of the work of the Spirit is consistent with his overarching principle of the sole mediatorship of Christ. We would engage Kruger and Gunton in our discussion to illuminate and affirm Torrance's understanding.

Torrance, in delineating the nature of the ministry of the Sprit, says, 'Since it is only through himself that God reveals himself, God himself is the personal content of his revelation to us embodied in Jesus Christ his incarnate Son. Since it is only through himself that communion with God is accessible to us, God himself is the personal reality of that communion granted to us in the Holy Spirit.'[1] This statement encapsulates Torrance's understanding that although the self-revelation of God is mediated to us in Christ, it is actualised in us through the communion of the Spirit. It is in and through the communion of the Spirit that divine revelation is personally and experientially brought to bear upon us so that we are able to be brought forward to hear and apprehend the Word of God. Our communion with God in Christ is made

[1] *CDG*, 59.

possible via a relation established between the divine and the human in the Spirit. As Torrance says, 'God creates that relation by the presence of his Spirit within us as a relation of himself to himself.'[2] On this note, Torrance's view reverberates that of Barth which says, 'The Spirit of God is God in his freedom to be present to the creature, and so to create this relation and thereby to be the life of the creature. And God's Spirit, the Holy Spirit, especially in revelation, is God himself in that he can not only come to man but also in man, and thus to complete his revelation in him.'[3] In congruence with Barth, Torrance claims that this is 'how we are led to think of the Holy Spirit as we indwell the New Testament Scriptures and listen to the incarnate Word of God speaking to us in Christ, and through the holy presence of God in his Spirit finds Christ himself coming to dwell in us in such a way that we are enabled to receive and apprehend God's revelation of himself.'[4] As the Spirit discloses to us the revelation of the Father through the Son and brings us into communion with the Father in the Son, the Spirit to Torrance, as Gary Deddo pointedly underlines, 'is rightly identified as the Spirit of the Jesus Christ the Son of God and the Spirit of God the Father.' In Torrance's scheme, Deddo says, 'The Spirit can only be personally recognised and identified in relation to Jesus Christ because the Spirit is the Spirit of Jesus and Jesus is the place where God the Father and God the Son have provided access to the knowledge of themselves.'[5] We may call the association of the Spirit with Jesus Christ the Son of God, particularly in relation to the unfolding of divine revelation and mediation, as the 'epistemological dependence' of the Spirit.

Torrance although is unequivocal in underscoring the epistemic work of the Spirit in unfolding divine self-disclosure, he is adamant that the controlling centre of our knowing of God lies solely in Christ instead of the Spirit. In alluding to Athanasius' emphasis of the Son as the only *Logos* and *Eidos* of Godhead, Torrance pinpoints that 'it is in and through the incarnate Form of God in Jesus Christ that His Face and Image are revealed and that our human knowledge of Him is shaped and

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[2] Ibid., 60. Torrance underpins that the Reformed doctrine of the communion of the Spirit is the communion in Christ through the Spirit. Thus, the communion of the Spirit has to be understood as correlative to the union of God and man worked out in the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. See *SF*, cvi; *TF*, 250-51.
[3] *CD*, I/1, 450. Cited in *CDG*, 60.
[4] *CDG*, 60.
[5] Gary W. Deddo, 'The Holy Spirit in T. F. Torrance's Theology,' in *The Promise of Trinitarian Theology*, ed. Elmer M. Colyer (Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001), 82.

formed through the conformity of our minds to Jesus Christ.'[6] In other words, only when we permit our scientific inquiry to respond appositely to what is revealed in Jesus, as Torrance says, 'we allow the basic forms of theological truth to come to view… as in the Spirit the being and nature of God is brought to bear upon us so that we think under the compulsion.'[7] By pivoting on the controlled knowing of God in Christ, Torrance claims that the work of the Spirit is there primarily to unveil that which is hidden. Thus the Spirit to Torrance is also the Spirit of Truth as it is only through the Spirit that Christ is revealed as the Son of the Father.[8] Torrance is adamant that as the Spirit leads all to Christ, he bears witness to Christ and not to himself. The Spirit, Torrance says, 'does not show us Himself, but shows us the Face of the Father in the Face of the Son, and shows us the heart of the Son in the heart of the Father.'[9] The Spirit does not focus on himself because it is his mission from the Father to declare the Son and pay attention to the Son. The function of the Spirit is to 'direct us through himself to the one Word and Face of God in Jesus Christ in accordance with whom all our knowledge of God is formed in our minds, knowledge of the Spirit as well as of the Father and of the Son.'[10] 'By His very mode of being as Spirit He hides Himself from us so that we do not know Him directly in His own hypostasis, and in His mode of activity as transparent Light He effaces Himself that the one Trinity God may shine through Him to us.' [11] Torrance says that the 'hiding' of the Spirit is the diaphanous self-effacing nature of the Spirit; by 'hiding behind' the Father in the Son and the Son in the Father, the Spirit brings the radiance of God's glory to bear upon us.[12] Notwithstanding the *homoousion* of the Spirit and the Son, Torrance is explicit that the Spirit, unlike the Son, is not of one substance with us 'for He incarnates the Son and did not incarnate Himself', and thus he is able to direct us

[6] *GR*, 166. In relation to the epistemological activity of the Spirit, Torrance underlines that the Son, as the only *Logos* and *Eidos* of Godhead, is the inner rationality of the divine Being that direct and control our knowledge of God in the Spirit. See *GR*, 170.
[7] Ibid., 166-67.
[8] Torrance claims that the Spirit is the living personal Agent of Christ sent by him from the Father as the Spirit of truth who will guide the believers into all truth. In alluding to the Gospel, Torrance says that Jesus has made it clear that in the coming of the Spirit, the Spirit of God will not glorify himself but Christ; as John 16:14-15 says, 'He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and make it known unto you. All that the Father has is mine, and that is why I said "he will take what is mine and make it known unto you."' *CDG*, 65-66. Also see Deddo, 83-84.
[9] *GR*, 167. Torrance says that the Spirit 'has no "Face", but it is through the Spirit that we see the Face of Christ and in the Face of Christ we see the Face of the Father.' See *CDG*, 63.
[10] *CDG*, 66.
[11] *GR*, 167; *TRst*, 251-52; *TF*, 211.
[12] *CDG*, 66, 151; *GR*, 167-68.

through himself to the one *Logos* and *Eidos* of Godhead in Jesus Christ.[13] By pivoting on Christ as the controlled knowing of divine self-disclosure, and the epistemic function of the Spirit in pointing all to Christ instead of himself in the unfolding of the knowledge of God, Torrance underscores that,

> [The Spirit] brings the Being and Reality of God out of his hiddenness to bear upon man, and brings man out of his darkness to have communion with God, in Jesus Christ.

As,

> [The Spirit] is the creative Agent of God's revelation to us and the creative Agent in our reception and understanding of that revelation… He is the living Action and Presence of God in it all, who so relates the divine Word to the human and earthly forms which it assumed in Jesus Christ that in Him we are enabled to meet God face to face, shining in His own uncreated Light and speaking to us personally in His own eternal Word.[14]

The 'epistemological dependence' of the Spirit is a constitutive argument that cannot be overlooked in Torrance's scheme of establishing Christ as the sole Mediator of God. As the Spirit in his communion with humanity points to, and in that sense reveals, the Son who reveals the Father in the Son, divine self-disclosure unfolded through multiple mediations of human and earthly media in the course of human history does not finally have the Spirit as its ultimate focus but Christ the incarnate Son of God. The 'hiddenness' of the Spirit in relation to the Son in divine revelation and mediation as Torrance argues may invite criticism that his pneumatology is one, like Barth, that allows the Son to eclipse the Spirit; as Eugene Rogers Junior says, 'Barth allows the Son to eclipse the Spirit when he allows his fear of Schleiermacher to overshadow his admiration for Athanasius.'[15] It is a subject of debate if Torrance suffers the same problem. The fact is while the centrality of Christ is fundamentally upheld in divine self-disclosure, Torrance attempts to maintain simultaneously the sovereignty of the Spirit in his 'hiddenness' by accentuating that 'yet in Himself He [the Spirit] brings us to participate in the communion of the Father and the Son', as 'He is the Spirit that goes forth from God and returns to God, who brings God to bear directly upon and lifts us up to experience the undiluted acts of

[13] *GR*, 167.
[14] Ibid., 168.
[15] Eugene F. Rogers Jr., 'The Eclipse of the Spirit in Karl Barth,' in *Conversing with Barth*, ed. John McDowell and Mike Higton (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), 173.

God Almighty.'[16] Although Torrance says that we do not know the Spirit directly in his own personal reality, he avers that the Godness of the Spirit is indisputable 'because it is in His Light that we see Light and by His creative operation that we know the unknowable and eternal God, we know Him as no less Lord God than the Father and the Son'.[17] Torrance underscores,

> Yet He is never other than God… is free to condescend to mortal men on earth and, unlimited by their creaturely incapacity for Him, to present Himself to them in His own transcendent Being and Reality, and so to emancipate them from imprisonment in themselves and their weakness and to raise them up to partake of His creative and eternal life. Thus with the coming of the Spirit to us the Being of God Almighty, the Maker of heaven and earth, breaks through the distance between the creature and the Creator, shines through all the intermedia of our creaturely existence and knowledge, disclosing Himself to us personally…. Therefore, for us to be in the Spirit means to come up against God in the most absolute and ultimate sense, in His sheer Godness, to meet and experience Him in His immutable Reality who, by being the Lord God and by giving Himself to us as our God, lays absolute and exclusive claim upon our worship and love and obedience.[18]

From the discourse it is conspicuous that Torrance refuses to let the Spirit be eclipsed by the Son, even thought the importance of the 'hiddenness' of the Spirit in directing all to Christ is always at the forefront of his thought. However, if one takes a closer study of the arguments, it soon becomes clear that while Torrance endeavours to argue for the Godness and sovereignty of the Spirit by underpinning the revelatory movements both of his coming to humanity in communion and of his lifting humanity up before God in the knowing of God, some vagueness emerges in

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[16] *GR*, 172.

[17] Ibid., 167. Torrance underlines that it is also because through the Spirit the Word of God continues to sound forth the objectivity of the Trinity and is heard and believed by us, thus 'we know the Holy Spirit, although personally distinct from the Father and the Son, to be no less Lord God than the Father and the Son, both as he is toward us and as he is antecedently in the undivided oneness of God's eternal Being.' Torrance remarks that it is significant in the earliest tradition of the Church that there is little or no controversy about the deity of the Spirit, as it is everywhere acknowledged that God is Spirit and thus the Spirit of God is God. The acceptance of the deity of the Spirit according to Torrance could be due to the following factors. First, the Spirit is inseparably united with the Father and the Son in the work of our salvation and recreation, and it is into the one name of God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit that we are baptised. Second, the Spirit is worshipped and honoured together with the Father and the Son, which is the consistent reiteration of numerous doxological formulations. Third, The Spirit is intimately related to the eternal Word, and is the prophetic Spirit by whom God spoke to the prophets and has now spoken to us in Jesus Christ. Fourth, the church from the outset understood the biblical teaching about the Spirit in the Trinity sense; this is clearly expressed by Tertullian. In alluding to Novatian, Torrance says that two more factors could be taken into account for the deity of the Spirit. First, the fact that Christ sends the Spirit, the Paraclete, is powerful evidence for the deity of Christ. Second, Spirit refers to what God is in his being. Taking all factors into account, Torrance underlines that the early tradition of the church regards the Spirit as the expression of the unapproachableness, the ineffability, the unutterable majesty of God. See *CDG*, 66-67; *TRst*, 209-10, 230; *TF*, 205-15.

[18] Ibid., 172-73.

relation to the sole mediatorship of Christ. Given Torrance's stress of the deity and work of the Spirit, the ambiguity lies in whether apart from Christ, the Spirit through his communion with humanity is also the revelation and mediation of God. Kruger picks up similar problem when he remarks that there are 'places in Torrance's writings where there is a very definite ambiguity in his discussion of the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost especially as regards our sharing in the Son's communion with and knowing of the Father.'[19] The uncertainty to Kruger lies in the Spirit at times could be seen as the content of the sharing, since the Spirit in Torrance's account is also the very communion of the Father and the Son in the reciprocal relation of the immanent Trinity. Thus, our partaking of the Spirit is also our partaking of the communion and mutual knowing of the Trinity, and to share in God's self-knowing. On this note, Kruger says, 'Here Pentecost *is* Christ ministering the things of God to us. This is in line with the Biblical covenantal framework. The great blessing of God upon His people in the New Covenant mediated by Christ is the outpouring of the Spirit upon all flesh.'[20] There is, however, another approach in Torrance's thought of which the coming of the Spirit is understood more christologically. Kruger pinpoints, 'With respect to our knowing God, Pentecost, in Torrance's thought here is interpreted more in line with the fact that it is in Jesus Christ alone that human knowing of God and human sharing in God's own self-knowledge exist and that this cannot be separated from Christ Himself.'[21]

Kruger, in substantiating the observation, cites statements of Torrance to demonstrate the ambiguity. According to him, Torrance, in *Trinitarian Faith*, says that 'Jesus Christ thus constitutes the bridge between God and man, between the invisible and the visible, the incomprehensible and the comprehensible, the immeasurable and the measurable. It is, then, in Jesus Christ, through "union and communion" with him in love, and through sharing in the love of God incarnate in him, that we are enabled to know God in such a way that our knowledge of God is firm and sure, for it is anchored in the ultimate reality of God's own eternal being.' Kruger underlines that Torrance, after underpinning the importance of Christ, goes on to say, 'That would not be possible without the aid of the Spirit of God.' Judging the logical development of the argument, Kruger remarks that one would expect Torrance

[19] C. B. Kruger, 'Thesis: Participation in the Self-Knowledge of God: The Nature and Means of Our Knowledge of God in the Theology of T.F. Torrance' (The University of Aberdeen, 1990), 204.
[20] Ibid. Author's italic.
[21] Ibid., 204-05.

to go on from here to speak specifically and directly of the 'union and communion' with Christ through the Spirit. However, instead of that, Torrance refers to the fact that it is 'in and through the Lord Jesus Christ God has accustomed his Holy Spirit to dwell in human nature and at the same time has adapted human nature to receive the Holy Spirit, which enables us through the gift of the Holy Spirit to share in the relation of mutual knowing between the Father and the Son and thus on God's knowledge of himself.' On this note, it seems that the sharing and knowing of God to Torrance lies quintessentially in our partaking of the Spirit who dwells in us as God's gift.[22] Citing a longer statement to prove the point, Kruger says that the ambiguity continues although a clear christological orientation is emerging. Torrance says,

> Strictly speaking, as Irenaeus pointed out, only God can know himself so that it is only through God that God may be known…. Hence if we are really to know God it can be only through sharing in some incredible way in the knowledge which God has of himself. That is to say, we can know God only if he brings us into communion with him in the inner relations of his own being as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This sharing in the knowledge that God has of himself was made possible through the incarnation of God's Son and his mediation of the Spirit of the Father and the Son. In the incarnation God communicated himself to us in Jesus Christ his beloved Son, not something about himself, but his very *Self*, and thereby made himself known to us according to his own divine nature as Father. And at Pentecost God poured out upon us his own Spirit who as the Spirit of the Father and the Son is the immediate presence of God to us in his own very being as God. In Jesus Christ God has embodied in our human existence the mutual knowledge which the Father and the Son have of one another and in the Holy Spirit he gives us communion in the mutual relation of the Father and the Son… express it the other way around, through Jesus Christ we are given access to the Father in one Spirit.[23]

Kruger remarks that although here to Torrance 'the coming of the Spirit "gives us communion in the mutual relation of the Father and the Son"', 'it is not yet that clear as to whether the Spirit is Himself that communion or whether it is a partaking on our part in the Son's communion with the Father through the Son'.[24] Alternatively put, the key of Kruger's criticism lies in whether, in Torrance's account, the communion of the Spirit is the mediation of the revelation of God in Christ to us, or the way to Christ through whom we may partake the revelation of God. The question is which is the correct one. Kruger says that if we take 'the overarching thrust of Torrance's thought and its centring upon the person of Christ then this would suggest that the main or all-encompassing perspective within which

[22] Ibid., 205. Cited from *TF*, 32.
[23] *TF*, 54-55. Author's italic. Cited in Kruger, 205-06.
[24] Kruger, 206.

Pentecost should be viewed as Christological.'[25] In alluding to Torrance's account of the 'hiddenness' of the Spirit, Kruger underlines that the Spirit's work is fundamentally christological. Kruger says, 'Now, this emphasis upon the self-effacing and Christological nature of the Spirit's coming and work in hiding Himself and shining His Light upon Jesus must be interpreted more "closely" and "personally" in term of "union and communion with Christ". It is not just that the Spirit throws His Light upon a "distant" Christ but actually "connects" us with Christ Himself.'[26] In addition, when referring to the doctrine of the Spirit in *The School of Faith*, Kruger claims that to Torrance the 'proper work' of the Spirit in the communion is 'uttering Christ, revealing Him, creating communion with Him… The Spirit has an essentially Christocentric relation.'[27] Taking this christological framework into consideration, Kruger believes the latter interpretation, that of perceiving the communion of the Spirit as the way to Christ through whom we may partake the revelation of God, is the correct one.[28]

Kruger's conclusion corroborates our argument that Jesus Christ essentially is the sole Mediator of God in Torrance's theological scheme. Notwithstanding the ambiguity, the overarching christological thrust of Torrance's pneumatology indicates that the communion of the Spirit is to lead all to God's self-disclosure in Christ, the controlling centre of our knowing of God. To some extent we may say that the vagueness is due to a lack of clarity in Torrance's attempt to delimit the function of the Spirit in relation to the Son. The intent of Torrance to give the person of the Spirit a distinctive role so to avoid the eclipse of the Spirit in God's revelation and mediation in Christ is evident. With the endeavour of Torrance in mind, we may turn to Gunton for some guidance and affirmation.

In alluding to George Caird's remark that the Fourth Gospel is distinctive because it is written from the perspective of the church under the guidance of the Spirit, Gunton makes a 'slightly exaggerated contrast' between the Synoptic Gospel and the Fourth Gospel by saying that in the former we have an understanding of revelation from the point of view of its first recipients, and in the latter one from the later church.[29] The uniqueness of the Fourth Gospel is paramount to Gunton because

[25] Ibid., 206-07.
[26] Ibid., 209.
[27] *SF*, xcviii. Cited in Kruger, 210.
[28] Kruger, 210.
[29] Colin Gunton, *A Brief Theology of Revelation* (London: T & T Clark, 2005), 114-16. Although a few crucial expressions of revelation could be identified in the Synoptic Gospel, Gunton claims that

it is 'trinitarian in a thoroughgoing but also distinctive way.'[30] Gunton says that the way to understand it is to compare the weighting of the actions of the persons of the Trinity with Barth's similar account. Notwithstanding Barth's conspicuous trinitarian and christological account, Gunton remarks that some features are questionable. For example, Gunton asks whether Barth is right to describe Jesus Christ as revelation and the Father as revealer. Although in some aspect this is a feature of the Synoptic account, Gunton asks could the other way round be also possible. Gunton says, 'We have already met the problem of Barth's tendency to underplay the significance of the humanity of Christ. It is accompanied by an equivocal failure to give due place and function to the Holy Spirit.'[31] Gunton says that to Barth the Spirit is the 'subjective side in the event of revelation.'[32] It is Barth's equivalent of the Reformation concept

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the Gospel of John focuses singularly on the revelation of glory; encompassing the whole life of Jesus Christ from incarnation to ascension. Among the episodic events of Jesus, the Synoptics pay special attention to the baptism of Jesus. Gunton says although in the Eastern Orthodox tradition this event is seen as a revelation of the Trinity, he underpins that the centrality of revelation is Jesus Christ. This is in line with the expression of Mark that says that upon Jesus the Spirit descends and the voice of the Father says 'Thou art my son….' (Mk. 1:11). Besides the baptismal event, Gunton alludes to the confession of Peter at Caesarea Philippi and the subsequent narrative of transfiguration as the revelation of the Son by the Father. Although the content of revelation in this regard concerns Jesus' destiny and the meaning to be the Son of God, Gunton says, 'All three evangelists interpret Peter's confession through the transfiguration when God affirms, in a way analogous to the baptism, both the confession and Jesus' interpretation of it.' Notwithstanding the revelation of Christ is clearly made known, as Mk. 9:7 indicates, Gunton observers that the recipients are incapable of a full grasp. And, since the story is told from the point of view of those whom it happened, it continues into the Fourth Gospel. The third major episode of the Synoptics concerns the story of resurrection. Gunton underscores that there is a two-fold dynamic in the event. On the one hand, the resurrection is, as Pannenberg says, the divine declaration of the significance of Christ. It is an eschatological event and thus it anticipates the final revelation. But, on the other hand, resurrection, as the story indicates, is not revelation that in someway overturns the darkness of the cross. Rather, it establishes that as revelation. To sum up the Synoptics, Gunton says, 'The revelation is of the suffering sonship of Jesus, that it is through his death above all that he is revealed to be the one that he is, the vehicle not primarily of revelation but of salvation, atonement in his blood: the restoration and realisation of the predestined human relationship to the father. By anticipation in baptism and transfiguration, in fullness at the cross, he is revealed as the one sent and anointed to bear the sin of the world and so to set his people free for God.' The Fourth Gospel is not unlike that of the Synoptics with regard to the focus of divine salvific economy. However, Gunton is confident that the definitive treatment of revelation in the New Testament can be found there.

[30] Ibid., 119. Gunton says that although the Fourth Gospel, like the Synoptics, has employed the genre of narrative, it is of different kind as revelation is treated relationally rather than narratively. Gunton says, 'We should be alerted already to the distinct contribution that John has to make by his use of the idea of indwelling. The knowledge of which he speaks is first of all the knowledge by acquaintance that is a function of the interrelatedness of persons.' Thus, it should not come as a surprise to us that the knowledge of which John derives from revelation is one that is framed within the relations between God and the world. We may briefly summarise Gunton's exposition in three points. First, revelation is about creation; Christ is the mediator of creation. Second, it concerns incarnation. The mediator of creation becomes incarnate in Jesus Christ (Jn.1:14); 'Revelation is thus at a datable time and place, tied offensively and unphilosophically, to a historical person.' Third, Jesus Christ is the centre. The one who reveals God, is also the mediator of salvation; 'It is the epiphany of the one who is the mediator of God's salvation.'

[31] Ibid.

[32] *CD*, I/1, 449. Cited in Gunton, 119.

of the internal word; God confirms internally for the believer the external word of the Bible. Gunton argues that although Barth's revelation may represent a version of reformation teaching, he could not avoid the weakness of limiting the work of the Spirit to the believer's relation in Christ, a problem that is so typical of the pneumatology of the Western tradition.[33] On this note, Torrance, in expressing similar view, regards the construction of a full doctrine of the Spirit as an urgent task of modern theology that even Barth has yet to work out thoroughly in his *Dogmatics.*[34] Gunton and Torrance are not alone in this regard. Eugene Rogers notes that 'many critics have argued, persuasively, that despite books, sections, monographs and the Trinitarian revival, Karl Barth has managed to substantially ignore the Holy Spirit, or to reduce it to a function of Jesus Christ---"the power of Jesus Christ"'.[35] The way out according to Gunton, which is also the endeavour of Torrance as shown in the attempt to overcome the eclipse of the Spirit, is first to give the Spirit more a distinctive role, and second to develop a more adequate conception of mediation. Gunton elucidates,

> Revelation is… an eschatological concept: it is that which is awaited at the end time, when we shall know as we are known. If there is any revelation in the midst of time, it will be because the Spirit, the agent of eschatological completeness and the one who prefects the creation, enables an anticipation to take place: so mediates revelation that we may say that the mysteries of God are made known in our time.[36]

To Gunton the emphasis of the Spirit is the characteristic of the Fourth Gospel because it is written from the perspective of those who live after the giving of the Spirit. John's churchly situation enables him to comprehend that which is lacked in the disciples' understanding even though they are confronted with clear revelation as described in the Synoptic narratives. The reason of distinction, of which Gunton reiterates the point of John, is that the 'Spirit was not yet given, but now the Paraclete is with them (Jn. 7:39, cf. 12:16).'[37] To John the Spirit is the one whom the Father sends through the Son to bring believers to all truth (Jn.16:13). As the truth is Jesus Christ, Gunton underscores, as Torrance, that the Spirit is the agent of revelation

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[33] Gunton, 119-20.
[34] Thomas F. Torrance, 'Karl Barth,' *Expository Times* (1955): 209. Torrance says, 'If I were asked to give my main criticism of the teaching of Karl Barth I think I would say that we need to have from him much more than he has yet given us, a thoroughly worked out doctrine of the Holy Spirit'.
[35] Rogers, 173.
[36] Gunton, 120.
[37] Ibid. Gunton believes this is the reason why John is able to show us the glory of the Christ not only at crucial moments of revelation, but in the whole of his life.

leading all to the truth, to Jesus. And by pointing away from himself to Christ, it does not deny the truism that the Spirit is also revealed, 'but revealed as one from *whom* rather *to* whom we look.' 'The Spirit is revealed,' Gunton says, 'as the mediator of relation to God through Christ and *consequently* as the mediator of revelation.'[38] This is the heart of Gunton's argument to which Torrance would agree without difficulty. The mediatory office of 'the Spirit is to point to, and in that sense, reveal the Son; that of the Son to reveal the Father.'[39] Going back to Barth, the question is whether the trinitarian structure of revelation might be better to state as the Son reveals the Father in and through the Spirit. By asking questions, Gunton underlines that we are not implying that such elements are absent. But, 'there is a tendency working against them suggesting that the Son revels himself, with the result that the nature of the relation between Son and Father is obscured, and the work of the Spirit too closely located in the believer's subjective appropriation of revelation.'[40] The crux to Gunton is without the mediatory and revealing work of the Spirit, no one will know the Son as the way to the Father; since one is not the same as the other in the Trinity, and each has unique function and action, thus, differences of mediation naturally follow.

It is not difficult to note the congruity between Torrance and Gunton on the importance of the mediation and revelation of the Spirit. The strength of Gunton's account lies in while stressing the distinctive work of the Spirit it does not confuse but corroborate the sole mediatorship of Christ. Gunton's exposition of the Gospel would also be a complement to Torrance in his endeavour to avoid the eclipse of the Spirit. Although the ways of articulation and substantiation are uniquely different between the two, Gunton and Torrance, as our examinations show, agree unanimously on the distinctiveness of the Spirit and the Son in mediating God's self-disclosure in human history. Essentially the communion of the Spirit to Torrance and Gunton is to lead all to the Son, as the Son reveals the Father. Before we move to the next section, a question not irrelevant to our analysis awaits attention. If Gunton is right about Barth's weakness of limiting the activity of the Spirit to the believer's subjective appropriation of revelation, we may ask whether Torrance, notwithstanding his endeavour, is free from the same problem. This is an important

[38] Ibid., 121. Author's italic.
[39] Ibid., 122.
[40] Ibid.

question. Nevertheless, it will not be addressed until the next chapter when we look into Torrance's thought on scripture.

The Epistemic Dynamic of the Spirit

In the foregoing section we primarily discuss Torrance's understanding of the communion of the Spirit in enabling believers to meet God in Christ. Our focus of this section, however, is to turn to the nature of the epistemic work of the Spirit in unfolding divine self-disclosure through media of creaturely existence. We would analyse Torrance's thought on the activity of the Spirit in facilitating our scientific knowing of God, validating multiple media and correlating them with the being of God in divine mediation.

Torrance questions whether it is meaningful to speak of the epistemology of the Spirit, given that our knowing of God's revelation and mediation in Christ cannot be actualised apart from the Spirit. If there is a place for the question, Torrance believes it is to be carried out in relation to the Father and the Son, since the Spirit by himself, as the foregoing discussion shows, has no independent epistemological ground. If our concern of the work of the Spirit includes aspects of our knowing of God where epistemological forms break off, and where we are confronted with the acts of God that are very much beyond our comprehension and description, Torrance says that instead of indulging in the discussion of the epistemology of the Spirit, the speaking of the epistemological relevance of the Spirit would be more accurate and meaningful. Torrance elucidates,

> In epistemology we are concerned with the *formal* aspects of knowledge, the forms of the *how* and the forms of the *what* as they arise in our understanding under the impact of the object, whereas in the Spirit we are concerned rather with the *non-formal*, with the given reality or object of our knowledge as it outruns all forms of our understanding, and with the abrupt acts of God through which our understanding of Him arises but which cannot be reduced to forms of our understanding.… As knowledge of God actually arises, however, we know that we cannot attribute it to ourselves… though it is our knowledge of Him, it is explicable only from the side of God as freely given participation in His self-knowledge. The epistemological relevance of the Holy Spirit lies in the dynamic and transformal aspects of this knowledge.[41]

[41] *GR*, 165-66. Author's italic.

Torrance believes the discussion of the epistemology of the Spirit is inappropriate because it presupposes human action alone could ascertain the knowledge of God by coming before the Spirit methodologically and scientifically, and therefore runs the risk of losing the free, dynamic and non-formal aspects of the Spirit and the knowledge of God. Torrance's refusal is consequential as, we judge, it entails a deeper dimension of addressing what he believes to be the crisis of domesticating the Spirit of God particularly in Roman Catholicism and Protestant Pietism. Torrance says, 'This is the persistent error of the Romanism and Protestantism; the one confounds the Spirit with the spirit of the Church… and the other confounds the Spirit of God with the human spirit.' The ramification of the confusion indubitably is the dissolve of our knowledge of the Spirit 'in the subjectivities of the consciousness of the Church or the individual, and the products of this consciousness, in its collective or individual, are put forward as operations of the Holy Spirit.'[42] Torrance is adamant that the only way out of the predicament is to submit oneself before the living God and to 'distinguish the Holy Spirit from our spirits, and to know him in all his transcendent freedom and power as *Creator Spiritus.*'[43] Torrance underlines, 'Because the Spirit is the active and living presence of this One and Only God, He resists all our attempts to be independent of Him or to get alongside of Him or to manipulate Him for our own ends. Hence in all our knowing of God the Spirit… convicts us of falsifying the truth and of confounding Him with our own subjective states, and in which He distinguishes Himself from our spirits'.[44] On this note, Torrance pinpoints the meaning of the indwelling of the Spirit as,

> The presence of the Holy Spirit means, therefore, while God reveals Himself to us within the subject-object structures of our existence in space and time He encounters us always as the Lord in the implacable objectivity of His divine Being, objecting to our objectifying modes of thought and imparting Himself to us in accordance with the mode of His own self-revealing through the Word.[45]

From the argument it is manifest that the discussion of the epistemological relevance of the Spirit is more appropriate than that of epistemology, as the Spirit essentially is dynamic, non-formal and even personal in unfolding God's self-

[42] *TRst*, 242.
[43] Ibid., 228.
[44] *GR*, 173.
[45] Ibid.

disclosure in Christ; as Torrance aptly says, 'the Spirit is at work as *personalising Spirit*.'[46] However, given the vitality of the Spirit that, according to Torrance, is beyond human domestication or dominion, would it then dominate or even swallow up the human subjectivity through the acts of 'objecting' and 'imparting' within the reciprocal subject-object relation? To ascertain the answer, we may take cognisance of Torrance's employment of a term used by the Greek Fathers. Torrance says, '*Theosis* describes man's involvement in such a mighty act of God upon him that he is raised up to find the true centre of his existence not in himself but in Holy God, where he lives and moves and has his being in the uncreated but creative energy of the Holy Spirit.'[47] Although it is only in the Spirit that our knowing of God is authentic knowing, Torrance is unequivocal that it 'does not mean that by receiving the Spirit we lose our own proper being'.[48] Notwithstanding the dynamic compulsiveness, the personalising work of the Spirit in the subject-object relation is to bring to fulfilment the subjectivity of the human knower than to relegate or demean his dignity and self-determination as proper human person (see chapter three). Torrance elucidates, 'Far from crushing our creaturely nature or damaging our personal existence, the indwelling presence of God through Jesus Christ and in Holy Spirit has the effect of healing and restoring and deepening human personal being… for it is through Christ and in the Spirit that we are granted personalising communion with the ever-living God in the perfection of his triune being.'[49]

If Torrance's account of the Spirit and the nature of our knowing of God in the Spirit are acceptable, the challenge faces us is how are we going to relate the free, dynamic, and non-formal aspects of the Spirit with the scientific mode of human inquiry? Is there a contradiction in Torrance's argumentation? Should we throw scientific inquiry out of the window? Would our knowing of God's self-disclosure in Christ by the Spirit then become immediate, supra rational and ecstatic? 'Surely not,' Torrance avers, 'for it is the miraculous nature of the Spirit's activity that while He creates in us the ability to know God beyond all creaturely and human capacities this

[46] Ibid., 188. Author's italic.
[47] *TRst*, 243. According to Torrance the whole experience of falling under the overwhelming presence of God and coming under the control of the Spirit in our knowing of him is akin to what the Greek Fathers call *theosis*. Torrance says that the term is usually translated wrongly as deification; but it has nothing to do with divinisation of humanity any more than the incarnation has to do with the humanisation of God. By *theosis* Torrance says that 'the Greek fathers wish to express the fact that in the new coming of the Spirit we are up against God in the most absolute sense, God in his ultimate holiness or Godness.'
[48] *TRci*, 238.
[49] *TF*, 230-31.

does not involve any suppression of our rational and critical powers.'[50] In fact, far from suppressing or crushing 'the frail forms of contingent rationality', Torrance claims that 'the presence of the Holy Spirit empowers, integrates and establishes them while overcoming the alienating deficiencies and contradictions which we have introduced into them'.[51] Torrance elucidates the epistemic dynamic of the Spirit,

> Here we have to do with sober, self-critical activity, with careful, controlled judgements, with rational knowledge in its own right. We are concerned with modes of knowledge which have to be questioned and tested as to their real ground in actual knowledge, and which have to be examined and corrected to see that they are rightly and appropriately related to the realities to which they claim to refer. This is, in fact, the area of the Spirit's relevance to our human knowledge, where modes of knowing are related to being and forms of thought and speech refer to realities beyond themselves.[52]

Thus, instead of taking leave of our sense and rationality in the inquiry of God, the Spirit of God, as Torrance claims, in fact works through them in a dynamic and non-formal way so that we are able to grasp that which 'outruns all forms of our understanding'. The crux is the correlating of our rational knowing and the dynamic being of God that is outside the contingent rationality depends precisely on the non-formal and personalising divine action of the Spirit.[53] It is here we argue that the

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[50] *GR*, 168.
[51] *CDG*, 220.
[52] *GR*, 168.
[53] The epistemological relevance of the Spirit has provided an important basis to unravel the difficult relation between knowing and being. However, the question is how does the epistemological process take place in the structure of reality? In this regard, Torrance makes reference to Einstein and Polanyi and addresses the relation within the stratified structure of knowledge. The point of Torrance is that there is 'a correspondence between the structure of comprehension and the structure of the comprehensive entity which is the object.' He applies the principle of marginal control of Polanyi in the stratified structure of knowledge and asserts that in every level of stratified structure, the inquiry is referred and coordinated by the one above so that knowing becomes comprehensible and meaningful. Torrance calls this movement 'the principle of coherent integration from above'. The hierarchical coordination of sciences inevitably implies a movement of knowledge from a lower to a higher paradigm. To Torrance theology naturally constitutes the highest level since its primary concern is the Creator God. Torrance claims that similarities exist between the scientific structure and the theological structure. As no dogmatic system contains its own truth-reference, it requires to cross into a higher level in order to be ontologically significant as well as theologically consistent. Although in theology the movement is parallel but not identical to the stratified structure of the nature science, it can be apprehended in three levels from the experience of the Gospel to the articulation of the truth of the Gospel. The first level is 'the ground level of religious experience and worship', and its focus is 'a personal encounter with Jesus Christ within the structure of our historical existence in space and time.' The second level is theological and its main concern is to appropriate 'intellectual instruments' in order to 'apprehend more fully the economic and ontological and trinitarian structure of God's revealing and saving acts in Jesus Christ'. In this level the doctrine of *homoousion* is the hinge as it makes rational sense the being of God who reveals freely himself in Jesus Christ. Torrance says that *homoousion* is the 'ontological and epistemological linchpin of Christian theology', it enables us to deepen our grasp of the triune God in such a way that 'our thought has to move from the secondary level in which we have to do with the economic Trinity to the tertiary of higher theological level where

epistemic dynamic of the Spirit is of significance in constituting the divine action of the normative pattern of revelation and mediation. Torrance calls it 'the area of epistemological diastasis', or the place and work of the Spirit.[54] 'This then is the specific domain of the Spirit in theological knowledge,' Torrance says, 'for by His power and enlightenment we think and speak directly of God in and through the forms of our rational experience and articulation and we do that under the direction and control of the inner rationality of the divine Being, the eternal *Logos* and *Eidos* of Godhead.'[55] Only by the epistemic dynamic of the Spirit that such trans-formal experience is made possible, so that as human we are able to know by our scientific inquiry the truth of God's self-disclosure in Christ.

As we continue to analyse Torrance's thought on the activity of the Spirit, we would take heed of his declaration that the most fundamental 'area of epistemological diastasis' is the relation of our cognitive and semantic acts to the being of God. As noted, our attainment of God's knowledge to Torrance lies in the correlating of our rational knowing with the being of God by the Spirit. Difficulty however emerges as how could our thinking and speaking relate to God's being since, as Torrance says, 'It is impossible to reduce to thought how thought is related to being, else all we are left with is mere thought; it is likewise impossible to state in statements how statements are related to being without substituting mere statements for the relation to being'.[56]

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we have to do with the ontological Trinity'. In the third level, the higher theological level, through the appropriation of the *homoousion* of the Son and the Spirit, human thoughts are lifted from the level of economic Trinity to the level of the ontological Trinity. It is there that the knowledge of God is culminated in his eternal intelligible personal relations. Torrance claims that in this process a new concept, the *perichoresis*, is needed, along with *homoousion*, to make rational sense of the hypostatic union in God. Torrance calls *perichoresis* the *onto-relational concept* of the divine Persons. It speaks of the intra-trinitarian relations in God; and out of it is developed the doctrine of the Trinity the new concept of person according to which the relations between persons belong to what persons are. Torrance concludes by saying that 'it is in the recognition of the homoousial oneness between the economic Trinity and the transcendental Trinity, together with the doctrine of the perichoretic relations within the eternal Communion of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, that a thorough refinement of all our theological beliefs and truths takes place.' Incidentally in the process of unraveling the problem Torrance has answered a question Gunton raises. It concerns the basis of the movement from economy to theology. Gunton asks by what right does thought move from history to eternity or from action in time to being in eternity. Torrance's answer, as indicated, lies precisely in the principle of coherent integration from above. Thus, Gunton pinpoints that in Torrance's epistemological framework the rationale behind the necessity to move from economy to theology is more rational than mechanical. See *TCFK*, 85; *CTSC*, 36-37; *CDG*, 84-88, 91-95, 102-07; *TRst*, 17-19, 83, 93-94; *TS*, 233; *GR*, 186; P.S. Kang, 'Thesis: The Concept of the Vicarious Humanity of Christ in the Theology of Thomas Forsyth Torrance' (The University of Aberdeen, 1983), 357-58; Weightman 232; Colin Gunton, 'Person and Being: T. F. Torrance's Doctrine of God,' *The Promise of Trinitarian Theology: Theologians in Dialogue with T.F. Torrance*, ed. Elmer M. Colyer (Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001), 122-23.

[54] *GR*, 169, 171.

[55] Ibid., 170.

[56] *GR*, 175.

Although we are unable to account with scientific accuracy and verification how it ultimately happens, Torrance is unequivocal that a relation does indeed take place at this point in which, like all authentic knowledge, the being 'shows through' from beyond our forms of thought and speech. Torrance says that 'we are at the one point where the necessity for epistemological diastasis between the reality we know and our knowing of it becomes supremely compelling',[57] and without the Spirit 'we would not break through to the divine Being, or rather the divine Being would not break through to us in His reality as Being and thus in His distinction from our thought and speech of Him.'[58] However, tension exists at this point. Notwithstanding the Spirit through his indwelling brings about the imprint of God's being upon us in our experience, thinking and speaking so that we are able to relate appositely to divine compulsiveness, the Spirit, in doing so, reinforces as well the impossibility of how our thoughts and statements are to relate to God without breaking off. To resolve the problem, Torrance says,

> Through the Spirit empirical relation to the divine Being takes place and within it we are given intuitive knowledge of God, but the mode of our relation to Him and the mode of our knowledge of Him must be in accordance with His nature as *Spirit*, and therefore even though we have empirical relation to Him and intuitive knowledge of Him, they are not amenable to the kind of control which we exercise in relation to creaturely objects. It is rather we who fall under the overwhelming presence of the divine Being and come under the control of His Spirit in our experience and knowledge of Him.[59]

From the citation it is manifest that our knowing of God takes place intuitively in the Spirit because human rational thoughts are limited in relating themselves to the being of God. To Torrance our contingent limitation in this regard is not an impediment but the call to obedience and submission. Torrance says,

> This is unique action in which God's own Being is wholly present… creating from our side a corresponding action in which our own being is committed. That is why theological thinking is essentially a spiritual activity in which we are engaged in a movement that corresponds to the movement of the Spirit and indeed participates in it.[60]

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[57] Ibid., 176. Gary W. Deddo, 'The Holy Spirit in T. F. Torrance's Theology,' in *The Promise of Trinitarian Theology*, ed. Elmer M. Colyer (Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001), 96-98.
[58] Ibid., 175.
[59] Ibid. Author's italic.
[60] Ibid., 177. Torrance underpins that the movement of the Spirit coming into humanity to open our hearts to the knowing of God is anchored to the very act of God in which the Son becomes man in order to take the place of humanity, and to give us a place within the communion of the divine life. Thus, to Torrance, we are to think of the work of the Spirit not simply as the actualising within us of

Torrance is explicit that our corresponding movement to that of the Spirit is what Kierkegaard calls 'the leap of faith'. But 'it would be a grave misunderstanding to think of this as a blind or irrational movement, for it is the very reverse of that.'[61] If our intuitive knowledge of God as Torrance claims is inseparable from the movement of correlating our knowing with divine being, one may compare it, for example, with the realist epistemological approach of Einsteinian-Polanyian science that underpins the integration of form and being, or the Heidegger's leap of thought to unfold the ultimate being. On this note, Torrance, however, is adamant that such comparisons are inadequate as 'In none of them are we concerned with being that really *acts* upon us but only with our own attempts to make being disclose itself.'[62] At the first glance it may appear that Torrance is being inconsistent to some extent, especially in relation to the Einsteinian-Polanyian science of which he appropriates immensely in theological science. But if steps are taken to ascertain what Torrance is trying to get at here, the key essentially lies in the absence of the epistemic dynamic of the Spirit in these approaches. That is why Torrance expresses his reservation and says, 'We ourselves have both to pose the questions and to answer them, and since

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what God has already worked for us in Jesus Christ once for all, but as opening us up within our subjectivities for Christ in such a radical way that we find our life not in ourselves but out of ourselves, objectively in him. In this regard, as Torrance aptly says, 'we are engaged in a movement that corresponds to the movement of the Spirit and indeed participates in it.' See *TRst*, 238; *CDG*, 151.

[61] Ibid. Torrance claims that Kierkegaard has propagated a mode of rational thought within the subject-object relationship that is genuine and relevant in accordance with the nature of the object of disclosure. Crystallising Kierkegaard's argument under the caption 'Truth is Subjectivity', *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, Torrance says, 'The object of the theological knowledge is Truth in the form of personal Being, that is Truth as active Subject, but this Truth must be known, must be an object of knowledge, in a way appropriate to its nature as Subjectivity, for only then will the knowing subject be in the truth in relation to it. Thus the very mode of apprehending the Truth belongs to the truth.' Following the argument of Kierkegaard, Torrance underpins that this emphasis of subjectivity does not abrogate the validity of objectivity. In fact, the authentic subjectivity of a human person is only possible when he encounters the objectivity of the divine subject, when human subjectivity reposes upon the objective ground in the divine reality. Torrance reiterates Kierkegaard's argument that such encountering is the experience of faith; the leap of faith. Such leap of faith is neither a leap of irrationality nor subjectivism. It is the leap of rationality, or the activity of reason, in accordance with the nature of the truth. To Torrance the leap of faith is nothing but the process of 'Real thinking, thinking that moves from the known to the unknown, thinking that involves transition, moves across a "breach" in the process of logic in order to act in accordance with objective movement in the object of its knowledge.' As the experience of faith is the relational movement arsing out of meeting with the divine objectivity, it is also the highest passion of subjectivity in which one's whole existence is involved and is transformed by it. Thus Kierkegaard is able to claim that 'truth is subjectivity' for the subjectivity of humanity arises out of the objectivity of God. This could only occur if the subject is in a knowing relation with the object. Torrance rightly underscores that the existentialist thinkers who overlook the tenet of authentic subjectivity have interpreted 'truth is subjectivity' in the way of subjectivism that is greatly different from what Kierkegaard has originally intended. See *TS*, 1-6, 152-55.

[62] Ibid., 178. Author's italic.

we ourselves always stand behind our questions we are left finally alone with ourselves, without Another to put to us the ultimate question that will carry us beyond ourselves to open up the original source of our being. All we can do… after all but a leap into the void?'[63] But in theological knowing 'God is at work through His Spirit enclosing man within the circle of the movement that our questioning and answering, our knowing and speaking of Him, may reach a fruition which we could never give them.' Essentially, 'it is not man but God Himself who activates and sustains the relation between human knowing and His divine Being'.[64] That is the distinction. And it is here the epistemic dynamic of the Spirit in theological science becomes all-important to Torrance. The importance is particularly evident in Torrance's argument of the validity of *recognition-statements* of theology as the medium of divine self-disclosure. According to Torrance, *recognition-statements* are statements arising out of scientific inquiry and apposite reflection on the subject of investigation. They are the fruit of allowing human reason to act 'in accordance with the nature of the given object, that is, acknowledges and recognises it, so that it attains its essential conceptuality as it lets its thinking follow the inherent rationality of the given.'[65] Torrance says that in natural science *recognition-statements* derive from reflecting upon the rationality of the universe. In theology they are statements relating to the 'intimate locution', or the objective Word of God. With regard to the difference between science and theology, Torrance claims,

> This is even more true of theological activity for in it the human reason finds itself posited with a given reality that is not a dumb or inert object of knowledge but the Holy Spirit speaking the Word of God and in that Word presenting the very Being of God as the creative source and objective ground of our knowledge of Him.… Hence theological statements are formed as through the speaking of the Spirit the objective Word of God calls forth language from us which is sustained and actualised in relation to God by the same Spirit as the mode of God's communication with men, and as through the obedient response of our minds to the Spirit we seek to let our answering word take the form which it must take under the imprint of God's Word if it is to be correlated to that Word and be the medium of its recognition among men.[66]

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[63] Ibid.
[64] Ibid., 178-79.
[65] *GR*, 182. Torrance claims that if we appropriate reason with the right approach, it will serve us well in our theological endeavour. In alluding to John Macmurray, Torrance says that reason is about our capacity to behave consciously in terms of the nature of what is not ourselves. In other words, it is the capacity to act in accordance with the nature of the object. Thus, true thoughts are thoughts that refer properly to the reality, and are in accordance with the nature of the object of their reference. On this note, to be rational is to behave not in terms of our own nature, but in terms of our knowledge of the world outside of us, of things and persons in accordance with their own natures. See *TRst*, 231-32.
[66] Ibid., 182-83.

Thus, *recognition-statements* of theology are formed differently from that of science when we allow them 'to enshrine an "intimate locution" which echoes or reflects the "intimate locution" in the divine Being and which can only be conferred upon them through the operation of the Spirit'.[67] In other words, to Torrance, true theological statements, or *recognition-statements* of theology, are justified as the valid medium of divine self-disclosure only by relating them to the objective Word of God through the epistemic dynamic of the Spirit, and not on any basis of man-made epistemology or scientific verification. As Torrance says, 'in shining the divine light or sounding the divine Word through those forms of thought and speech, so that God may disclose Himself to us not apart from them but *through* them' in his revelation.[68]

Torrance's argument of the essentiality of the epistemic dynamic of the Spirit in validating media and correlating them with the being of God in the mediation of Christ's revelation corroborates his theological scheme of revelation and multiple mediations. The truism to Torrance is that 'God reveals Himself to man not, as it were, in His naked majesty, but in the medium of the creaturely existence to which man belongs in space and time, and uses the sign-world of inter-human communication in order to communicate Himself to man.' Although any creaturely existence could become 'the area of epistemological diastasis', or the place and work of the Spirit, Torrance is explicit that not all but only those that 'He determines, within the created world, within man's life and history, and within the subject-object structures of his existence, certain facts and events as the signs or the mediate objectivities of His revelation'.[69] The 'facts and events' God appropriates are those of the history of Israel and the life of the incarnation Son of God that we have discussed in the preceding chapters. They comprise as well those of the church, particularly in relation to scripture, Word and sacraments, and also the contingent creation that we would analyse in the succeeding chapters. It is through these chosen media that God by the epistemic dynamic of the Spirit continues to bring forth his self-disclosure in Christ to humanity in the course of time. Torrance says,

> Thus God still comes to us clothed in the historical and biblical forms of His revelation which (whether B.C. or A.D.) direct us to Jesus Christ in the centre, for it is in Him that God has objectified Himself for our human knowing, but through the

[67] Ibid., 183.
[68] Ibid. Author's italic.
[69] Ibid., 184. See *TRst*, 248.

> power and presence of the Holy Spirit we are enabled to meet God and know Him directly and immediately in Jesus Christ.[70]

Torrance is unequivocal that the creaturely media without the imprint of the Spirit are mere expressions of earthly, natural and human activities, and are quite opaque in relation to God's revelation; since they are taken from 'man's intra-mundane existence, and from within the subject-object structure of his relations with the world of nature and other human beings'. Unless they are 'interpreted beyond their this-worldly reference', they are unable to be the media 'in which God reveals *Himself*.'[71] That to Torrance is where the dynamic activity of the Spirit comes in, since without his creative acts all earthly media of divine self-disclosure will remain dark and opaque, and fail their task of mediation. Torrance says conclusively,

> Without the Spirit, we have no opening to the transcendent Being, but through the Spirit our concepts are opened in such a way that He is accessible to us---if we close these concepts in order to give them the kind of precision apposite only to concepts we develop in knowledge of determinate realities, then we smother knowledge of God and evade His Reality. Knowledge of God in the Spirit is profoundly conceptual, rational knowledge in its own right, knowledge in which we are carried right over to what transcends us, yet which is apposite to the nature of God as *Spirit*.[72]

We have in this section analysed Torrance's thought on the epistemological relevance of the Spirit. We underscore that apart from the meaninglessness of speaking the epistemology of the Spirit, Torrance's emphasis of the epistemic dynamic of the Spirit addresses as well the peril of domesticating the Spirit of God particularly in Roman Catholicism and Protestant Pietism. Notwithstanding the dynamic and non-formal nature, the epistemic work of the Spirit is essentially rational to Torrance first in enabling our scientific knowing of God, and second in validating multiple media and correlating them with the being of God so that divine self-disclosure in Christ could be mediated continuously through them to humanity in the course of human history. Hence, as we argue, the activity of the Spirit indeed constitutes immensely the divine action of the normative pattern of revelation and mediation of Torrance's theological scheme.

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[70] Ibid. See *TRst*, 257-58.
[71] Ibid., 185. Author's italic.
[72] Ibid., 188. Author's italic.

Conclusion

Torrance says, 'Moreover by his presence the Holy Spirit is the "place" (τόπος) where men may meet with God and are enabled to have communion with him, receive his revelation and worship him.'[73] This statement aptly encapsulates what we endeavour to argue in the present chapter. Essentially the *parousia* of the Spirit to Torrance is to enable rational knowing by leading us into the communion of the Spirit so that we are led to the Son, as the Son reveals the Father. By the epistemic dynamic of the Spirit, media of created existence are enabled to mediate divine self-disclosure in human history which otherwise would not be possible. Thus, we may end by stating that the Spirit in Torrance's theology of revelation and multiple mediations has been given the distinctive role and essential place. The activity of the Spirit indeed is the crucial divine action of the normative pattern of revelation and mediation.

[73] *TF*, 229.

Chapter Five

Scripture: The Primary Medium of Revelation

In the foregoing chapter main features of Torrance's thought on the dynamic activity of the Spirit as the divine action in mediating Christ's revelation through the human and earthly media have been examined. Our discussions show that although Torrance has yet to devote a book completely to pnuematology, he indeed possesses rich and complex understanding of the role of the Spirit in divine revelation. We argue that Torrance's pnuematology is closely related to his concept of multiple mediations; particularly the epistemic dynamic of the Spirit in validating and correlating media of revelation with the objective being of God. We note that not all but 'certain facts and events' determined by God could then become 'the signs' of divine self-disclosure.[1] On this note, scripture to Torrance, as to the Reformers,[2] is incontestably the primary earthly medium of divine revelation, particularly in relation to others that would be analysed in the next chapter. We may appropriate the analogy of concentric circle to illustrate the point. Christ, the sole Mediator bridging between God and humanity, is the core 'clothed' principally by the circle of scripture. The circle that surrounds scripture is the church, Word and sacraments. Together with the outer circle of the contingent creation, the chosen media together bear witness to and mediate the self-disclosure of God in Christ by the Spirit.[3] Thus, with the primacy of scripture in mind, we would begin the chapter with an analysis of Torrance's thought on the basis and nature of scripture, and then an assessment of his unusual move of advocating the effacement of scripture before moving on to a critical examination where implications, either derived from or exacerbated by the move, are studied. By way of making the claim, we would end by questioning if the decision of Torrance is justifiable within his overall framework.

The Basis and Nature of Scripture

[1] *GR*, 184. See *TRst*, 248.
[2] For Torrance's relation with Reformed tradition, see Alasdair Heron, 'T. F. Torrance in Relation to Reformed Theology,' in *The Promise of Trinitarian Theology*, ed. Elmer M. Colyer (Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001), 31-50.
[3] I am indebted to John McDowell for drawing my attention to the analogy.

The main purpose of this section is to consolidate and reinforce the notion with regard to the indispensability and normativeness of scripture as the important, if not, the most important medium of divine revelation in Torrance's theology of revelation and multiples mediations. In accordance with Torrance's understanding, we would pivot the discussion primarily on the basis and nature of scripture in relation to divine revelation. The formation of scripture would be touched on as well as it is fundamental in demonstrating the validity of scripture as the mediation of the revelatory Word of God in Torrance's thought.

The recent debates over the doctrinal understanding of scripture by theologians through the appropriation of categories such as revelation, inspiration, inerrancy, infallibility, authority, canon and word of God could be said at times to be in disarray. John Goldingay observes the cross currents and remarks that, just to give some examples, James Barr and Edward Farley question the appropriateness of applying the notion of authority to scripture, R. P. C. Hanson declares the idea of inspiration ought to be abandoned, and John Barton criticises the treatment of the model of canon as a key to unfold the significance of scripture.[4] Ronald Thiemann makes similar observation with regard to the crisis and contributes significantly to the discussions by approaching scripture from the framework of narrative to account for the category of revelation.[5] To Torrance the landscape, notwithstanding the complexity, could be categorised broadly into three main streams; namely, liberal, fundamentalist and modern historical-critical biblical scholarship.[6] As we would return to Torrance's criticism, it is sufficient at this juncture to mention that he detects a tinge of dualism in the approaches and therefore demands a different account of the matter. To Torrance the crux lies in our understanding of the relation between scripture and God. In order to have an appropriate knowledge, Torrance asserts the importance for Christian theology to abandon the phenomenalist and observationalist theory, and return to a realist view of significance that underscores the referential relation between language and the objective reality of which it signifies. He substantiates his argument in a dense but important statement,

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[4] John Goldingay, *Models for Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 1-2. Also see James Barr, *The Bible in the Modern World* (London: SCM, 1973). Edward Farley, *Ecclesial Reflection* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982). R. P. C. Hanson, 'The Authority of the Bible,' in *The Anglican Synthesis*, ed. W. R. F. Browning (Derby: Peter Smith, 1964). John Barton, *Reading the Old Testament* (London: DLT, 1984).

[5] Ronald F. Thiemann, *Revelation and Theology* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 1985). Chapter one and three are particularly useful in dealing with the validity of the category.

[6] *RET*, 15-18; *STR*, 2-3.

> We have now to focus our attention on the self-revelation of God to man through his historical dialogue with the people of Israel and in the incarnation of his Word and Truth in Jesus Christ, which give rise to the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. It is thus a Bible-related revelation of God that we must have in view and seek to interpret, for it is in that articulation form of human word, spoken and written, which divine revelation has taken in space and time, that God continues to make himself known to us as we meditate upon the Holy Scriptures and hear his Word addressing to us.[7]

The citation encapsulates Torrance's thought on revelation and scripture, and the correlation between them. Revelation, which is the fundament of scripture to Torrance, is essentially 'an articulate revealing of God by God whom we are enabled to apprehend through the creative power of his Word addressed to us'.[8] Such self-revelation of God takes place in human history and existence, and through the media of human thought and speech. It is the fruit of the union and communion of divine and human action. It involves the subjectivity and objectivity of revelation, a reciprocal relation between God and humanity. In this reciprocity, as our discussions in the preceding chapters show, Torrance develops his understanding of God's dialogical interaction with his people both in the Old and New Testaments through the 'two-way movement' of 'an adaptation of divine revelation to the human mind and an adaptation of articulate forms of human understanding and language to divine revelation.'[9] This duality of objective giving and subjective appropriating in revelation is itself an important question of modern epistemology that Gunton also recognises and concurs with Torrance. In alluding to a statement by Coleridge, Gunton says that the polarity of subject and object raises the epistemological question of subject-object relation of revelatory knowledge.[10] What is at stake is that, as Gunton underlines the realisation of Coleridge, 'the question of the revelatory authority of the Bible can be answered only in the light of a careful relating of that which the Bible gives, and that in the reader which responds.'[11] On this note, Torrance is adamant that 'that which the Bible gives' cannot be derived merely from

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[7] Ibid. 84.
[8] Ibid., 85.
[9] *MC*, 7.
[10] Gunton, 65. Coleridge says, 'And need I say that I have met everywhere [in the Bible] more or less copious source of truth, and power, and purifying impulses; - that I have found words for my inmost thoughts, songs for my joy, utterances for my hidden griefs…? In short whatever *finds* me, bears witness for itself that it has proceeded from a Holy Spirit….' See Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Confessions of an Enquiring Spirit* (1840; reprinted Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988), 26. Cited by Gunton.
[11] Ibid.

a phenomenological analysis of the historical data as recorded in both the Old and New Testaments. The Bible, as Torrance says, 'is the direct Word of God, not the Word of God as man utters it, but *the* Word *of God as God himself utters it*, in fact *the Word of God which God himself is*, for *he is identical with his Word*'.[12] What the Bible gives has to come mediately from the self-revealing activity of God through the Word in the Spirit and our scientific inquiry that is carried out epistemologically in accordance with the nature of divine disclosure. 'That is the basic fact in the doctrine of Holy Scripture', Torrance says, 'God has willed and constituted in the apostolic foundation of the Church a creaturely correspondence to his own Word, assuming it into union with his Word and effecting it as the human expression of his Word.'[13]

To Torrance the action of humanity alone without reposing on the divine action of God in Christ by the Spirit will not be able to appropriate and authenticate that which the Bible gives as the Word of God, no matter how rigorous the scholarship of biblical criticism is. Having said that, it is not the intent of Torrance to underpin the importance of divine action at the expense of human participation in scriptural revelation. Torrance clearly values the rigour of biblical criticism in engaging scriptural texts and the historical contextual issues when he underscores that there 'was no evading of the linguistic and historico-critical examination of the Biblical texts'. However, if after all the painstaking human action of serious exegesis we fail to interpret everything finally in the light of God's self-disclosure in Christ by the Spirit, to Torrance, it would simply be trying to 'get behind the back of Jesus to the eternal Son of God'.[14] Torrance's point is biblical criticism has its proper place if it recognises not only the fact that scriptural texts are human documentations which involve the constraint of writing and human fallibility, but also the truism that 'they are much more than that for they have been adapted by God under the impact of his Spirit for his own self-testimony, and therefore they are interpreted aright only as we allow the living Word of God himself to sound through them to us, and as through the Holy Spirit the Reality of God in Christ shines through to us.'[15] As Jean-Luc Marion says, the theologian 'proceeds to a hermeneutic of the biblical text that does not aim

[12] *KBBET*, 83. Author's italic. Torrance traces Barth's emphasis of the doctrine of the Word of God back to Luther and Calvin. He says that in 'their rediscovery and reappropriation of the Word of God in the Bible they recognised that the Word of God is not just some communication of truth about God but is identical with God himself speaking in Person.'
[13] *TRst*, 138.
[14] *KBBET*, 110-11.
[15] *TRst*, 257.

at the text but, through the text, at the event, the referent';[16] as the freezing of the gaze on the phenomenal would amount to idolatry, the refusal of iconic transcendence. Torrance would concur with Marion when the latter accentuates that '*The theologian must go beyond the text to the Word, interpreting it from the point of the view of the Word*'.[17] Thus, the Bible, to Torrance, is to be handled and read not only from the approach of linguistic and historico-critical examination, but also from what may be coined as 'exegetic-theological interpretation'.[18] It is the 'biblical understanding of biblical statements and of how they are to be theologically interpreted', an approach reinforced by Barth deriving from his study of Anselm. Torrance continues,

> Because of their objective reference biblical statements cannot be treated like fixed premises from which theological truth may be deduced, but as statements signifying the "solid truth" of God upon which they are grounded. By their very nature, therefore, biblical statements have to be interpreted theologically in the light of the objective realities to which they refer.[19]

Strictly speaking, the quest for the theological understanding of the Word of God lies in correlating scriptural texts with the objective truth of God in Christ. 'It is our specific task as theologians,' Torrance says, 'at that point between the biblical citations and the realities they signify, to inquire into what we ourselves have to thinks and say on the basis and under the direction of biblical revelation.' And unless 'theological insight and formation of this kind are already present, if only in incipient form, in his exegetical study of the Scriptures, the biblical theologian has not been engaging in genuine exegesis, for he has not been concerned to understand the Scriptures in terms of their all-important objective reference to the Word and Truth that God himself is.'[20] To Torrance the decisive point of our handling of scripture lies in going beyond its logos to the Logos of which it depends. True reading of scripture occurs only when our interpretation of the texts and the apprehension of the reality of which they signify are correlated. 'When such a recognition of the personal nature of the Word of God strikes home,' Torrance claims, 'then reading and understanding of the Bible undergo a vast paradigmatic shift of an intensely realist kind. We are swept along by the mighty driving wind of the Spirit into direct

[16] Jean-Luc Marion, *God without Being* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 148.
[17] Ibid., 149. Author's italic.
[18] For detailed account, see 'A Realist Interpretation of God's Self-Revelation' in *RET*, 84-120.
[19] *KBBET*, 116.
[20] Ibid., 117-18. See *TRst*, 138.

encounter with the wholly other reality of God who may be heard only through his own self-witness and be understood only through the eternal Word that he himself is and has caused to become incarnate in the world'.[21]

If scriptural texts as Torrance argues are vital as the pointer to God in Christ, would they efface themselves once they have served their referential function? Torrance's answer is unequivocal as he underlines emphatically that this 'does not mean that once we are in touch with the truth and being of God the biblical word may be left behind, far less kicked away, for we are quite unable to know God except on the basis of the biblical revelation.'[22] The importance of scripture as the medium of divine revelation is unmistakably underpinned again when Torrance alludes to Barth regarding his exegetical rigour; 'He certainly engaged in strenuous exegetic-theological interpretation of the biblical text ranging over the full extent of Holy Scripture in an unparalleled way'.[23] Notwithstanding his reiteration, we need to note that Torrance, unlike Barth, in fact does not demonstrate in his works the same rigour of working out the exegetic-theological interpretation of scripture, as one would expect. Kang Phee Seng comments that 'Torrance seems to have neglected too often the place of detailed exegesis.'[24] Mackinnon asks, 'Can questions of exegesis, which are in the end questions of epistemology, be as lightly dismissed as Torrance sometimes implies by the relative brevity of his treatment of them?'[25] Similarly, notwithstanding Torrance's consistent claim of scripture as the creaturely place of which one could encounter Christ continuously, Morrison remarks that 'one finds, contrary to Calvin and Barth, almost no actual engagement with the text of Scripture.'[26] The serious lack of interaction with scripture in Torrance's works indeed does not sit well with his argument that divine revelation unfolds itself by the Spirit through human participation in rigorous exegetic-theological interpretation. The irregularity induces suspicion that it in someway is not unrelated to Torrance's quick and inconsistent move to efface the Bible in revelation without much struggle with the humanity of scripture. Is this symptomatic of a hidden tension or contradiction within his framework? This is a point we would return to again.

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[21] Ibid., 88.
[22] Ibid., 116-17.
[23] Ibid., 117.
[24] P.S. Kang, 'Thesis: The Concept of the Vicarious Humanity of Christ in the Theology of Thomas Forsyth Torrance' (The University of Aberdeen, 1983), 313.
[25] D. M. Mackinnon, 'Review: Karl Barth, an Introduction to His Early Theology, 1910-1931,' *Journal of Theological Studies* (1963): 558. Cited in Kang, 313.
[26] John D. Morrison, *Knowledge of the Self-Revealing God in the Thought of Thomas Forsyth Torrance* (New York: Peter Lang, 1997), 287.

As discussed, in following the footsteps of Barth, scripture to Torrance is the revelation and the Word of God because it ultimately hinges on Jesus Christ. 'In fact,' Torrance says, 'the real text of God's self-revelation to mankind has once and for all been provided in the humanity of Jesus Christ, the Word of God personally incarnate in the flesh.'[27] On this note, the issues now require Torrance's attention regard the inspiration, inerrancy and authority of scripture. To answer the question of scriptural inspiration, Torrance, in alluding to Barth, says lengthily that 'the eventuation of the presence of the Word of God in the human word of the prophets and apostles, can only be regarded as a repetition, a second prolongation and continuation of the once-for-all and primary eventuation of revelation itself… [thus] Holy Scripture functions as a unique witness to divine revelation in its primary eventuation and as such ever points beyond itself to the transcendent Word that God himself is, and precisely in that service to the Word it is and ever becomes the divinely inspired eventuation of the presence of the Word in the human word of the Bible witness.'[28] By saying that, Torrance does not mean that the Word of God is either tied to scripture or incarnated in the Bible. However, the crux is by the work of the Spirit 'God has graciously accommodated his revealed Word to the written Word of the Bible, and has thereby adapted its written form to his self-revelation' as the inspired and authoritative text. 'This calls for a dynamic, not a static, concept of verbal inspiration', Torrance claims, 'Scripture given by divine inspiration is and becomes what it really is through the presence and advocacy of the Holy Spirit.'[29]

Riding on the argument of Barth that inclines to 'now' instead of 'then' of inspiration, Torrance moves on to address the doctrine of the inerrancy by claiming that verbal inspiration 'does not mean the infallibility of the biblical word in its linguistic, historical and theological character as human word. It means that the fallible and faulty human word is as such used by God and had to be received and heard in spite of its human fallibility.'[30] Torrance elucidates that this dynamic and non-static notion of biblical inerrancy is undergirded by the extrapolation of the patristic slogan, 'the unassumed is unhealed'. Torrance says, 'The miracle is that in the Bible the Word of God comes to us through the word of sinful, erring people to whom God has spoken and who bear witness to his speaking in frail, fallible,

[27] *RET*, 89.
[28] *KBBET*, 101-02. See *CD*, I/2, 534.
[29] Ibid., 91-92.
[30] Ibid., 105.

inadequate forms of thought and speech, which imperfect though they may be are nevertheless assumed and adapted by the holy Word of God to be the human medium by which God continues to communicate his self-revelation to mankind… as the spoken and revealed Word of God'.[31] To put it succinctly, notwithstanding scripture as a human product, the Bible to Torrance is inerrant and infallible because its inerrancy and infallibility lies not in itself but in God and in the dynamic communication of Christ by the Spirit. Kruger aptly remarks that it is 'both a point of "realism" and a point as to the "accuracy" of communication.'[32] The key is that Christ is 'inerrantly' and 'infallibly' communicated. The cardinal principle of Christ as the dynamic basis of inerrancy and infallibility is also extrapolated by Torrance to substantiate the claim of the authority of the Bible. Although Torrance's account is brief, from his criticism of fundamentalism it is manifest that he regards the modern crisis of the authority of scripture as the repercussion of the 'marked failure to acknowledge the unique Reality of God in its transcendent authority' over the contingent texts used by God in his self-revelation.[33] Ultimately, in scripture, 'we have to do with the majestic Word of the Lord God which he has stooped to speak in the frail human words of the Holy Scriptures thereby constituting them through his grace as the unique authoritative written Word of God to mankind.'[34] The authority of scripture essentially lies not in the texts but in God, in Christ.

We have thus far discussed Torrance's handling of scripture in relation to the category of revelation, Word of God, infallibility, inerrancy and authority. We note the discrepancy between his postulation of the importance of exegetic-theological interpretation and the apparent lack of it in his works, and question if it is symptomatic of a hidden tension or contradiction within his framework. Before we go further to discuss his advocacy of the effacement of scripture, we would continue to set the stage by discussing briefly Torrance's thought on the formation of scripture; as it corroborates what is being said and undergirds his argument of the normativeness and indispensability of scripture as the medium of revelation. We will focus mainly on the role of the Jews and the apostles in the forming of the Old and New Testaments.

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[31] Ibid., 104-05.
[32] C.B. Kruger, 'Thesis: Participation in the Self-Knowledge of God: The Nature and Means of Our Knowledge of God in the Theology of T.F. Torrance' (The University of Aberdeen, 1990), 258.
[33] *RET*, 17-18, 68. For a fine study of scripture and authority in systematic theology, see David H. Kelsey, *The Use of Scripture in Recent Theology* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975).
[34] *KBBET*, 89.

Torrance says that the reciprocity created by God's revelation takes a corporate form in human history. In order to communicate the Word, 'divine revelation penetrates into the speaker-hearer relationship within the interpersonal structure of humanity and becomes speech to man by becoming speech of man to man, spoken and heard through the intelligible medium of a people's language.'[35] This is how Torrance interprets the revelation of God, particularly the self-revealing acts of God in the Old Testament. As the people elected to be the instrument of realising God's self-revelation in history, Israel, through the covenantal relation, subjects to divine moulding in such a way that certain structures of thought and speech are forged within them for the service of interpreting and communicating the revelation of God. 'And so,' Torrance delineates, 'throughout Israel's tradition the Word of God kept pressing for articulation within the corporate medium of covenantal reciprocity, creating formal and empirical correlates of its own self-utterance through which it extended its activity in space and time, progressively taking verbal and even written form through the shared understanding and shared response that developed in this people.'[36] On this note, Torrance regards the formation of the Old Testament as the consequential event of the witness of the Jews to the revelation of God in human history. In addition, he regards as well the shaping of Israel by God in accordance with the record of the Old Testament as the preparation to usher in an era of watershed in human history. To use Torrance's term, Israel is the 'womb' of the incarnation of the Word. The matrix of appropriate forms of thought and speech that is hammered out by God in Israel throughout her history enables the coming of the Word in the fullness of time construable within the reciprocal relation of God's giving and man's receiving, as our discussion in chapter one indicates. Thus, Torrance is able to argue convincingly that the revelation of the incarnate Word in human history is mediated through the media of languages and concepts, as that of the Old Testament. In fact, as indicated, Torrance claims that it is only in Jesus Christ that the union of the human and divine Word is made possible because 'in him God assumed human speech into union with his own, effecting it as the human expression of the divine Word.'[37]

The issue leads us to the New Testament where consideration is given to the question as to how the union in Jesus Christ is made communicable continually

[35] *RET*, 86.
[36] Ibid., also *MC*, 12-21.
[37] Ibid., 88.

within the human exchange of word and language. The answer, according to Torrance, in a way similar to that of the calling of Israel for the service of God in divine revelation, lies in the calling of the apostles. The apostles, called by Jesus Christ to form a nucleus within the speaker-hearer relation around the Son of God, would carry on the task of communication and mediation. However, a point of distinction between Israel and the apostles Kruger picks up deserves to be mentioned. Kruger says, 'Whereas God chose Israel to be the human community through which his self-unveiling would be earthed in appropriate human expression, the apostles, in Torrance's thought, are the "chosen vessels appointed to receive the Revelation of Christ, to pass it through their mind, and pass it on to the Church."'[38] Kruger underlines that the apostles to Torrance are the 'great cardo or hinge, the "cardinal", as it were, in whom the Word of God in Christ was once and for all folded out into the form in which, under the living impact of the risen Christ, Christ meant it to be heard and spoken---that is what we have in the divine revelation of the New Testament'.[39] We will return to Torrance's thought on apostolicity when we come to the mediation of the church in the next chapter. At this juncture, it is sufficient for us to underline that in Torrance's terms the main function of the apostles is to serve as witness for Christ. The apostles are 'the controlling basis for the folding out of the self-witness of Christ into witness to Christ informed, empowered, and used by Christ's self-witness so that it could take the field as the communicable form of his self-witness in history'.[40] Guided by the Spirit, the witness of the apostles takes its formative shape within the church, and is grounded in the corporate reciprocity centred in Christ. Torrance underlines that the result of this witnessing, which remains its specific form intended by Christ for the proclamation of God to humanity through the Spirit, is the birth of the indispensable authoritative report---the New Testament. Because of its unique fruition, Torrance asserts that the texts of the New Testament 'constitute, therefore, the divinely provided and inspired linguistic medium which remains of authoritative and critical significance for the whole history of the church of Jesus Christ.'[41]

The implication of the uniqueness of the New Testament as the witness of Christ is theologically significant to Torrance. Apart from bestowing upon the New

[38] Kruger, 220. See *RP*, 27.
[39] Ibid. See *TRst*, 135; *RP*, 28; *TF*, 286.
[40] *RET*, 92.
[41] Ibid., 92-93.

Testament the normative status of divine ordination and endorsement as the Old Testament, Torrance claims that 'Its purpose in this written form in which it has come down to us is to enable us to stand with the original witnesses under the creative impact of the Word which they received and obeyed, and to be drawn into the sphere of its effective operation in the world where we, like them, may learn to repent and believe the gospel, give thanks to God and live in communion with him.'[42] Thus, in distinction to the Old Testament, the New Testament to Torrance serves as the designated medium directing us to the vicarious humanity of Christ and makes us contemporaneous with the apostles under the same impact of the Word and to be in communion with him. It is not difficult to detect Kierkegaard's concept of contemporaneity at work here.[43] Metaphorically speaking, we may say that in Torrance's thought the New Testament functions as the two-way traffic in bringing Christ to us and us to Christ as he has directed in his self-revelation. In view of the basis and nature, Torrance claims that our understanding and interpretation of the New Testament can never be done in anyway apart from making direct reference to the Word. Torrance summarises his argument and says,

> It must be noted that with the incarnation of God's Word in Jesus Christ and the community of reciprocity which it created we have a decisively different situation from that which obtained in Old Testament times, for here the forms of thought and speech developed through the historical dialogue of God with Israel are not only fulfilled but transcended and relativised by the final and permanent forms which the Word of God has taken in the life and teaching and saving work of Christ. Here we have to reckon with a profound integration between the Word of God and the word of man which may not be disrupted…. Hence, the basic forms of thought and speech in which the incarnational self-revelation of God is mediated to us in the New Testament cannot be made the object of independence investigation in themselves…they can only be understood from their place in the normative and definitive structure of the Word made flesh in his solidarity with human and physical being in space and time.[44]

Notwithstanding the distinctiveness, Torrance does not elevate the New Testament above the Old Testament. It stands equal to the Old Testament in

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[42] Ibid., 93.
[43] Søren Kierkegaard, *Philosophical Fragments*, trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), 64-68. Kierkegaard claims that the contemporaries of Jesus who saw and heard him have no advantage over subsequent believers. To Kierkegaard true contemporaneity does not lie in the immediate sense of physical presence, but in the non-immediate sense of faith in responding to Christ, or 'the teacher'. As he says, 'And that is how it truly was, just as it was true that that contemporary had not known the teacher, something that only the believer (that is, the nonimmediate contemporary) can do, the one who received the condition from the teacher himself and therefore knew him as he was known.' For comprehensive account, see 'The Situation of the Contemporary Follower', 55-71.
[44] *RET*, 93-94.

mediating divine revelation and jointly they form scripture. Kruger points out that to Torrance the 'Holy Scripture forms a divinely provided linguistic medium and it is through Scripture, not apart from but nonetheless through Scripture, that Christ in the Spirit gives nothing other than Himself to us.'[45] As Torrance says, 'in it God has allowed his self-revelation to assume forms and images from our human world which he uses as *media* or signs to disclose himself to us'.[46] That, to Torrance, is what scripture gives and the reader should respond to. 'The Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments rightly evoke from us profound respect and veneration not because of what they are in themselves but because of the divine revelation mediated in and through them. That is why we speak of them as "Holy Scripture".'[47] From our discussion, it is manifest that Torrance indeed regards scripture as an important, if not, the most important medium of divine revelation. Essentially, that which is mediated is a 'Bible-related revelation of God' in Christ by the Spirit; 'for it is in that articulate form of human word, spoken and written, which divine revelation has taken in space and time, that God continues to make himself known to us as we meditate upon the Holy Scriptures and hear his Word addressing to us.'[48]

We have thus far discussed the significance of scripture in Torrance's thought. Our discussion shows that its basis and nature as the witness of God's historical engagements with humanity through Israel, Jesus Christ and the apostles are essential to Torrance in establishing the normative status of the Bible as the indispensable medium of divine revelation. By underpinning the continuance of scripture in mediating Christ's revelation through consistent rigor of exegetic-theological interpretation, Torrance's argument, as we claim, is in line with the concept of mediation. On this note, any move by Torrance to debase the mediatedness of scripture would not only strain his argumentation unnecessarily, but subvert as well his framework of revelation and multiple mediations.

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[45] Kruger, 229.

[46] John Calvin, *A Calvin Treasury: Selections from the Institutes of the Christian Religion* (London: SCM, 1963), x. Author's italic. Cited in Kruger, 230. See *CAC2*, 47.

[47] *RET*, 95. We may say that, firstly, Torrance is affirming the authority, decisiveness and inspiration of scripture. Secondly, Torrance is asserting that the content of revelation is not just statements about God, but the living God himself in Jesus Christ. And finally, Torrance is maintaining that scripture is a medium of two-way communication through which Jesus Christ is mediated to us by the Spirit and we are lifted in the Spirit to meet him. As Torrance says, 'There is indeed, then, a two-way relation between divine revelation and the Bible'. We are agreeable to Kruger's remark except with some variation on the third point. Kruger mainly focuses on the unilateral coming of Christ to us in the Spirit through the mediation of scripture. However, we believe that Torrance's emphasise is put on the two-way mediatory nature of scripture in bringing Christ to us and us to Christ in the Spirit. See Kruger, 230; *RET*, 96.

[48] Ibid., 84.

The Effacement of Scripture

We have in the foregoing section discussed Torrance's thought on the basis and nature of scripture. Our discussion shows that Torrance upholds the primacy of scripture as the mediation of God's revelation to humanity. As Torrance says, 'Scriptures are evidently the inspired product of the community of reciprocity which, in the course of his saving activity, God created and maintained between his people and himself, within which and through which he has chosen to make his Word known in articulated communication to mankind.'[49] Although Torrance is unequivocal of the indispensability of the Bible, he makes an unexpected move in *Reality and Evangelical Theology* to advocate the effacement of scripture after it has served its function in pointing beyond itself to Christ's revelation. It is therefore the purpose of this section to examine Torrance's argument and ascertain the possible cause of his decision.

The undergirding argument that substantiates Torrance's move of the effacement of scripture lies in working on the asymmetric character of the relation between divine revelation and its contingent witnesses whose voices are passed on as those of the scriptural witness. According to Torrance, there is a two-fold order in this asymmetric relation. First, the profound hypostatic union of the divine and human word in Jesus Christ constitutes the first-order relation of the ontological inseparability between the Word of God and the word of humanity. Second, divine revelation and human language form a second-order relation, since scripture is not ontologically identical with the incarnate Word.[50] However, Torrance explicates that as the second-order relation is contingent upon and controlled by the first-order relation of hypostatic union, scripture and the incarnate Word in this regard can neither be divided from nor confounded with one another. He says, 'In this case the relation of asymmetric is very different, for it obtains in a relation not of ontological identity but of ontological difference.'[51] The asymmetric relation between the incarnate Word and scripture is central to Torrance with regard to the nature of scriptural mediation. It forms the basis of his argument that as much as there is an

[49] *STR*, 2.
[50] *RET*, 94-95.
[51] Ibid., 95.

intrinsic correlation between the two, the 'Holy Scripture is not Jesus Christ'.[52] By claiming the ontological distinction between scripture and the incarnate Word, Torrance asserts that the self-revelation of God, although is mediated in and through scripture, 'must be experienced and cognised in the reality' that 'is apart from the words and statements of the Bible'.[53] He says,

> [S]omething would appear to have gone wrong if we become too obsessed with the Bible, as so often happens in the stress that is laid upon its inspiration when our attention is directed to the Bible itself instead of to what it is intended to bear witness.[54]

Thus, according to Torrance, the appropriate way to approach scripture is to 'attend jointly to the text and the divine realities to which it directs us', and to allow the text to subordinate to the realities beyond. Torrance's accentuation of the referential character of scripture is consistent with his realist understanding of the epistemic correlation of form and being, and the necessity of adopting 'open concepts' in order to allow our understanding to come under the compulsion of the objective reality, as discussed in chapter three and four. The key is scriptural texts fulfil the semantic function properly only when they point us to the reality of which they signify. To Torrance, the scriptural texts 'cease to be objects of attention in themselves but serve as transparent media through which those realities show themselves'. Torrance is adamant that scriptural texts would 'become obscure or lose their proper meaning when they are allowed to obtrude themselves on us as the immediate objects of our attention.' 'Transferring this to the Bible,' Torrance continues, 'we may say that we rely upon the Bible for its guidance in directing our understanding to the Word of God which sounds through it, or the Truth of God which shines through it.'[55]

So far it is clear that in working out his thought on the mediatory nature of scripture, Torrance attempts to maintain the ontological difference between the human and divine Logos, or the reality that the 'Holy Scripture is not Jesus Christ', in the asymmetric relation. Thus, we may say that the crux of Torrance's argument with regard to the mediatedness of scripture lies in pointing to 'what it is intended to bear'. Or, to be more precise, the continuous referential character of scripture; 'God

[52] Ibid.
[53] Ibid., 95-96.
[54] Ibid., 96.
[55] Ibid.

continues to make himself known to us as we meditate upon the Holy Scriptures and hear his Word addressing to us'. However, it is at this point of enforcement that Torrance takes an unusual step and claims that,

> In the fulfilment of that semantic service *the Bible effaces itself before the immediacy and compulsion of God's self-revelation*, which we experience, certainly through the Bible, but in its own divine reality which is independent of the Bible.

And,

> There is indeed, then, a two-way relation between divine revelation and the Bible, but it is an asymmetric relation in which ontological priority and authoritative primacy must be given to divine revelation and not to the Bible. It is the subordination of the Bible to that revelation and the semantic service it fulfils in mediating that revelation to us that give the Bible its singular status in our respect and its decisive authority in our knowledge of God.[56]

From the statements, we may comment that Torrance attempts to focus on that which the Bible points. It could be said that by underscoring the ontological difference between the human words and the divine Logos, the intent of Torrance to accentuate the 'immediacy and compulsion of God's self-revelation' is to safeguard the notion that only God could reveal Godself; according to Kruger, an important point which 'Torrance will in no way allow to slip away'.[57] As Torrance says, 'one which Karl Barth has hammered home throughout all his immense work---is that while God is who he is in his self-revelation, that divine revelation is God himself, for it is not just something of himself that God reveals to us but his very own Self, his own ultimate Being as God.'[58] However, by stressing the difference (second-order relation) to an extent that it eventually threatens the ontological inseparability of the Word and word (first-order relation), and ultimately leads to the relegation of the mediatedness of scripture in divine revelation---'the Bible effaces itself before the immediacy and compulsion of God's self-revelation'---would Torrance then contradict or subvert, first, his own understanding of the mediation of scripture, second, argument of multiple mediations, third, emphasis of maintaining the conjoint action of the divine and the human in revelation, and fourth, claim of revelation as

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[56] Ibid., 96-97. My italic.
[57] Kruger, 231. Kruger underlines that Torrance's emphasis of 'God Himself is the content of revelation' is clearly seen in his attacks on liberal, fundamentalist and modern historical-critical biblical scholarship. On this note, given the context of discussion, we believe it is closely related to Torrance's advocacy of the effacement of scripture. See Kruger, 231-36.
[58] *RET*, 14.

mediation? What are the implications entailed by the move? Would the medium now simply become a channel of which the revelation of God may flow through tangentially losing its purpose of embodiment that is crucial to Torrance's understanding?[59] Does it reflect or would it exacerbate some tension that is embedded within Torrance's theological framework? These are some questions that have to be answered and weighed in relation to Torrance's overall framework. Before we attend to these questions, we need to ascertain the possible cause of Torrance's rather unusual move.

Taking the cue from Torrance when he says that something would appear to have gone wrong if we become too obsessed with scripture instead of what it refers to, a possible cause here is the concern with the detriment of dualism that to him has held captive of liberal, fundamentalist and modern historical-critical biblical scholarship. Torrance's worry is conspicuous when he says that 'Modern liberal theology like ancient Arianism continues to stumble at the identity between God and his revelation, which is evident not only in its denial of the deity of Jesus Christ but in its assimilation of the Spirit of Jesus Christ to the human spirit.'[60] In rejecting the controlling centre of God, Torrance says that liberal theology is being thrown back to the autonomous religious reason in order to provide the ground to ascertain that which scripture is mediating. 'Thus in the last analysis it is not,' Torrance says, 'as in rigorous science or theology, reality itself that is the ultimate judge of the truth or falsity of our thought and speech about it, but the self-conscious and self-referring human spirit.'[61]

Similar concern is expressed when it comes to fundamentalism. Notwithstanding the effort to preserve the integrity of the biblical faith, Torrance says, 'Fundamentalism stumbles, not so much at the consubstantial relation between the free continuous act of God's self-communication and the living content of what he communicates, especially when this is applied to divine revelation in and through the Holy Spirit. It rejects the fact that revelation must be continually given and received in a living relation with God---i.e., it substitutes a static for a dynamic view of revelation.'[62] To Torrance the problem of fundamentalism is akin to that of

[59] For detailed account of God's revelation embodied in Israel and the person of Jesus Christ see 'The Mediation of Revelation' in *MC*, 1-23.
[60] *RET*, 15.
[61] Ibid., 16.
[62] Ibid. See John D. Morrison, 'Thomas Forsyth Torrance's Critique of Evangelical (Protestant) Orthodoxy,' *The Evangelical Quarterly* (1995).

Newtonian mechanics operating within a rigid structure of ideas, unable to allow it to respond appositely to the objective reality of God in his self-disclosure. 'Instead of being open to the objective pole of their reference in the continual self-giving of God and therefore continually revisable under its control, they are given a finality and rigidity in themselves as evangelical beliefs, and are clamped down upon Christian experience and interpretation of divine revelation through the Holy Scriptures.'[63] In other words, fundamentalist separates dualistically the revelation of God in scripture from the objective reality of the continuous revealing of God in Christ by the Spirit. Torrance says that 'the Bible is treated as a self-contained corpus of divine truths in propositional form endowed with an infallibility of statement which provides the justification felt to be needed for the rigid framework of belief within which fundamentalism barricades itself.' 'This effect,' Torrance continues, 'is only reinforced by the regular fundamentalist identification of biblical statements about the truth with the truth itself to which they refer.'[64] That is the main reason, in Torrance's view, that accounts for the failure of fundamentalism in acknowledging the sovereignty of God over the contingent medium of scripture of which God uses to mediate his revelation.

Torrance's criticism of modern historical-critical biblical scholarship in someway is not unlike that of fundamentalism. To him both share the root problem of 'a fatal deistic disjunction between God and the world' that disallows the revealing activity of God to speak continuously through scripture and thus depriving us of having any real knowledge of God as he is in himself. Because of the underlying dualistic presupposition, Torrance remarks that 'biblical and theological interpretation of this kind is regularly trapped within the fallacies of socio-cultural relativism and linguistic nominalism.' 'That is to say,' he continues, 'by cutting short the ontological reference of biblical and theological statements to God (at least in respect of any cognitive relation to him) it is forced to interpret them merely culturally in terms of the socio-religious self-understanding of the times, or merely linguistically in terms of the sentential meaning defined through grammatical usage and syntactical complexes---although, admittedly, attempts are made to combined both these approaches.'[65] The main difficulty of such scholarship to Torrance is that the unproductive interpretation of scripture is carried out with the phenomenalist and

[63] Ibid., 17.
[64] Ibid.
[65] *STR*, 2-3.

positivist assumption, separating the understanding of revelatory events from the objective reality of God's continuous self-revelation. 'Hence,' Torrance claims, 'instead of being regarded as conveying a real Word from God, a biblical writing is automatically held to reflect only what people happen to believe in accordance with the cultural standards of their own time, as if they had no direct access to standards of truth and falsity transcending their time which might limit imaginative construction or subjective fantasies! Then it requires to be transposed into our modern cultural context to be reinterpreted under the guidance of our own standards and philosophies if it is to be "meaningful", "understandable", or "relevant" today.'[66] Without doubt some would take Torrance to task here, notwithstanding his voice in someway reverberates an escalating dissatisfaction with modern conventions of textual study preoccupied much by positivism, objectivity and neutrality, and concurs with the call to return to the 'plain sense' of the biblical texts represented by biblical scholars such as John Barton.[67] Although it is not within the present compass to analyse the interaction, one may appreciate the concern if some justification is allowed. Torrance says,

> I am not prepared (as apparently form-critics have been and now also some redaction critics) to allow the socially conditioned paradigms of one community to apply as interpretative rules for another, very different in time, place and culture, or to allow a set of theoretical and methodological ideas thrown up out of our own cultural trends and philosophies of life to distort what I read in the ancient texts, but insist that we must be quite ruthless with ourselves in discarding all assumptions of an *a priori* or extraneous derivation, in attempting to penetrate into the conceptual forms and patterns at work in the actual, empirical stream of tradition in which the text being interpreted is to be found. We must do our utmost to allow these texts to bear witness to themselves as far as possible out of themselves and their own inherent demands, and to let them impress upon us the appropriate frame of reference for our understanding of them, so that we may interpret them from within their own natural coherence.[68]

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[66] Ibid., 3. Torrance underlines in the footnote that through this pseudo-assumption, all kinds of spurious ideas are easily consecrated in the name of 'historico-critical scholarship'.

[67] For argument of 'plain sense' and overview of the key factors and developments in recent biblical studies, see John Barton, *The Nature of Biblical Criticism* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007). Also, Robert Morgan and John Barton, *Biblical Interpretation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988).

[68] *STR*, 4. Torrance explains that he is not rejecting in any way the importance of careful handling of scripture. He says, '[F]ar from it---but that my critical mind will not allow me to accept results that are predetermined by uncritical epistemological assumption; nor does it imply that I have not learnt from modern New Testament scholars something of the net-work of difficulties and contradictions that must be recognised… I make no apology, therefore, for trying to interpret the Bible in the light of the *logos* of God's self-revelation which it conveys and which, in accordance with its own self-witness, created the historical community of reciprocity between God and ancient Israel and God and the apostolic Church, within which the Old and New Testaments arose and took shape as the media through which that *logos* continues to be heard in the obedience of faith.' See 4-5.

From what has been discussed, we may say the possible cause that compels Torrance to advocate the effacement of scripture and to shift the weight from mediation to immediacy is not unrelated to avoiding the pitfall of dualism, and to allow God the due attention in revelation. In anticipation of subsequent critical examination, it could be said that by making the move Torrance has knowingly or unknowingly altered the nature of scripture as the medium of which divine revelation is mediated continuously. That is to say, scriptural texts become something akin to 'disposable cups' that could be discarded soon after they have fulfilled their mediatory function; they are no longer the 'crystal cups the master filled'.[69] In addition, by making the move not only does Torrance run the risk of having to face the problem of Barth, of which 'the mediatedness of revelation, given with the right hand, is in effect taken away by the left',[70] he cannot avoid as well the suspicion that revelation is now taking a form of mystical encounter which indubitably leads to the truncation of human participation and the relegation of the humanity of Christ, a point we will explore further in the next section.

The current section focuses primarily on analysing Torrance's argument of the effacement of scripture and the shift of revelation from mediation to immediacy. The analysis suggests that the move could be a response of Torrance to what he perceives as the dualistic presupposition of the liberal, fundamentalist and modern historical-critical biblical scholarship. Notwithstanding his arguments, we judge that the move would entail undesirable outcome to which Torrance cannot ignore. We will examine the ramification and ask if Torrance could at the end justify his decision.

A Critical Examination

We have in the preceding section examined the move and ascertained the cause of Torrance's effacement of scripture. The purpose of this section is, therefore, to examine critically the implications and to ask if the move is justifiable in the light of Torrance's theology of revelation and multiple mediations.

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[69] P. T. Forsyth, *The Principle of Authority* (London: Independent Press, 1952), 131. Although Forsyth principally refers to the apostles, the basic principle is applicable to scripture as medium of divine revelation.

[70] Colin Gunton, *A Brief Theology of Revelation* (London: T & T Clark, 2005), 5.

To continue the point mentioned earlier, we attempt to examine whether the shift from mediation to immediacy may result in Torrance a revelation of mystical encounter in Christ by the Spirit. Kurt Richardson describes Torrance's thought on the revelatory knowledge of God as 'an objective knowing by subjects, both divine and human, its overall condition is a mystical and participatory one…. By mystical interpretation then Torrance means a kind of intuitive that is occasioned by the unique relational knowing of God by the creature.'[71] Richardson acknowledges that the mystical approach of Torrance is not one of mysticism, but a form of union and communion in Christ through intuitive knowing by the Spirit. In alluding to Barth's recovery of the *ordo salutis* of Reformation theology, Richardson underlines that Barth explicates *ordo* as a form of illumination, justification, new obedience and mystical union. It is through 'mystical union with Christ nurtured by the Holy Spirit there results an illumination, an understanding of the Gospel on God's terms where revelation begins to achieve its fulfilment, an understanding that arises from participation in the gracious life of God.'[72] In relation to Torrance, Richardson observes that he has developed his own view of mystical apprehension through the *apophatic* and *kataphatic* traditions of Athanasius and the Cappadocian Fathers. Richardson says, 'If we are to consider what Torrance means by the mystical moment in the apprehension of the knowledge of God in revelation through Scripture, we must first of all be clear about what he does not mean.' 'First and foremost,' Richardson continues, 'it means that there is no mystical knowing of God apart from or beyond Christ…. Second, the Gnostic path of mystic speculation is also closed…. Finally, the classic philosophical path… is also a mystical path bypassed by Torrance.'[73] As Kye Won Lee states, 'For Torrance, union with Christ is a mystical union, but not in a mystic sense. Rather, he uses it in the sense that it derives from and is grounded upon Christ, *Mysterium*.'[74] After clearing the way, as it were, Richardson arrives at the centre of Torrance's understanding and says,

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[71] Kurt Richardson, 'Revelation, Scripture, and Mystical Apprehension of Divine Knowledge,' in *The Promise of Trinitarian Theology*, ed. Elmer M. Colyer (Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001), 186-87.
[72] Ibid., 187.
[73] Ibid., 193. For detailed account of Richardson's delineation of the influence of Athanasius and the Cappadocian Fathers on Torrance in relation to the *apophatic* and *kataphatic* traditions, see 187-88, 193-94.
[74] Kye Won Lee, *Living in Union with Christ: The Practical Theology of Thomas F. Torrance* (New York: Peter Lang, 2003), 4.

> Where Torrance discerns the mystical is in the communion of the redeemed with the Redeemer and therefore in participation with God in God's own Triune life. In this communion, the human knower is raised up through the statements of Scripture to a knowledge of God that grasps the Trinitarian whole (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) of that which has been revealed by Christ, elicits a personal knowing that is interpersonal and inclusive of the creature, and results in true *theologia*, real knowledge of God in God's own Trinitarian reality.[75]

Indeed, there is a mystical dimension in Torrance's revelation that could not be overlooked. The subtlety of 'mysticism' seems to capacitate Torrance to move from mediation to immediacy without substantial theological struggle. By making the shift in conjunction with the effacement of scripture, the result indubitably is the heightening of the mystical element of revelation as attention is now directed solely to 'the immediacy and compulsion of God's self-revelation'. Revelation then becomes, as Paul Ricoeur says, a signification of 'inspiration from a first person to a first person.'[76] The key question is whether such a picture of mystical encounter with Christ in God's revelation when the human knower is lifted up by the Spirit through scripture in the light of its soon erasure is one that will sit well with Torrance's overall understanding of revelation and multiple mediations. If the answer is negative, as we argue, the next question would be what are the implications that could strain his theological framework? Or, are there problems embedded in Torrance's theological structure that would be exacerbated by the move?

Carl Henry, one of Torrance's critics, has pinpointed the implicit incongruity between the human and divine Logos in Torrance's revelation.[77] He remarks that Torrance has attempted to rise above the antithesis of personal and proposition revelation by emphasising the personal manifestation of God in Christ; in particular, Christ, 'at once Person and Message', 'both personal and propositional'.[78] However, by shifting the focus from the human logos to the divine Logos, Henry questions whether the safeguarding of the sovereignty of God in Christ's revelation is purchased at the price of human rationality, creativity, responsibility, self-determination and participation of divine revelation. To put it succinctly, would the elevation of the divine jeopardise the human action? Henry is critical with regard to Torrance's remark that our words are 'impersonal acts separate and distinct from their

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[75] Richardson, 193-94. In his response to Richardson's article, Torrance, in alluding to this citation, does not express any difficulty in accepting it. Thus, we may say that Richardson's assessment is accurate as it is affirmed by Torrance himself. In the same book, 'Thomas Torrance Responds', 326.
[76] Paul Ricoeur, *Essays on Biblical Interpretation* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985), 92.
[77] Carl F. Henry, *God, Revelation and Authority* (Texas: Word Book, 1979), 214-29.
[78] Henry, 217.

persons'.[79] Although Henry has no difficulty with Torrance's assessment of the human estrangement when the latter says that we constantly live in 'positive untruth, in contradiction and opposition to the Truth', and our 'ideas and conceptions and analogies and words are twisted in untruth and are resistant to the Truth'[80], he questions Torrance's ground of attributing the distortion to an epistemic deficiency in humanity instead of the human volitional rebellion. To resolve the incongruity, Henry pinpoints that Torrance has chosen not only to reiterate divine action in Christ, but also turned to the notion of mystery in revelation. Henry says,

> Torrance replies that "while our words are distinct and separate from our persons, His words have an essential relation to His Person, and… partake of the hypostatic relation between His humanity and His deity" (*TS*, 148). But this truth is 'communicated to us in the form of mystery,' that is, argues Torrance, in 'concrete fact or particular event to which nevertheless the Truth is infinitely Transcendent' (*TS*, 149). 'Theological knowledge and theological statements participate sacramentally in the mystery of Christ as the Truth' (*TS*, 150).[81]

Henry argues that Torrance's assertion with regard to the overcoming of the gap between the human and divine Logos in Jesus Christ could hardly corroborate his claim of the inadequacy of human words and concepts. If human nature only under the conditions as Torrance describes could then possess the truth of revelation in epistemological form, and if coherent knowledge of God requires a structural change in the mind of humanity made possible only by a personal union with God, Henry says that the price paid for preserving the truth of revelation could not be reconciled with the teaching of scripture. Henry continues that if the *imago Dei*, on the basis of divine creation, includes categories of thought and forms of logic ample to the knowledge and service of God, and if the fall of humanity has not destroyed the contingent rationality, it does not have to be the case that in God's self-revelation we are faced with a reality that cannot be reduced to our creaturely dimensions.[82] Human action could still have a place in the revelation of God without denying God's sovereignty. Thus, Henry remarks that Torrance has undermined God's revelation 'in nature, history and the conscience and mind of man', devalued the Old Testament revelation and compromised as well the apostles' witnesses of Christ with regard to

[79] *TS*, 147. Cited in Henry, 218.
[80] *TS*, 49. Cited in Henry, 218.
[81] Henry, 219.
[82] Ibid., 222.

Christ's teaching and promise.[83] Henry is here sounding a note of caution that the normativeness of scripture as the medium of God's revelation is at stake.

Without question, coming from a theological tradition that stands in stark contrast to that of Torrance, Henry, in certain key areas, has either clearly misunderstood or read Torrance with some entrenched presupposition and expectation.[84] Although to dwell in an exhaustive comparison between the two is outside the compass of the current section, it is sufficient for us to pinpoint that the main misunderstanding, among others, lies in different interpretations when terms such as logic, reason and rationality are alluded to or appropriated.[85] Notwithstanding the differences, Henry does bring home a point---the incongruity of human and divine Logos---that someone who is theologically closer to Torrance acknowledges as well. Thomas Langford, the critic who very much shares Torrance's aspiration of theological science,[86] regards the incongruity as basic duality.[87] Langford underlines that the distinction is made more tenuous by the assertions that 'we can never claim that God must be the content of our statements about him', and our statements, both theological and biblical, are to be judged true only by God himself in his freedom of revelation. Langford aptly questions, 'But where does this leave the deposit of written theology? Where does this leave the Scriptures? The Creeds? The volumes by individual theologians? All of these are now given only a "formal" possibility of validity.'[88] These are questions Torrance has to reconcile. If Torrance pushes the distinction between the human and divine Logos to its extremity, he may unintentionally invite a dialectic tension so great that at the end it would undermine and subvert his theological reconstruction. On this

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[83] Ibid, 218.

[84] Morrison remarks that although Henry and Torrance talk pass each other on a few important matters, they 'are more in agreement on significant issues than either ever admits.' See Morrison, *Knowledge of the Self-Revealing God in the Thought of Thomas Forsyth Torrance*, 268-70.

[85] Their differences in logic, human reason and rationality are due to the theological position they embrace. For example, while Torrance considers the Kierkegaardian leap of faith perfectly 'logical and rational', Henry would think otherwise and conclude that it is an illogical and irrational retreat to Christ-Word mysticism. Similarly, Torrance would regard Henry's view of the Bible as the written Word of God a form of 'nominalism', unjustifiably separating the Word from God.

[86] Thomas A. Langford, 'T. F. Torrance's Theological Science, a Reaction,' *Scottish Journal of Theology* 25 (1972): 170. Notwithstanding several criticisms, Langford makes it clear that 'At none of these points do I want to counter his primary effort. The questions which have been put in… have to do with the development of these agreed upon themes in the hope that Torrance, and others, shall continue with the working out of the subsequent dimensions of such a theological science.'

[87] Ibid., 161-62. Not unlike the criticisms of Henry, Langford questions if Torrance has dealt sufficiently the problem of scriptural mediation. In alluding to Torrance's delineation of the nature of theological and biblical statements, Langford identifies a 'basic duality' in the claim that while they are derivative of the active speaking God, they are, at the same time, undeniably human statements.

[88] Ibid., 163.

note, one may ask whether the relegation of the human is symptomatic of the swallowing up of the humanity by the divinity of Christ in Torrance's theology, a problem not unlike that of Barth as Gunton pinpoints that Barth has the tendency 'to underplay the significance of the humanity of Christ'?[89] Is that the tension embedded in Torrance's christocentric-trinitarian framework that constantly induces him to focus on the divine at the expense of the human in revelation? Could Torrance escape the suspicion of a tinge of Docetism if the observation proved accurate? Surely, this is not the intent of Torrance.

In rejecting what to him as revelational foundationalism, Thiemann criticises Torrance's arguments of revelation's uniqueness and rationality as contradictory. Thiemann claims that Torrance, in his defence of the primacy of theology's object, namely the revelation of God in Christ, has denied human subjectivity in the reciprocal relation. Thiemann says, 'If Torrance consistently denies that human subjectivity has a reciprocal effect on the divine object, then either he must deny theology's rationality or he must use the terms *knowledge* and *rationality* equivocally.'[90] Thiemann claims that this apparent contradiction threatens to undermine Torrance's position. As Torrance has put much stock in emphasising the characteristic of theology as scientific and rational, the success of his argument to defend the sovereignty of God in revelation hinges very much on that characteristic. But, to Thiemann, Torrance's account of theology's unique object appears to undermine the arguments for formal rationality, thus his upholding of the divine at the expense of the human provides the falsifying argument his critics seek. The point is Torrance cannot relegate the participation of human subjectivity even when his attention is shifted to the objectivity of God in revelation; 'Torrance cannot deny subject-object reciprocity and continue to claim that rationality and truth reside solely in the object without also denying theology's rationality.'[91] Thiemann's criticism, however, is not without challenge. John Morrison says that Thiemann has been mistaken about Torrance's argument as he does in fact maintain the necessity of subject-object reciprocal relation.[92] Morrison underlines that Torrance has never allowed the subject to project into the object in the subject-object relation because the knowing subject could never be able to 'add anything' to the self-revealing object;

[89] Gunton, 119.
[90] Thiemann, 38. Author's italic.
[91] Ibid.
[92] For comprehensive account, see Morrison, *Knowledge of the Self-Revealing God in the Thought of Thomas Forsyth Torrance*, 275-78.

only receive it through faithful responses in revisable expression as it is brought into ever greater conformity to the object. But, as we indicate, Thiemann considers such an account of theology's unique object is achieved at the expense of the subject's subjectivity, as it appears to undermine the argument for formal rationality; the notion is considered false because it fails to conform to the demand of general sciences. On this note, Morrison develops his defence of Torrance and argues that 'Contrary to Thiemann, there is no difference among the sciences to be found in Torrance's thinking on the question in that sense.'[93] In sounding similar note, Tom McCall claims that Torrance has given a convincing account that rational scientific inquiry is the active participation of the subject in responding appositely to the demand of the object.[94] We may add to the discussion by underscoring a point made in our chapter three that the subservience of the knowing subject to the revealing object is not a debasement but the fulfilment of the subjectivity of the knowing subject to Torrance. In relation to foundationalism, Elmer Colyer, as McCall,[95] argues that 'Torrance is certainly not the kind of foundationalist Ronald Thiemann contends that he is', as Torrance's appropriation of intuition is a process of scientific inquiry that requires the active participation of the subject.[96]

Thiemann is not unaware of Torrance's appropriation of intuition to argue for the case that the human subjectivity in fact plays an essential but non-constructive role in the revelatory relationship. He has taken note of Torrance's argument that theologian must penetrate into the inner logic of God to trace the 'logic of grace' and think with the 'inner compulsion' of God's self-revelation, a process of intuition of which science regards as discovery and theology as revelation.[97] However, Thiemann is not impressed. He says, 'Once again the weight of an argument for revelation comes to rest on the frail concept of intuition.'[98] By appealing to intuition, Thiemann underscores that Torrance, instead of resolving the inconsistency, has compounded the problem. He says, 'Torrance uses the term *intuition* to signify the indubitability and incorrigibility of this casually imposed knowledge…. Thus human beings must be the passive recipients of a self-evident truth. But this appeal to

[93] Ibid., 276.
[94] For full account, see Tom McCall, 'Ronald Thiemann, Thomas Torrance and Epistemological Doctrines of Revelation,' *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 6 (2004): 148-68.
[95] For detailed account, see McCall, 153-55.
[96] For detailed argument, see footnote 97 of 'The Integration of Form in Theology' in Elmer M. Colyer, *How to Read T.F. Torrance: Understanding His Trinitarian & Scientific Theology* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 343-44.
[97] *TS*, 129-31. Cited by Thiemann, 39.
[98] Thiemann, 39-40.

intuition surely does not resolve the inconsistency in the logic of Torrance's position; it simply makes the nature of his difficulty more apparent.'[99]

Notwithstanding the challenge, Thiemann's argument warrants our attention as he has indeed pinned down a point of concern that cannot be overlooked. Thiemann remarks that the difficulty here is reminiscent of the problem that has plagued Barth in his early works. Barth's solution, to Thiemann the version of Torrance is an update, is to grant God's Spirit the mediating power to bring divine object and human subject together. Thiemann claims that it is an unjustifiable answer because God's Spirit is finally not the human subject but the 'not-I' that dwells within. At the end, human subjectivity becomes nothing more than the vessel through which God knows himself, and the human self remains hopelessly bifurcated in the act of knowing God.[100] Could that be as well a reasonable factor that has contributed to Torrance's unusual move, as the human recipient of divine self-disclosure is basically passive, and what is left is only the work of the Spirit in lifting him up before Christ in the mystical encounter of revelation? Could that account for Torrance's effacement of scripture, as attention to the humanity of scripture is rendered insignificant for the same reason? Although Thiemann criticises Torrance, he, like Henry and Langford, finally allows the problem of historicity of revelation to go by without substantial engagement. It is with the issue of historical contingency of revelation in mind that we would now turn to Ray Anderson.

In a book that takes its final published form from a dissertation accomplished under Torrance's supervision, Anderson criticises his supervisor's works on a few aspects.[101] However, in view of our discussion, we would concentrate on his remark in relation to a lack of historical contingency in Torrance's revelation. We believe that the problem is accentuated by Torrance when he effaces scripture and shifts the focus of revelation solely to the divine. Anderson claims that divine revelation cannot be determined apart from God's 'historical transcendence'; a term he uses to denote the revelatory reality and presence of God as a historical experience in human history.[102] In congruence with Torrance, Anderson underlines that the historical

[99] Ibid., 40. Author's italic.
[100] Ibid., 42.
[101] Ray Anderson, *Historical Transcendence and the Reality of God* (London: Geoffrey Chapman 1975).
[102] Anderson admits that the term 'historical transcendence' is an odd combination of words that may suggest a confusion of language game. He, however, explicates that the formulation is based on the thought of Ronald G. Smith and Dietrich Bonhoeffer in relation to transcendence and worldliness as historical experience. As Anderson says, 'by historical transcendence, I mean no more than that which

transcendence of God has been demonstrated most clearly through the incarnation, where God is present both as the Word and the Person.[103] Anderson claims that a double movement in incarnation constitutes the rationale of God's historical presence in revelation. First, there is the movement of the eternal Son becoming man, utterly conditioned by history and by humanity while remains in reciprocal relation with the eternal Father. Second, there is the movement by which 'the Spirit causes community with God to impinge immediately upon humanity and thus opens up man to his future with God in a way that makes belief possible.'[104] On this note, the historical presence of the Son is also the history of the Spirit, as the Spirit brings the person of the Son into communion with humanity. Anderson underlines that it is through this double movement that the God of Trinity is revealed in human history. One key argument of Anderson with regard to Christ's incarnation is that not only the Word is inseparable from the Person, the words and acts cannot be dichotomised from the Person as well. In view of the unity, the words and acts of Jesus could lead us directly to the living Word and thus they serve as a 'pole of transcendence' (or, historical contingency of divine revelation) to place us in the truth.[105] Notwithstanding Christ's revelation occurs in specific time and place in human history, Anderson argues that its historical past continues to have an indispensable function in our revelatory encounter with God today. The crux is the historical presence of Christ's revelation takes its continuity in human history through the followers and disciples of Jesus, the witnesses of Jesus' acts and words. Anderson claims that the witnesses of Jesus' acts and words carry with them an authority of 'absolute extrinsicality', because they, in witnessing Christ, become part of the revelation.[106] Anderson says,

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is denoted by the use of the general concept since Bonhoeffer, but no less than the full significance of the "inner logic" of this concept as an explication of the reality of God.' He continues to explain that 'when I suggest that a phrase such as "historical transcendence" has an "inner logic", I mean that the phrase is referential in its meaning, not to the existential self-understanding of the one who attempts to comprehend it, but to the reality which "stands behind" the phrase, the reality to which the phrase points. I also intend to signify, that this reality has an intrinsic intelligibility of its own which imposes its rationality upon the subject comprehending it.' From the explication of Anderson, we may summarise it by saying that 'historical transcendence' is the revelatory reality and presence of God as a historical experience determined by the object of self-disclosure in its imposition upon the subject of comprehension. See Anderson, xiv-xv.

[103] Ibid., 208.

[104] Ibid., 209.

[105] Ibid., 210. Anderson underlines that the believers could be placed in the truth in this regard only as they reflect upon the testimony concerning Jesus and allow that to inform their intention to seek him out for a direct encounter.

[106] Ibid., 210-11. Anderson alludes to Bonhoeffer for the use of 'absolute extrinsicality'.

> The authority which these words of witness to Christ conveyed was derivative of his own person, and conditioned by the ambiguity of all historical words and acts, but nonetheless, constituted a pole of transcendence, and as such, a revelation of the reality of Christ. Here we see at work the operative principle for the formation of a larger body of witness to Jesus which became the Scriptures of the New Testament.[107]

Anderson continues,

> It is this rationale which sets forth what can be called an inner logic to a doctrine of Scripture as revelation…It is here that the rationale for the transcendence of God through the historical person of Jesus Christ must come to terms with the rationale of Scripture as the revelation, and thus the historical transcendence of God. This will immediately raise the ghost of so-called 'propositional revelation' for some...[108]

The above citations bring Anderson's criticism of Torrance in relation to scripture as the mediation of divine revelation into focus. Although Anderson appreciates Torrance's effort to state the case for the place of scripture in 'a double sense, both above the Church, and thus transcendent of the words of man, but also in human history, and thus subject to the limitations of human finitudes', so that the Word of God will not be confounded with the word of humanity,[109] he suspects Torrance is able to maintain the tension without sacrificing the mediatedness of scripture.[110] He remarks that Torrance's understanding of scripture in fact runs the risk of losing what propositional revelation attempts to uphold. Anderson says,

> What is at stake in giving up that which a concept of propositional revelation seeks to preserve is the pole of transcendence which we have said lies in history and thus can serve to inform the act of faith 'in the Spirit' of its transcendent grounds in the person of Christ. Historical transcendence itself is at stake here, because if the cognitive link with the content of God's transcendence as historical act is broken, the act of faith must supply its own content to the divine Word.[111]

One possible corrective, according to Anderson, for Torrance to overcome the lack of historical contingency of revelation is to remove the double sense of scripture and to affirm it as 'the one pole of transcendence which confronts us completely as a

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[107] Ibid., 211.
[108] Ibid., 212.
[109] Ibid., 213.
[110] Ibid., 214. Anderson says, 'One can appreciate the efforts of Professor Torrance to maintain both the authority and humanity of Scripture: but I am not so sure that it can be done by giving the Scripture both a transcendent and an immanent relation to man, and thus separating its transcendence from its historicity.'
[111] Ibid., 213.

revelation within history'.[112] In someway we may comment that Anderson's proposal addresses what Henry and Langford recognise as problematic in Torrance's account. Another difficulty, however, has to be brought to light at this juncture. When scripture effaces itself as the human knower is lifted up in the Spirit to the mystical revelation of Christ, the problem is, as indicated in the above citation, 'the cognitive link with the content of God's transcendence as historical act is broken, the act of faith must supply its own content to the divine Word.' That is to say, as scripture is rendered unnecessary, there is an absence of material content with regard to God's revelation in human history. Thus, faith must now search for its own content because revelation has become an immediate experience, as Avery Dulles says, where God communicates inwardly with each believer in his mystical encounter with Christ by the Spirit.[113] When Christ's revelation becomes a mystical experience, the question of verifying its content becomes imperative. Indeed it is a difficult question. 'Can one claim that some forms (Paul as opposed to James; the Council of Trent as opposed to the Thirty-nine Articles; Barth as opposed to Tillich) are more susceptible to God's influxion than others? If so on what grounds may this be claimed?' A possible solution, according to Langford, is to turn to 'the forms which have been used by God in his gracious encounter with men'. 'But,' he continues, 'this provides a different base---namely an historical assessment---for the validation of theological statements.'[114] If Langford's suggestion is acceptable, the key to the door lies in the subject of biblical revelation. However, as important as it is, it is an area Torrance has failed to engage adequately, as our discussion thus far shows. Langford suspects that Torrance's problem is not unlike that of Barth. In his allusion to Hermann Diem's criticism of the inadequacy of Barth in biblical hermeneutics, Langford says that Torrance, like Barth, has not provided an adequate interaction of dogmatic work with scriptural exegesis.[115] We need to declare that Langford's comment of Barth, rightly or wrongly, does not fall within the compass of our current discussion; though we suspect many Barth scholars would disagree to it. However, his criticism of Torrance in this regard resonates our earlier observation. As a result, Langford says

[112] Ibid., 214. By saying that, Anderson clarifies that the transcendence of scripture does not depend on the existential pole of the hearer but in the human words of scripture itself.
[113] Avery Dulles, *Models of Revelation* (New York: Doubleday, 1983), 69. For detailed account of revelation as inner experience, see 68-83.
[114] Langford, 163.
[115] Ibid., 162.

that 'the usability of this philosophy of theology seems to be meagre.'[116] Langford continues,

> There seems to be one possibility: the role of the Christian community. Any legitimate judgment must be made by the continuing community and therefore no quick or final answer is possible. Patience and sensitivity are required for guidance by the Spirit…. What Torrance has achieved is a theological approach which remains---to the end---open to the direction of the Holy Spirit.
>
> If this is a correct interpretation, then one final comment upon it may be worthwhile. To carry through his delineation of the work of the Spirit of God in the thinking of men, a stronger emphasis should be placed upon the role of the Body of Christ, the continuing community of faith. For, in the last analysis, it is within this community that judgements of validity are to be made and remade. The theologians does not stand in isolation before God asking how he may judge the truth of his own interpretation, rather he submit his work to the company of believers who share with him the conviction that Jesus is Lord of truth of life.[117]

From the citation we may comment that Langford's suggestion indeed underlines the importance of multiple mediations. Torrance would agree with him that 'the company of believers', or the church, is a locus where the Spirit and believers work conjointly in the unfolding of the revelatory truth; a point corroborates the normative pattern of the union and communion of divine and human action of revelation and mediation. Langford's stress of 'the continuing community' deserves to be taken seriously as it brings us back to the primary question in relation to the nature of the medium of revelation. Indeed, media minted and used by God could not be the 'disposable cups', but the 'crystal cups the master filled'. Langford's emphasis reverberates P. T. Forsyth's remark of the mediatedness of the apostles.[118] The point is multiple mediations is one of the main pillars of Torrance's theology of revelation, and any unjustifiable move to relegate any medium of its mediatory nature would strain the framework and destruct its coherence. In addition, if the move to efface scripture is the response of Torrance to the dualism of liberal, fundamentalist and modern historical-critical biblical scholarship in segregating the divine from the human by shifting the focus solely to the human, by doing the reverse one wonders whether Torrance is unknowingly falling into the very pitfall he has fought so valiantly throughout his academic career to surmount. The detection of duality and incongruity by Langford and Henry cannot be undermined. Is there a remnant of

[116] Ibid., 163.
[117] Ibid., 168.
[118] Forsyth, 131.

dualism in Torrance as the result? If the answer is yes, could there be a deeper cause? With these questions we may turn to John Morrison to probe the matter further.

As a reader of Torrance, Morrison comes to an analytical conclusion that there is certain remnant of dualism in Torrance's 'Christocentric-Trinitarian theological realism'.[119] He says that Torrance's formulation of the christological pattern of truth appears to produce a conceptual reduction of revelation that ends in a rather existential and dialectic understanding of revelation. Morrison observes that this problem could be linked to the indelible influence of Kierkegaard and Barth, especially in relation to Kierkegaard's contemporaneity and Barth's transcendentalism.[120] Morrison says, 'This remnant dualism was said to potentially negate the humanity of the existing person in the knowing relation to God on the one hand and to endanger the real, historical incarnation of the Word on the other.'[121] The remark of Morrison corroborates to a great extent our earlier observation with regard to the relegation of human participation and the subservience of the humanity to the divinity of Christ. In order to grasp the criticism, we need to touch on Morrison's discussion of Kierkegaard and Barth, as he develops his argument of Torrance's dualism through it.

Morrison underlines that because Kierkegaard is unwilling to follow the Hegelian System, he sets forth in his own 'experiment' to explore the relation between humanity and the highest truth. In his endeavour to clarify the meaning of Christianity, Kierkegaard marks Christ's incarnation as the Absolute Paradox. Morrison says, 'It is the Absolute Paradox… in existential contrast to the Hegelian-Idealist "System" in order to set forth a philosophical reflection on the nature of truth in relation to God and history by means of Jesus Christ, the Historical instantiation of the Eternal.'[122] Kierkegaard argues that in distinction to Socratic-Idealist perspective of the teacher as the 'mid-wife' who eventually vanishes in the eternal, the teacher of Christianity has to be understood fully as saviour, deliverer, reconciler and judge.[123] Kierkegaard asserts that the learner cannot form any conceptual knowledge of God unless he receives it directly from God himself. This, according to Kierkegaard, is the divine 'incognito'. It refers to the impossibility of penetrating into the divine if

[119] Morrison, 285.
[120] Ibid., 285-86.
[121] Ibid., 286.
[122] Ibid., 295. Because it is an event of impossible proportion, Kierkegaard claims that Christ's incarnation provides the means to express the difference, the difficulty and the historical decisiveness of the Gospel message. For detailed account of the Absolute Paradox, see *Fragments*, 37-48.
[123] Ibid., 302. *Fragments*, 13-15.

'without receiving the condition from the teacher'.[124] Kierkegaard claims that it is only through faith that one could understand, affirm, and respond to the 'teacher'. To reiterate the point, Morrison says, 'As the alternate to Idealism, the teacher who is the god and thus the "moment" (or "fullness of time") must then be decisive. "It must decide" the person. The historical individual in untruth is brought into truth by the faith ("leap") response to the Eternal god in time, the paradox.'[125] With regard to the 'leap of faith', Kierkegaard says that the immediate contemporaries of Jesus have no advantage over later generations because even as they get 'to see this external form was something appalling: to associate with him as one of us and at every moment when faith was not present to see only the servant form'.[126] This is the ironical paradox of Jesus Christ. Only by faith can one see beyond the physical form of a servant and to be in contemporaneity with Jesus the God. Morrison underlines that if 'a specific "moment" in history is of vital significance for the acquisition of truth and the change of the existing individual to truth, then "the moment" or "Absolute Fact" at the heart of Christology and faith is necessarily distinct from relative facts of history.'[127] On this note, a two-fold reason may account for the distinction; it is absolute in the sense that it is historical, yet it is equally contemporaneous to every point in time because it is the eternal. Morrison delineates that this formulation of incarnation as the coming and becomingness of God into time is critical to Kierkegaard's christology. However, as the Absolute Paradox that cannot be explained and proved neither by human logic nor objective fact of history, the christology of Kierkegaard cannot be understood apart from its radical consequence of the leap of faith. The necessity of historicity is undermined. If Oscar Cullmann is right, this problem could be caused by the fact that Kierkegaard is found to be misled with regard to the relation of God and history in Christ. Cullmann says,

> [Kierkegaard] with his conception of 'contemporaneity', mistakes the significance of the present for redemptive history. According to him faith transfers us back into the time of the Incarnation; it makes us contemporaries of the apostles. In this view it is correct that faith permits us to survey the entire redemptive line and to share in its fruits… but the concept of contemporaneity presupposes that basically time as redemptive time has already come to a standstill with Jesus Christ; hence we can only go back to him in order to enter the realm of salvation… when the first disciples uttered their original confession: 'Christ reigns as Lord,' this means rather that Christ

[124] Ibid., 295. *Fragments*, 64.
[125] Ibid., 302-03.
[126] Ibid., 295. *Fragments*, 65.
[127] Ibid., 296.

> the Crucified and Risen One comes to us. The redemptive history continues; Christ sits at the right hand of God, now, today. [128]

In congruence with Cullmann, Morrison underlines that Kierkegaard has failed to recognise fully that the post-Easter present of Christ signifies a continuance in time of the redemptive process. As Cullmann aptly says, 'while rightly centring on the incarnation, Kierkegaard is said to wrongly see the need to overleap the centuries to the Christ event as "mid-point".'[129] Because of this failure, Kierkegaard is often categorised with those who speak of eternity invading time to communicate a kind of 'oil and water' relation.[130] The problem is historical and thus redemptive-historical, the root lies in Kierkegaard's understanding of God and his relation to history. On this note, Cullmann is right to say that Kierkegaard's salvation history casts 'mundane' history away. However, although Morrison agrees with Cullmann that Kierkegaard does lose sight of the place of all history including the history of existing person that is crucial to biblical understanding, the problem is not so much of an overleaping of centuries backward to the mid-point event of Christ. Morrison differs slightly from Cullmann and claims that the Kierkegaardian loss of real history arises from 'the paradoxical view of the incarnation whereby the action of the wholly other God is one of "coming" from the redemptive-historical mid-point by which the centuries may be "overleaped" to encounter the believing person who then participates in redemptive time, God's time.'[131] In other words, it is not so much just an issue of trans-historical immediacy; it is a problem of Kierkegaard's emphatic declaration of the otherness of God and the utter qualitative distinction of God from time. Morrison continues to underlines that as the coming of the Eternal in time, 'the god can detemporalise actual historical distinctions.'[132] He says, 'History has been altered by the "addition" of a second "historical" (or trans-historical) continuum whereby paradoxical immediacy for faith is engendered by the indirect historicity of the Incarnation.'[133] Approaching incarnation in this way, Morrison says that Kierkegaard has made history-qua-history of no final accounting, and faith as that by which the individual encounters God in revelation outside the direct historical realm.

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[128] Oscar Cullmann, *Christ and Time: The Primitive Christian Concept of Time and History* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1964), 146. Cited in Morrison, 305.
[129] Cullmann, 169. Cited in Morrison, 306.
[130] Morrison., 306.
[131] Ibid.
[132] Ibid., 307.
[133] Ibid., 308.

Morrison observes conclusively that Kierkegaard's eagerness to overthrow Hegelian immanentism has not only caused him to alter and bifurcate history by an emphatic divine transcendence, it has also altered the nature of the knowledge of God and of historical redemption in Christ. In congruence with Anderson's emphasis of historical contingency, Morrison says, 'The knowledge of God as truly historical in the context of true historical, covenantal relatedness, "historical transcendence" would do much to shore up the line of thought from Kierkegaard to and through Karl Barth to Thomas Torrance.'[134] With this remark, we would now turn to that which Morrison considers to be the other root problem of Torrance, Barth.

To Morrison the difficulty of Barth is not unlike that of Kierkegaard. For Barth, and Torrance, the implication of the divine priority of Christ as the sole objectivity of God's self-revelation requires us to understand our fallen time in relation to the 'real time' of the incarnational event. This reckoning of our fallen time to the time of God manifested in the fulfilled time of Christ's revelation is to be seen redemptively as the love of God.[135] In an almost definitional statement according to Morrison, Barth says,

> The time God has for us is constituted by His becoming present to us in Jesus Christ. If we say Jesus Christ, we also assert a human and therefore temporal presence. (It) is an eternal but not therefore a timeless reality… not a sort of ideal, yet in itself timeless content of all or some time. It does not remain transcendent over time, it does not merely meet it at a point, but it enters time; nay, it assumes time; nay, it creates time for itself.[136]

Morrison comments that problems could be detected from the above citation concerning the structuring of time and history. He says that revelation in Barth's terms still retains its own time that must be made distinct from the fallen time, so that it will not become something merely historical. Morrison claims that Barth's development of the 'God's Time/our time' relationship only exacerbates the dilemma.[137] Morrison's observation is verified by Richard Roberts. Notwithstanding Barth's 'extraordinary efforts to affirm the parallel between the Word's becoming flesh and its becoming time', Roberts criticises that the relation of real time and our time 'remains ambiguous' and the problem of disrelation continues to plague Barth's

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[134] Ibid.
[135] Ibid.
[136] *CD*, I/2, 50. Cited in Morrison, 309.
[137] Morrison, 310.

Church Dogmatics.[138] According to Morrison, the solution that Barth has provided to resolve the gulf between God and humanity is to create a form of unity-in-distinction which will maintain the otherness of the divine in his comingness in history. It is here Morrison argues that Kierkegaard's notion of 'contemporaneousness' has become significant for Barth's theological formulation, and so its difficulty as well. The influence is clearly seen when Barth says,

> In revelation God stands in for us entirely. And so also the time He creates for Himself in revelation, the genuine present, past and future is presented to us entirely. It should, it can, it will become our time, since He directs His Words to us; we are to become contemporary with this time of His. His genuine time takes the place of the problematic, improper time we know and have. It replaces it in that, amid the years and ages of this time of ours, the time of Jesus Christ takes the place of our time coming to us as a glad message presented to us as a promise, and to be seized and lived in by us.[139]

Regarding Barth's distinction of *Geschichte* and *Historie*, Morrison, in alluding to Richard Niebuhr, points out the apparent ambiguity of Barth's argument. Niebuhr says, 'In Barth's mind… these two orders of history requires two methods of cognition. For profane history, ordinary experiential cognition suffices, but for God's immediate action, there is no human response that is adequate. Pure revelation demands a wholly passive attitude of man, for what happens then and there… happens wholly and entirely externally to him, outside and apart from him. How then can revelation be known?'[140] In congruence with Niebuhr, Morrison underlines that Barth's attempt to adequately reflect the factual instantiation of God's time for us in Jesus is beclouded in transcendental otherness and a 'history' of its own that cannot be ours but only God's; 'The Christ, as the Word of God's self-giving for us, remains "transcendentalised".'[141] On this note, Roberts comments that despite Barth's endeavour to preserve Christian theology from the indifferent and hostile secular world through a profound ontological exclusiveness, his theological aggrandisement

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[138] Richard Roberts, *A Theology on Its Way?* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1991), 39. Roberts comments that the problem is pervasive in the whole enterprise of Barth's theology; especially in his earlier works, such as *The Epistle to the Romans*. Roberts remarks that in spite of Barth's endeavour, he has failed to resolve the problem in *Church Dogmatics* and thus 'the serious danger of a distinct Docetism exposed in his doctrine of time' continues to prevail. Roberts traces the root problem of Barth's 'God's time' and 'our time' relation back to the influence of Kant, Hegel and Kierkegaard. See 3-9.

[139] *CD*, I/2, 55. Cited in Morrison, 314. The repeated references to 'contemporaneity' and 'indirectness' in Barth's discussion of the incarnation and the self-revelation of God in Jesus Christ are evidences of the substantial link to Kierkegaard.

[140] Richard R. Neibuhr, *Resurrection and Historical Reason: A Study of Theological Method* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1957), 84. Cited in Morrison, 315-16.

[141] Morrison, 316.

inevitably runs the risk of segregating and alienating his theology from natural reality, as symptomatically mirrored in the difficulty of his doctrine of time. Thus, Roberts, in a concluding statement, underlines that Barth's works illustrate phenomenally 'the logic of the disrelation of Christian theological categories and the reality of which they speak from our own culture.'[142] This, to Morrison, is the core problem of Barth's God-world relatedness. It has its root in Kierkegaard. And it is on this ground, as we shall now see, that Morrison argues for the remnant dualism of Torrance.

Morrison says that Torrance has attempted to work out an adequate 'disclosure model' to reflect faithfully the revelation of God. However, in his theological construction along the Kierkegaardian-Barthian line of thought, Morrison remarks that Torrance has fallen prey to the same problems of Kierkegaard and Barth. The outcome is that there exists a polarity of unreconciled sides of revelation. While Torrance delineates the importance of the 'historical disclosive situation' in Christ by the Spirit, his understanding of the Word as encountered in revelation continues to maintain strong bases in Kierkegaardian-Barthian transcendentalism.[143] Morrison says,

> At Torrance's critical theo-logical point where human knowing of God is meant to be actualised or instantiated in real historical relation, God seems to recede from the historical into non-objectivity for space-time human existence. Torrance's formulations and descriptions of that 'moment' of encounter become descriptions of a Christ-mysticism very similar to descriptions of the existential Word-event as found in such prominent post-Bultmannian theologians as Gerhard Ebeling and Ernst Fuchs.[144]

In alluding to Thiselton's criticism of the modern theological-existential emphasis of the 'Word-event', Morrison remarks that Torrance's approach has come too near to the Word-magic. The setback of it is the inevitable devaluation of the 'place of assertion' and the 'complexity and variety of functions performed by statements' in the revelatory process;[145] a point evidently corroborates our earlier argument. The main reason for Torrance to use Kierkegaard in spite of the problems seems to be the fact that in him Torrance has found the much needed objectivity and

[142] Roberts, 58.
[143] Morrison, 318.
[144] Ibid.
[145] Ibid.

dynamic mode of thinking.[146] However, the appropriation of Kierkegaard does come with a price; as Morrison says, what Kierkegaard has left unfinished and disjoined, have not been overcome by Barth or Torrance. As much as Torrance wants to surmount the disjunction between the divine and human history, his Kierkegaardian's leap of faith into the encounter of contemporaneity has left him with the inevitable negation of the historicity of the Word and humanity. At the end, Morrison says that the problem persists in Torrance's theology 'because of "transcendentalism" assumptions which thwart a final completion of real interrelatedness as is necessary in Torrance's asymmetrical, unitary theo-logical whole as a disclosure model of God's lordly creative-recreative relation to the world as centred and founded in the real historicity and Mediation of the Word made flesh.'[147]

What have we achieved in the discussion of Morrison? Fundamentally it has thrown the criticisms, particularly that of Anderson, into sharp relief and unveiled a possible remnant of dualism embedded in Torrance's theological structure by tracing its root back to Barth and Kierkegaard. By suggesting the failure of overcoming the problems, Morrison's observation has provided us with another possible cause of Torrance's unusual move. Thus, it may be said that a two-fold factor has given rise to it; internally within his framework an inclination of transcendentalism, and externally the response to the dualistic presupposition of the liberal, fundamentalist and modern historical-critical biblical scholarship. As mentioned, notwithstanding Torrance's arguments of the locatedness of God's revelation in space and time, it remains essentially outside the human history. Because of the inherent historical inadequacy of his theology of revelation, Torrance manages to shift from mediation to immediacy without much struggle. In conjunction with the advocacy of the effacement of scripture, the shift has led to a form of mystical immediacy where the human subject's historical existence and humanity is finally demeaned or lost as he is lifted up by the Spirit in the moment of contemporaneity. On this note, the inevitability is the vulnerability of subordinating the humanity to the divinity of Christ in divine revelation; the shadow of Docetism is still lurking. Thus, the conclusion of Morrison corroborates our claim that, by derailing from the normative

[146] That is to say, in Kierkegaard, Torrance recognises a new theology that will not fall prey to the static forms of formal deduction which is important to his theological reconstruction. The use of Kierkegaard will help Torrance in his arguments that traditional logic cannot cope with the dynamic Truth that has moved into time as a historical event.
[147] Morrison, 320.

pattern of revelation and mediation, Torrance has unknowingly fallen prey to the very problem he endeavours to surmount in his theological quest.

As Morrison traces Torrance's problem back to Kierkegaard and Barth, we may return to the remark of Gunton underscored in the preceding chapter about the inadequacy of Barth's pneumatology. Gunton says, 'We have already met the problem of Barth's tendency to underplay the significance of the humanity of Christ. It is accompanied by an equivocal failure to give due place and function to the Holy Spirit.'[148] Gunton claims that the Spirit is the 'subjective side in the event of revelation' to Barth.[149] And, like many great theologians of the Western tradition, Barth is unable to avoid the weakness of limiting the activity of the Spirit to the believer's relation with Christ in divine revelation. In alluding to the Forth Gospel, Gunton says that the way to overcome this weakness in pneumatology is to allow the Spirit the distinctive revelatory role beyond the subjectivity of human knower. Gunton says, 'The Spirit is revealed as the mediator of relation to God through Christ and *consequently* as the mediator of revelation.'[150] Thus, the Spirit is the agent of revelation actively working through human and earthly media and leading all to the truth, to Jesus; 'the Spirit is to point to, and in that sense, reveal the Son; that of the Son to reveal the Father.'[151] Our discussion shows that Torrance is in fact in congruence with Gunton on this note. In his endeavour to surmount the eclipse of the Spirit by the Son in divine revelation and mediation, Torrance underscores that the doctrine of the Spirit cannot be less important than the doctrine of the Son. Torrance regards, as Gunton, the construction of a full doctrine of the Spirit an urgent task of modern theology that even Barth has yet to work out thoroughly in his *Church Dogmatics*.[152] In view of the remarks, we would now attempt the question left unanswered at the end of the foregoing chapter. We ask if Gunton is right about Barth's weakness of limiting the activity of the Spirit to the believer's subjective appropriation of revelation, would Torrance then fall into the same pitfall despite of his argument. Is Torrance finally free from the pneumatological weakness of Barth, given that he shares Barth's problems as Morrison has indicated? The answer, we believe, is manifest in the light that revelation in Torrance's scheme is now voided of historical contingency and mediation, the Spirit has no other media but the

[148] Gunton, 119.
[149] *CD*, I/1, 449. Cited in Gunton, 119.
[150] Gunton, 121. Author's italic.
[151] Ibid., 122.
[152] Thomas F. Torrance, 'Karl Barth,' *Expository Times* (1955): 209.

subjectivity of the beholder; a symptomatic problem, according to Ricoeur, at least in the West, of lacking 'an appropriate theology that does not psychologise the Holy Spirit.'[153] Thus, we may conclude that by making the move to advocate the effacement of scripture and underpin the immediacy of Christ's revelation, Torrance has altered the landscape considerably and pneumatology is now a weakness notwithstanding his arguments.

We have thus far examined the implications and problems that are either derived from or exacerbated by Torrance's move to efface scripture and focus primarily on the immediacy of Christ's revelation. Through our engagements with Richardson, Henry, Langford, Thiemann, Anderson, Morrison and Gunton, we show that the ramifications are complex and far reaching. Despite the complexity, we may encapsulate them into six main points. First, the revelation of God in Christ is denied of historical contingency. It has become a form of transcendental-mystical encounter between the redeemed and the Redeemer outside the human history. Second, as scripture effaces itself and is rendered unnecessary in revelation, the lack of material content leaves no option except to allow the act of faith to search for its own revelatory message in the mystical encounter. Questions of authenticity and verification then become imperative and problematic. Third, the move to efface scripture in revelation has debased the nature of mediation and thus contradicted the argument of multiple mediations. As the nature of continuance has been discarded, media of divine revelation become something disposable. Fourth, the move has exacerbated the dialectic tension between the human and the divine in Torrance's theological structure and led to a remnant of dualism. Fifth, the safeguarding of God in revelation is purchased at the price of human participation. The derailing from the normative pattern of revelation and mediation has undermined the historical existence of the human person as a creative, responsible and self-determined creature; a serious setback for his postulation of theological science. The repercussion indubitably is the susceptibility of subordinating the humanity to the divinity of Christ, a problem of Docetism. Sixth, notwithstanding his arguments, pneumatology becomes a weakness in Torrance's theology. As revelation takes up the form of mystical immediacy negating historical contingency and multiple mediations, the activity of the Spirit is limited to the subjectivity of the beholder before God in Christ. Taking all points into

[153] Ricoeur, 93. Ricoeur argues that the problem is not unrelated to our over-psychologising of revelation. Thus, to 'discover the objective dimension of revelation is to contribute indirectly to this non-psychologising theology of the Holy Spirit that would be an authentic pneumatology.'

account, the question we raise at the outset becomes an easy one to answer. Indeed, as we claim, it is difficult for Torrance to justify the move as it goes against the grain and subverts his theological enterprise.

Conclusion

We have in this chapter examined the importance of scripture as the primary medium of revelation in Torrance's thought. In our discussion of the basis and nature, we note Torrance's use of scripture in relation to the category of revelation, Word of God, infallibility, inerrancy and authority. As the testimony of God's involvement in human history via the chosen people of the covenants, scripture to Torrance assumes a normative status in mediating divine revelation that could neither be ignored nor discarded. The continuance of scripture in embodying and mediating God's self-revelation in Christ is again accentuated through his postulation of exegetic-theological interpretation, although an undeniable lack of it is manifest in his works. Is the discrepancy suggestive of a hidden tension that leads to the derailment from the normative pattern of revelation and mediation? Perhaps the move taken by Torrance to efface scripture after establishing the primacy and normativeness is not completely an unexpected one if the external and internal contributing factors of capacitation as our discussion shows are taken into consideration. As much as 'something would appear to have gone wrong if we become too obsessed with the Bible', the relegation of scriptural mediation and the underpinning of the immediacy of Christ's revelation do come with a dear price tag that perhaps may surprise even Torrance. We believe Torrance would concur with Rowan Williams when the latter says that 'the model of revelation as a straightforward "lifting of a veil" by divine agency has to be treated with caution.'[154] What is significant arising out of our discussion is the unearthing of that which stays beneath the symptomatic move; particularly the embedded tension within Torrance's framework that at times seems to lurk him to derail from the normative pattern of revelation and mediation. The question now is could other weighty media within Torrance's structure of multiple mediations avoid similar setback? It would be the task of the next chapter to ascertain the answer before a possible corrective is proposed at the end.

[154] Rowan Williams, *On Christian Theology* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003), 135.

Chapter Six

Church, Word and Sacraments, Creation: A Variety of Media

The preceding chapter focuses on Torrance's understanding of scripture as the primary medium of divine revelation. Our analysis shows that notwithstanding the intent to argue consistently for the normativeness of scripture, Torrance, due to internal tension and external dualistic threats, takes an unusual step to relegate the mediatedness of scripture and advocate the immediacy of Christ's revelation in order to maintain the primacy of God in divine self-disclosure. As our arguments show, such move is unnecessary as Torrance has constructed a theology of revelation and multiple mediations centred on Christ; the normative pattern of divine self-disclosure which is derivative of the hypostatic union of Christ underpins the essentiality of the union and communion of divine and human action could serve well as deterrence to the dualistic threats and overcome the dialectic tension without compromising either the sovereignty of God or the validity of human participation in revelation. In fact, the whole enterprise of Torrance's theological reconstruction which upholds the unity of form and being in Christ lies precisely in attempting to surmount the dualism that, according to him, has derailed Western theology from the centrality of God and his self-revelation for a substantial period of time. What is required of Torrance when facing the pitfall, as we claim, is to keep in line with what he has developed. Notwithstanding the embedded tension as discussed, we would argue that in his explication of other ordained media of revelation Torrance is basically successful in overcoming the inducement, especially when the normative pattern of revelation and mediation is properly maintained. On this note, it is the purpose of the final chapter to examine Torrance's arguments of the church, Word and sacraments, and contingent creation as the media of divine revelation.

Church

The purpose of this section is to examine Torrance's understanding of the church as the significant medium of divine revelation. We attempt to show that Torrance, like Barth, primarily centres his thought on Christ as he develops his ecclesiology. The

mediatory nature and essence of the church will be further explored as our focus turns to the apostles. Our aim is to argue that Torrance, by observing the normative pattern of the union and communion of divine and human action of revelation and mediation, is able to affirm the validity of ecclesial mediation despite the embedded tension.

John McLeod Campbell says, 'Do not imagine the Christ, the Son, came to change the Father: he came to reveal the Father---he did not come to make God kind, but to show us God's kindness---"Herein God commendeth his (that is God's) love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us."'[1] The atonement of Christ to Campbell is the effect of God's love for mankind, and it is mediated by Christ as the representative of a new humanity;[2] as Dorothee Sölle says, 'Representatively he reconciled us to God and revealed God's prevenient grace towards us.'[3] On the same note, to Torrance, it is out of God's providence as God's love and grace take concrete form of articulation and expression in Christ, that revelation and reconciliation are but inseparably the obverse of Christ's atonement in bearing the fruit of the new humanity in Christ (see chapter one). 'If atoning reconciliation between man and God is not externally but internally related to Jesus Christ,' Torrance says, 'then the Church of Jesus Christ cannot be thought of as only externally related to him.'[4] The question is how could one understand this 'internal' relation between Christ and the church, or the new humanity, especially with regard to revelation and mediation? Torrance clearly recognises the significance when he attempts the question 'What is the Church?'[5]

There are many ways one could delimit the meaning of the church even if it is approached from the perspective of scripture. From the images and names used by scripture to speak of the church, Torrance claims that the most significant expression is the 'Body of Christ' because it is more inclusive than any of the others.[6] 'But the

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[1] John McLeod Campbell, *Sermons and Lectures*, vol. 2 (Greenock: R. B. Lusk, 1832), 76. Cited in George M. Tuttle, *So Rich a Soil: John McLeod Campbell on Christian Atonement* (Edinburgh: Handsel Press, 1986), 79.

[2] John McLeod Campbell, *The Nature of the Atonement and Its Relation to Remission of Sins and Eternal Life* (London: James Clarke and Co., 1959), 20. See Tuttle, 85-88.

[3] Dorothee Sölle, *Christ the Representative* (London: SCM, 1967), 19-23, 51-56.

[4] *MC*, 66.

[5] *CAC1*, 104. An address Torrance gave to the Theological Colleges Union at New College, Edinburgh, in November 1956. It was then published in *The Ecumenical Review*, October 1958.

[6] Torrance elucidates that we have to approach the metaphor in proper light. It cannot be understood in terms of organism in biological sense even though the New Testament does use some biological language in speaking about it. 'But,' Torrance says, 'at those very points it deliberately uses language that is unnatural and un-biological, as when St. Paul speaks of the Body as growing from the head as well as into head, and when he balances it with the image of the building which contrary to normal procedure is built down from the coping stone. It is only when we allow the other analogies and

word "Body" is most important,' Torrance says, 'for in the expression "the Body of Christ" it directs us at once to Christ Himself in such way that we have to lay the emphasis upon "of Christ" and not upon "Body"'.[7] It is not difficult to comprehend Torrance's preference especially in the light that the metaphor is essentially christological. But more importantly, the analogy provides Torrance with the proper language to articulate God's prevenient grace of incorporating the church into a relation of union and communion with Christ that finally sets the basis of fittingness not only of its existence, but also of the church as the valid medium of divine revelation in human history. As Kye comments, 'Upon this union with Christ, Torrance clarifies the intimate relation between Christ and the Church, and the Church and Christ.'[8] Not unlike the asymmetric relation between the Word of God and the word of scripture as discussed in the preceding chapter, 'Body of Christ' to Torrance does not mean 'a relation either of identity or of difference between Christ and His Church but an analogical relation in which there is no relation of proportion but only of similarity (and dissimilarity) of proportion.' In other words, it is neither a relation of identity nor of difference, but one involving something of difference and of identity. The analogical relation could only be properly thought out 'in terms of the hypostatic union of the two natures in one Person, and indeed in terms of the *inconfuse*, *immutabiliter*, *indivise*, *inseparabiliter* of the Chalcedonian formula.'[9]

By appropriating the church as the body of Christ and pivoting on the relation of union in Christ, the analogy enables Torrance 'not [to] focus our attention upon the Church as a sociological or anthropological magnitude, nor upon the Church as an institution or a process, but upon the Church as the immediate property of Christ which He has made His very own and gathered into the most intimate relation with Himself.'[10] The personal and dynamic relation of union and communion between Christ and his church serves as the firm foundation capacitating Torrance to work on safeguarding both the sovereignty of God and the participatory significance of the church in ecclesial mediation without falling into the dualistic pitfall of allowing the

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images to play their part in opening up and enriching this concept of the Body that it can serve its purpose in declaring the nature of the Church.' See *CAC1*, 104-05.

[7] Ibid., 106.

[8] Kye Won Lee, *Living in Union with Christ: The Practical Theology of Thomas F. Torrance* (New York: Peter Lang, 2003), 221-22.

[9] *CAC1*, 231.

[10] Ibid. Torrance underlines that we must learn 'to make the Christological reference paramount in all our thinking and understanding of the Church, and at no point allow anything in the Church to obscure Christ Himself, to stand in His way, to set Him aside, or to subordinate Him to another interest or end, even momentarily.' See *CAC1*, 107.

elevation of one at the expense of the other; especially to avoid the swallowing up of the divine by the human that causes the church to become merely, as cited, 'a sociological or anthropological magnitude'. Since 'Christ clothed with His Gospel is the essence of the Church. There is no Church except that which participates and lives in Him and loves and obeys Him',[11] the task of fulfilling the calling of the church as the object of God's grace existing in human history to reveal, mediate and witness the love of God concretely in Christ before humanity cannot succeed without upholding the normative pattern of revelation and mediation. Thus, on the conjoint action of the divine and the human in mediating God's self-disclosure in Christ, we would first touch on Torrance's thought of the Spirit as the divine action, and then the participation of the church as the human action of the normative pattern of revelation and mediation.

The significance of the Spirit in enabling the church to be in union with Christ cannot be understated in Torrance's ecclesiology. To Torrance it is by the coming of the Spirit upon the church that, as it receives the power, understanding and faith, it becomes the body and true witness so that Christ could continue 'to be heard and to be believed' among humanity in the course of time. 'Thus,' Torrance says, 'through the coming of the Spirit God brings his self-revelation to its fulfilment, for the Spirit is the creative Subject of God's revelation to us and the creative Subject in our reception and understanding of that revelation… in and with his coming, Christ himself returns to be present among us, living and speaking and operating in the Church which through the Spirit is constituted his Body on earth and in history.'[12] To Torrance the ascension of Christ is not meant to be an absence but the real presence of Christ by the Spirit in human history. Torrance says, 'By ascension Christ has withdrawn Himself from the visible succession of history… and [He] sends us His Spirit by which He fulfils His own Revelation of Himself.'[13]

To address Torrance's thought on the work of the Spirit in ecclesial mediation, three salient points may be encapsulated. First, it is by the epistemic dynamic of the Spirit that the church is in union with Christ and becomes validated as the effective medium of divine revelation. Torrance, however, is unequivocal that the

[11] Ibid., 107-08.
[12] *TRst*, 253. In relation to our preceding chapter about the transparency and self-effacing nature of the Sprit, Torrance underlines that the office of the Spirit in the church is not to call attention to himself apart from Christ, but 'to focus all attention on Christ, to glorify him, to bear witness to his deity, to testify to his mind and will, and in him and through him to lead us to the Father.'
[13] *RP*, 28.

forming of the church is achieved not on the basis of the Spirit but the foundation of Christ's redeeming work, so that by the Spirit the church 'is opened up from within for the reception and actualisation of revelation'. 'As such,' Torrance continues, 'this Body becomes matched to Christ as His vis-à-vis in history '.[14] Second, it is by the Spirit that the church grows within itself to the fullness of Christ and reaches out extensively to the ends of the world to fulfil its mediatory mission in Christ. On this note, we may say in anticipation of later discussion that Torrance, notwithstanding his manifest devotion to the ministry and missionary work of the church, has produced less than little work in that field. Third, it is by the Spirit that the church fulfils its ministry of the Word and sacraments; so that 'it grows, increases, gathers strength, and is multiplied', and 'all who believe and are baptised into the name of Christ are added by God to the Body'.[15] It is important to note in Torrance's thought that the inseparableness of Christ and his church is the fruit of the indwelling of the Spirit. To Torrance the activity of the Spirit that generates the relation of reciprocity between Christ and his church derives from and is grounded in the mutual indwelling of the Father, the Son and the Spirit within the Trinity.[16] While the church participates in Christ by the communion of the Spirit and becomes his body on earth to mediate continuously God's presence to humanity, it essentially draws its life incessantly from the communion of the triune God; as Gunton aptly puts, 'The Church is called to be the kind of reality at a finite level that God is in eternity.'[17] Torrance resonates,

> Thus the Church has no independent existence, as if it were anything at all or had any life or power of its own, apart from what is unceasingly communicated to it through its union and communion with Christ who dwells in it through the Spirit and fills it with the eternal life and love of God himself. It is quickened and born of the Spirit; it is filled and directed by the Spirit, but in order that the church may be rooted in Jesus Christ, grounded in his incarnate Being and mission, and in order that it may be determined in its inner and outer life through participation in his life and ministry.[18]

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[14] Ibid., 23.
[15] Ibid.,24.
[16] *MC*, 67. For detailed account of the church as the communion of the Spirit, see Thomas F. Torrance, 'The Mission of the Church,' *Scottish Journal of Theology* 19 (1966): 133-36.
[17] Colin Gunton, 'The Church on Earth: The Roots of Community,' in *On Being the Church*, ed. Colin E. Gunton and Daniel W. Hardy (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1989), 78.
[18] *TRst*, 205.

In corresponding appositely with the revelatory and mediatory work of the Spirit, the church as the human counterpart of the divine, according to Torrance, participates in Christ's revelation through a double reference. Torrance delineates,

> [O]ne which we may describe as vertical, and one which we may describe as horizontal. It is only through vertical participation in Christ that the Church is horizontally a communion of love, a fellowship of reconciliation, a community of the redeemed. Both these belong together in the fullness of Christ. It is only as we share in Christ Himself, that we share in the life of the Church, but it is only as we share with all saints in their relation to Christ that we participate deeply in the love and knowledge of God. Participation is a conjoint participation, a participation-in-communion, but the communion is above all a communion-in-participation in Christ.[19]

Torrance argues that the word *koinonia*, as it is used in the New Testament, refers firstly to our vertical participation in Christ and secondly our horizontal communion with one another in Christ. As Christ is the basis of *koinonia*, Torrance claims that 'the Church as the Body of Christ is not a figurative way of speaking of some external moral union between believing people and Jesus Christ, but an expression of the ontological reality of the Church concorporate with Christ himself'.[20] Although Torrance is explicit about the church as the historical presence of Christ by the Spirit, or 'the earthly historical form of his existence' as Barth calls it,[21] he does not disregard the church in actuality is as well the gathering of human believers called by God out of his prevenient grace. Thus, to Torrance, our understanding of the church as the human action of the normative pattern of revelation and mediation will not complete without acknowledging this horizontal dimension of participation not only as the communion of believers here and now, but also those in history. Torrance explains, 'All through its history the fellowship of the Church on earth is only maintained as the Church participates in the fellowship of heaven as well as of earth, i.e. in the great communion of saints, the whole company of heaven and earth of all who are named with the Name of Christ.'[22] Similarly, the horizontal dimension of the church is not only about the mediation of divine revelation here and now, it refers as well to its continuous mediation of God's presence in Christ past, present and future in human history until in the fullness of time of Christ's second coming. Torrance underpins three key elements of the human

[19] Ibid., 109.
[20] *MC*, 67.
[21] Cited by Torrance in *MC*, 66.
[22] *CAC1*, 116.

action of ecclesial mediation. First, the mediation of God's love. The 'Church is a communion of love' as it 'represents that area within humanity where the love of God is poured out by the Holy Spirit and where men and women are given to share together in their life on earth, and within the social cohesion of humanity, in the overflow of the divine life.'[23] Second, the mediation of God's reconciliation. Upon the communion of love the church is also a fellowship of reconciliation; 'not only a fellowship of those who have been reconciled to God in Christ and those who have therefore been reconciled with one another, but a fellowship sent out into the world in order to bring healing and reconciliation into the great multitudes who are alienated from God and divided from one another in estrangement and conflict.'[24] Third, the mediation of God's new creation. Having partaken in what Christ has established and tasted the power of the age to come, 'the Church on earth and in history is the provisional manifestation God has given to mankind of the new creation which will be revealed when Christ comes again.'[25]

One could note the relatedness of the vertical-horizontal dimension of the church's participation in Christ with the reciprocal-covenantal relation of God and Israel in Torrance's discourse. We may recall from the first chapter that the covenantal relation in Torrance's terms is one which entails corporate as well as personal participation, as personal relations with God take place within the corporate interaction with God. Torrance says that 'the vertical and the horizontal interrelations of the covenant partnership penetrated each other, constituting a coherent community of reciprocity between God and Israel, and manifesting a community response to the self-revealing and self-giving of God to Israel.'[26] The similarity between the church and Israel as chosen media of God in this regard evidences the consistency of Torrance's argument that is undergirded by the normative pattern of revelation and mediation. As God calls Israel and establishes the vertical-horizontal relation, likewise he gathers his apostles and believers to be his body in order that they may participate in him vertically and horizontally to fulfil their mission that Christ has laid. Notwithstanding the parallel, it is ultimately the church and not Israel according

[23] Ibid.
[24] Ibid., 117. Torrance says that if the reconciliation between humanity and God is not externally but internally related to Christ, then the church cannot be thought of as only externally related to him. Torrance underscores, 'In the Church of Christ all who are redeemed through the atoning union embodied in him are made to share in his incarnational union with him through his birth, death and resurrection and are incorporated into Christ by the power of his Holy Spirit as living members of his Body'. See *MC*, 66.
[25] Ibid., 120.
[26] *MC*, 13.

to Torrance that has been called to mediate finally the full revelation of God in human history. On this note, we may now turn to the apostles because their place in Torrance's scheme as the human action of the church through which the self-revelation God in Christ is mediated cannot be undermined.

Torrance says that 'the apostolicity of the Church refers back to the original foundation of the Church once for all laid by Christ upon the apostles, but it also refers to the interpretation of the existence and mission of the Church in its unswerving fidelity to that apostolic foundation.'[27] The relation between the church and the apostles is one of inseparability in Torrance's thought. It may be said that to Torrance the ministry and mission of the apostles is the ministry and mission of the church, as both are one and singularly founded by Christ upon his salvific foundation and in union with Christ. Thus, in relation to the preceding argument of the vertical and horizontal participation of the church in Christ, Torrance claims that the apostolic witness is also 'to have a twofold reference, a vertical reference to Christ, and a horizontal reference to others to whom witness is being communicated'.[28] However, the distinctiveness of the apostles is that they are the 'hinges' or 'cardinals' where the vertical and horizontal meet.[29] Torrance says, 'Apostles formed the *hinges* of the divine mission, where, so to speak, the vertical mission in the sending of the Son by the Father, is folded out horizontally into history at Pentecost'.[30] There are two ways to understand the significance. First, the apostles are the hinges between 'the Old Israel with its Twelve Patriarchs and Tribes, and the New Israel which is reconstituted in them as the Body round the Messiah-King.' In this sense, 'the Apostles are the authoritative link between the Old Testament Revelation and the New Testament Revelation. It is on the ground of the Apostolic witness that the Old Testament is subsumed under the New Testament Revelation, so that the Church is founded on Apostles and *Prophets*.'[31] Second, the apostles are the hinges 'between

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[27] *TF*, 285.
[28] *TRst*, 43.
[29] Torrance explicates that when the New Testament speaks of the church as founded once and for all upon the apostles, and that apart from them no foundation is to be laid, it means that the apostles are the only 'cardinals' of faith and the only 'hinges' in which 'the vertical is folded out into the horizontal in such a way that throughout history men and women on the ground of this witness communicated to them horizontally and mediately on the plane of history may be directed vertically, as it were, and immediately to the Lord to meet and know him for themselves.' Thus, in the nature of the case, Torrance claims that the apostles can have no successors because it is not given to anyone else to receive the Word directly from Christ and to translate it into witness of which the whole church's foundation is built upon. See *TRst*, 43-44.
[30] *RP*, 27. Author's italic.
[31] Ibid., 27-28. Author's italic.

the incarnational Revelation objectively given in Christ, and the unfolding of that once and for all in the mind of the Church as the Body of Christ.'[32] Although as hinges, Torrance is unequivocal that the function of the apostles is not to pass on directly what they have received 'in precisely the same way' that they have received from Christ. Torrance explicates,

> The supreme importance of the Apostles lies in the fact that they were the chosen and trained instruments, endowed with the Spirit, to pass on the self-witness of Jesus (in word and act) translated into witness to him by men in history, for men in history. In the apostolic witness there took place once and for all, under the power of the Spirit… an inspired act… of Christ's own self-revelation and communication to men.[33]

Therefore,

> The mission of the Apostles was not just to reproduce the *ipsissima verba* of Jesus, but under the compulsion of his teaching and his actions, as they illuminated one another, to communicate a faithful report of him, by means of which others in historical tradition could be brought under his power, and find their minds compelled to think of him and speak of him in the basic way.[34]

From the citations we may comment that the witness to Christ's revelation and the mediation of Christ's revelation in Torrance's thought are but the obverse sides of the same apostolic mission revolving around God's grace and love as embodied and articulated in Christ. In this one apostolic movement of witnessing and mediating Christ's revelation in human history, Torrance brings to light a characteristic twofold relation that corresponds to the twofold nature of Christ as the Word and Person. First, there is a corresponding relation between the words of the apostles and the Word of Christ. 'The apostolic statements are thus by their nature recognition-statements which at one and the same time point away from themselves to Christ… in such way that others hearing or reading their report are themselves directed to look away to Christ, and indeed meet him and know him through the apostolic witness.'[35] It is significant to note at this juncture that Torrance, in emphasising the referential character, does not relegate the medium to effacement in divine revelation. Instead, he reinforces the validity as well as the continuity of the apostolic testimony by claiming that 'it is the form in which they handed on that

[32] Ibid., 28.
[33] *TRst*, 206.
[34] Ibid., 41-42.
[35] Ibid., 41.

Word in tradition that determines the form in which the historical Church continues to grasp and apprehend the Truth.'[36] The second corresponding relation regards the ecclesial communion and the personal being of Christ. Just as Christ creates and shapes the understanding of the Word in the church through the apostolic words, Torrance says that 'through the Apostles the Person of Christ creates the community which receives him and which he compacts around himself as his own Body, the Church.'[37] The vital undergirding principle that cannot be overlooked here is that to Torrance there should be no dualistic division between our knowing and God's being in the knowledge of Christ's revelation. As the Einsteinian-Polanyian realist epistemology rightly underscores the integrative and relational mode inquiry, Torrance asserts that our knowing of and union with Christ must go 'hand in hand together' so that our knowledge of God is one based on a personal and living communion with Christ vertically, and with one another in the church horizontally. Thus, the 'apostolic knowledge of the Word was *Christian* knowledge, and the apostolic understanding of Christ was *Christian* understanding, for that was the knowledge and understanding that Christ meant the whole Church to have of himself and of God through him.'[38] The inseparability of the apostles and the church in mediating divine self-disclosure is accentuated as the 'revelation of God objectively given and subjectively realised in the Person and Work of Christ now through the Spirit subjectively takes shape in the mind of the apostolic Church in final form.'[39] Torrance says conclusively in affirming ecclesial mediation,

> That is the Apostolic mission. It is not any new revelation or any new interpretation added to it or put upon the objective Revelation in the historical Christ, but the actual unfolding of the Mind of the risen Lord within His Church, the *pleroma* of the incarnational Revelation through His Spirit. The Apostles thus formed the definite medium in our flesh and blood where the unfolding of the Mind of Christ was met by inspired witness and translated into the language of the flesh, the medium, where, as it were, the Revelation of Christ through the Spirit became earthed in the Church as the Body of Christ, became rooted in humanity.[40]

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[36] Ibid.
[37] Ibid., 42.
[38] Ibid. Author's italic. Because the apostles are the primary and foundational Christians, Torrance claims that it is upon their knowledge and understanding of the divine revelation of Christ that the whole church rests. In this regard, 'the apostolic mind is determinative for all theological activity within the Church.'
[39] Ibid., 137.
[40] *RP*, 27.

We have thus far identified a twofold import of Torrance's ecclesial mediation. First, it is by building his argument upon the scriptural metaphor of the church as the body of Christ, and upon the essentiality of the conjoint activity of the Spirit (as divine action) and the apostles (as human action) that Torrance is able to articulate the church as the crucial medium in which the revelatory presence of Christ is unfolded horizontally in the course of human history. Second, the peril of dualism---the inducement of focusing solely either on the divine or the human in revelation---is basically surmounted when the normative pattern of the union and communion of divine and human action of revelation and mediation is maintained. Thus, Torrance, on the ground of ecclesial mediation, is able to declare theologically that the church through God's prevenient grace is empowered to reach out extensively into the world 'in order to bring healing and reconciliation into the great multitudes who are alienated from God and divided from one another in estrangement and conflict.'[41] Evidently, Torrance's argument of the church as the vital medium of divine revelation harmonises well with his theology of revelation and multiple mediations.

An observation, however, could be made at this juncture. Notwithstanding his profound articulation of the horizontal dimension of the church as both the communal body of believers and the locus of Christ's revelation and reconciliation on earth in human history, Torrance is rather mute on how the church ought to live and do in the world of pluralism and secularism of which it situates. The silence is evidenced by a conspicuous lack of discussion in Torrance's corpus on relating the church as the mediation of divine grace and love to the earthly and fallen reality of which it speaks from. The insufficiency encourages suspicion that Torrance's ecclesiology is basically either overtly noetic or too occupied with Christ's vicariousness, despite his claims of the church to reveal and mediate God's love and grace in the world and to bring forth reconciliation between God and humanity in Christ. Is the disrelation symptomatic of dialectic tension?

The fact is the issue of church-in-the-world, or ecclesial praxis, is one no theologian serious about ecclesial mediation could afford to ignore. In alluding to Don Browning, Anderson brings to mind questions such as 'What should we do? And how should we live?' indeed provide critical point 'to which all theological reflection must return if it is to contribute toward a knowledge of God which guides

[41] *CAC1*, 117.

human life as well as thought.'[42] Without addressing the issue adequately, ecclesiology as a subject of theological reflection runs the risk of losing its prophetic voice of speaking authoritatively and relevantly to the life of the church in specific context. It creates, as Christoph Schwöbel says, a 'gap between the factual existence of the Church in society and the theological formulae in which its nature is expressed', and reflection of ecclesiology as an academic operation that is deprived of the social context of the church is 'unable to relate to the practical questions which face the Church in its struggle for survival in a society more and more shaped by a plurality of religious and quasi-religious world views.'[43] If the church is to fulfil steadfastly the function of mediation as Torrance has relentlessly argued, the manner of realising its essence and mission in the world is a crucial question that any astute theologian has to address. Torrance would probably concur without difficulty with Alvaro Quiroz Magaña when the latter says that a 'new praxis' is needed in order to respond faithfully to 'a word that constantly summons us to emerge, to take the road, to go on a pilgrimage to a new land, to take up the cross and follow Jesus.'[44]

The vital question is what type of ecclesiology is able to mediate realistically and faithfully the revelation of God in Christ in a world of deprivation? If Gunton is right in saying that 'The concrete means by which the Church becomes an echo of the life of the Godhead are all such as to direct the Church away from self-glorification to the source of its life in the creative and recreative presence of God to the world',[45] the challenge that awaits Luther at the crossroads of embracing *theologia crucis* instead of *theologia gloriae* is after all not in the remote past to us. Gerhard Forde, on commenting the thesis twenty-one of Heidelberg Disputation, says pointedly that theologians of glory fail to understand that 'there is no abstract theological solution' but only 'the cross itself and the subsequent proclamation of the word of the cross as a divine deed' to God's sovereignty.[46] Could the theology of the cross be the pilgrim's journey, one that Torrance may incline to take? What kind of ecclesiology

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[42] Ray S. Anderson, 'Reading T. F. Torrance as a Practical Theologian,' in *The Promise of Trinitarian Theology : Theologians in Dialogue with T.F. Torrance*, ed. Elmer M. Colyer (Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001), 176. See Don S. Browning, *A Fundamental Practical Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), 10-11.
[43] Christoph Schwöbel, 'The Creature of the Word: Recovering the Ecclesiology of the Reformers,' in *On Being the Church*, ed. Colin E. Gunton and Daniel W. Hardy (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1989), 117.
[44] Alvaro Quiroz Magaña, 'Ecclesiology in the Theology of Liberation,' in *Systematic Theology: Perspectives from Liberation Theology*, ed. Jon Sobrino and Ignacio Ellacuría (New York: Obris, 1996), 179.
[45] Gunton, 79.
[46] Gerhard O. Forde, *On Being a Theologian of the Cross* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 74-75.

would emerge from it? It seems that there is only one answer, at least according to Douglas Hall; 'the *theologia crucis* gives rise to an *ecclesia crucis*.' Alternatively put, it is 'to engender a movement---a people---that exists in the world under the sign of the cross of Jesus Christ: a movement and people called into being by his Spirit and being conformed to his person and furthering his work.'[47] Does it or does it not resonate and cohere inherently with that which Torrance has argued uncompromisingly about the church being God's people sent out into the world in the power of the Spirit to fulfil the mission of Christ as discussed? Thus, Torrance's ecclesiology on this note should not, at least, be adjudicated as ahistorical, although the issue of ecclesial praxis has not been addressed as sufficiently as one would expect. Having said that, given the embedded tension in Torrance's structure as discussed, it is not to disregard the susceptibility of giving in to the pressure of gravitating towards immediacy especially when the normative pattern of revelation and mediation is not adequately maintained. We, however, would argue otherwise that Torrance's ecclesial mediation does provide a good basis for its further revision and development as, essentially, Torrance himself is convinced that 'Knowledge of God takes place not only within the rational structure, but also within the personal and social structures of human life'.[48]

Word and Sacraments

The preceding discussion shows that Torrance's ecclesial mediation is indeed in line with his theology of revelation and multiple mediations. Notwithstanding the lack of ecclesial praxis, Torrance, particularly when the normative pattern of revelation and mediation is properly maintained, is capable of upholding the importance of the church in mediating divine revelation. As we turn to the ministry of the Word and sacraments, the question is whether Torrance is able to remain consistent in his arguments as that of the church. Thus, we would focus on *kerygma*, Baptism and the Holy Communion.

[47] Douglas John Hall, *The Cross in Our Context: Jesus and the Suffering World* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003), 137.
[48] *GR*, 188.

In a principal statement that arguably encapsulates the essence of the ministry of the Word in his thought, Torrance says,

> The saving revelation of God in Jesus Christ and the faithful reception and understanding of it by the apostles were incorporated together in the foundation of the Church, so that in the economic purpose of God the truth as it is in Jesus was made accessible to people in history only through the apostolic preaching and teaching of the Gospel and only in living continuity with their godly tradition in the Church.[49]

From the citation it is apparent that the ministry of the Word as both the human action of preaching and teaching of the Gospel is intimately associated with the apostolic foundation and tradition of the church. Although the work of the Spirit is not mentioned here, its import is implicit in the whole movement of translating the self-witness of Christ to witness to Christ in terms of preaching and teaching the Word by the apostles and the church. Our preceding discussion evidently argues a point that the activity of the Spirit is decisive and instrumental to Torrance in the fulfilment of the church as the body of Christ through administering the Word and sacraments. In fact, it would be a mistake to compartmentalise the work of the Spirit, the apostolic mission, and the ministry of the Word and sacraments in Torrance's understanding of the unfolding of Christ's revelation horizontally in human history as though they are not in one way or another closely related. Torrance himself is unequivocal that the communication and instruction of the Word of God in the body of Christ cannot be achieved without the communion of the Spirit.[50] The key, as we have argued, is that the Spirit has a significant role in enabling the reciprocal relation between Christ and the church so that the Word could take the specific form intended by Christ for the goal of proclamation to all humanity. 'That is what took place in the apostolic foundation of the church and in the apostolic formulation of the *kerygma*,' Torrance says, 'both as parts of one movement in which Christ's self-address to man evoked and inspired a response in word and deed which he assimilated into union with his own response to God and effected as the authoritative expression of his own

[49] *TF*, 30.
[50] *SF*, xxiii-xli. Especially from xxxix to xli, Torrance underlines the importance that 'Christian instruction can only achieve its end through the *demonstration of the Spirit*'. Kruger makes similar observation. He says that in the overall structure of Torrance's thought scripture, church and preaching go together in the communion of the Spirit. See Kruger, 251.

kerygma in the world.' Torrance continues, 'The apostolic proclamation of Christ was so geared into his self-proclamation that it was used by him as the shared and corporate medium of understanding and communication…. Thus through the apostolic witness and proclamation it was Christ himself who was at work testifying to the mighty acts whereby he had redeemed the world and offering himself as their Saviour and Lord.'[51]

It is noteworthy that by pivoting on the church centred in and controlled by Christ through the activity of the Spirit, Torrance endeavours to defend the fittingness of the ministry of the Word as the ordained medium in which divine revelation is mediated through the union and communion of human and divine action. Torrance's undergirding argument of the fittingness, as that of the church as discussed in the foregoing section, lies in being in union with Christ by the Spirit; 'it is through a union of the Church's *kerygma* with Christ's own *Kerygma* by the Spirit that the Church's *kerygma* is made to echo Christ's own self-proclamation', as Kye rightly remarks.[52] Even though it is in union with Christ by the Spirit that the preaching and teaching of the church locate the qualification of fittingness and source of efficacy, Torrance is adamant to maintain that the upholding of God's sovereignty in this regard does not relegate the participation and self-determination of the preachers and teachers as indispensable media of divine revelation; indisputably it is through their acts of proclamation and teaching that the mediation of Christ's revelation in human history is achieved from generation to generation. In alluding to the last chapter of the Gospel of Mark, Torrance claims, 'Here we have a statement about the relation between the Church's proclamation of Christ and the activity of Christ himself in that proclamation where, through their common objective and dynamic content, the proclamation of the Gospel in the name of Christ and Christ's own proclamation are one and the same.' 'That is the New Testament concept of the *kerygma*,' Torrance continues, 'in which proclamation is objectively and dynamically controlled by the reality proclaimed. Primarily, it is Christ's own *kerygma*, his self-proclamation, which through the Spirit he allows to be echoed and heard through the preaching of the Church, so that their *kerygma* about Jesus Christ is made one with him own *kerygma*.'[53] To Torrance the crux of the ministry of the Word lies in the conjoint participation of Christ and his church by the Spirit so that when the revelation of God

[51] *MC*, 92.
[52] Kye, 241.
[53] *STR*, 119.

in Christ is mediated in preaching and teaching, it is able to confront humanity with the power of God in the Spirit and to summon people to respond to Christ in faithful believing and following. Torrance says,

> According to St. Paul (1 Cor. 2:1) God's testimony, *martyrion*, takes place through proclamation (κήρυγμα). God's testimony, as we have seen, is defined concretely as Christ crucified, Power of God. *Kerygma* may be defined as the straightforward proclamation of this *martyrion* in such a way that the original *martyrion* actually takes place in the experience of the hearer. That is to say, the original event becomes event all over again through the power of the Spirit so that in *kerygma* a man encounter the living Christ, Christ crucified but risen.[54]

Torrance does not deny the fact that the proclamation of the Word on one level is mere human speech or articulation about God. However, *kerygma*, he claims, becomes the medium of divine revelation when, by the power of the Spirit, God bears witness to and authenticates it through Christ. It is noteworthy that in his endeavour to affirm the mediatingness of the medium, Torrance in fact says that '*kerygma* is revelation' by the power of the Spirit.[55] 'In itself *kerygma* is simply speech', Torrance elucidates, 'but it becomes the power of God---that is the great mystery: God manifest in the flesh. This is the treasure that we may possess in earthen vessels.'[56] Because *kerygma* becomes Christ's revelation through the dynamic activity of the Spirit, it therefore becomes 'sacramental preaching with an eschatological result' so that whenever the proclamation of the Word is carried out the original event of Christ's revelation becomes event all over again in the hearer. In a rare moment, Torrance turns to the Roman Catholic Church to substantiate his point. Torrance says,

> That is why we cannot reject outright the thought of *repetition* in the Roman Mass. In the teaching of the New Testament, however, this is not temporal repetition, but eschatological event. Thus there is also an element of truth in the Roman doctrine of the *opus operatum*, for the Word-deed of God, that becomes event and becomes flesh in the sacrament, is the creative Word, the active Word, the original Word-deed of God (cf. John 1:1 ff). It is that Word that is the *dynamis* in *kerygma*.[57]

From the argument it is evident that *kerygma* to Torrance cannot become a dispensable medium of divine revelation. On the contrary, its 'repetition', or

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[54] *CAC2*, 71-72.
[55] Ibid., 72.
[56] Ibid.
[57] Ibid., Author's italic. See Torrance's footnote.

continuity, is crucial in mediating the reality of Christ's revelation in human history. Torrance says, '*Kerygma* is not the proclamation of ideas or a bare message, but such a proclamation of Christ, the Word-Act of the living God, that by the Holy Spirit it becomes itself the actualisation of the Word-Act among men in salvation and judgment.' Thus, the 'Word of God is never idle. It always accomplishes its action upon man in the *Kerygma*.'[58] On this note, the eschatological dimension of *kerygma* is underscored. It has a dual significance corresponding to the *eschaton*. First, it is used by God as the medium of which God himself is able to intervene in human situation. It occurs in the church, as Torrance argues, 'where the age to come has already overtaken this age and overlaps it.' Second, notwithstanding the hearer is brought face to face with the *eschaton* through the proclamation of the Word, Torrance says that Christ has withdrawn visibly from human history but without being absent, so that 'the Word of the Gospel and the final Deed of God are partially held apart in eschatological reserve until the *Parousia* or the *Epiphaneia*.'[59] Because the age to come has yet fully arrived, Torrance underlines that Christ by sending the Spirit has instituted 'the ministry of the Word and Sacrament within history, whereby he continually nourishes, sustains, orders and governs his people on earth.'[60] From the arguments it is manifest that the ministry of the Word to Torrance is the vital medium through which the revelation of God in Christ by the Spirit is mediated continually in human history until the second advent of Christ.

We have discussed Torrance's thought on the ministry of the Word. Our discussion shows that Torrance, by maintaining the normative pattern of revelation and mediation, is able to affirm *kerygma* as the valid medium of divine self-disclosure without compromising the sovereignty of God or the importance of human participation. Thus, we may claim that Torrance's account of the ministry of the Word as the indispensable medium of revelation harmonises with his theology of revelation and multiple mediations. The question now is could the same be said of the ministry of the sacraments? Would Torrance build his case upon similar ground

[58] Ibid., 73. Torrance explicates the unity of the Word and Act of Christ in *kerygma* by saying that in 'Jesus Christ God's Word and God's Action are absolutely identical. He is the *eschatos* who confronts men in His own Person, in His teaching and in His work, with the final Word and Act of God, and demands absolute love and obedience. The situation has the urgency of finality, of salvation and judgment. It is that eschatological urgency that lies at the heart of *kerygma*.'
[59] Ibid. Thus, current age to Torrance is the age of *kerygma* in which the Word of God is proclaimed to all until the coming of the *eschaton*.
[60] *STR*, 121.

so that the media of the sacraments will not be finally effaced in revelation? To answer the questions we may turn first to baptism and then the Holy Communion.

The Sacraments

Torrance is unequivocal that baptism is to be interpreted in a way similar to that of *kerygma*,

> *Kerygma* refers to the proclamation of the Gospel, and yet not so much to the proclamation itself as to what is proclaimed, namely, Jesus Christ; not so much to the act of proclaiming as to the saving work of Christ. When the Gospel is proclaimed it is Christ Himself the crucified and risen Lord who is present and active for our salvation. Similarly in regard to Baptism, the New Testament is not interested so much in the outward rite as in what stands the rite; not so much in the subjective experience of the baptised as in the death and resurrection of Christ; and therefore it is not interested in the human minister but in the One into whose name we are baptised.[61]

It would easily be an oversight, if reading only from the citation, for one to conclude that the media are unimportant as to that which is mediated through them. The intent of Torrance, however, is clear when he affirms their validity by saying that 'This is not to say that the outward rites are dispensable; on the contrary, they are quite indispensable'.[62] The import in relation to baptism is particularly evident as Torrance primarily follows Calvin in emphasising it as *participatio Christi*; as Hunsinger comments, it means 'the baptised person was granted a share in Christ's own baptism in the Jordan, which he had undergone for the sake of sinners.'[63] 'For Jesus,' Torrance says, 'baptism meant that he was consecrated as the Messiah, and that he, the Righteous One, became one with us, taking upon himself our unrighteousness, that his righteousness might become ours. For us, baptism means that we become one with him, sharing in his righteousness, and that we are sanctified in him as members of the messianic people of God, compacted together in one Body in Christ.'[64] In other words, as the medium of divine revelation, baptism leads us to

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[61] *CAC2*, 127. Torrance underlines that the referential character of *kerygma* and baptism is like the *oikonomia* used in the New Testament which refers, on the one hand, to the divine dispensation by which the eternal purpose of God hid from the ages is now revealed, and, on the other hand, to the stewardship of that mystery which he has committed to the church. See *TRci*, 84.
[62] Ibid.
[63] George Hunsinger, 'The Dimension of Depth: Thomas F. Torrance on the Sacraments,' in *The Promise of Trinitarian Theology: Theologians in Dialogue with T.F. Torrance*, ed. Elmer M. Colyer (Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001), 139-40.
[64] *TRci*, 87.

and mediates to us what God in Christ has done for us and on our behalf in the economy of salvation. Torrance's argument in this regard resonates a point mentioned in our preceding chapter about the 'two-way traffic' trait of scripture in bringing Christ to us and us to Christ as he has directed in his self-revelation. However, notwithstanding the similarity, Torrance's discourse of baptism does not end as his scripture. The mediatedness of baptism is affirmed when Torrance underscores the careful appropriation of the term by the New Testament writers. Torrance says,

> It is significant that from the very beginning the Christian Church avoided the term *baptismos*, which is regularly used in Greek to denote a rite of religious ablution, and employed instead the term *baptisma*, which it may well have coined, with the intention of expressing Christian baptism in this objective sense…. This is the mystery of Christ and his Church which is being fulfilled in us who through the Spirit enter into the inheritance of Christ and are being made one Body with him… All this helps to make it clear that while *baptism is both the act of Christ and the act of the Church* in his Name, it is to be understood finally not in terms of what the Church does but in terms of what God in Christ has done, does do and will do for us in his Spirit.[65]

What concerns us here is Torrance's intent to safeguard the sovereignty of God through 'the act of Christ' without subverting the validity of baptism as the 'act of the Church', especially when both are treated inseparably as one through the work of the Spirit. As Torrance claims, 'There is *one baptism* and *one Body* through the *one Spirit*. Christ and his Church participate in the one baptism in different ways---Christ actively and vicariously as Redeemer, the Church passively and receptively as the redeemed Community.'[66] Torrance elucidates,

> Thus whenever the Church in obedience to the command of Christ baptises specific individual with water in the Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, it believes that Christ himself is present baptising with his Spirit, acknowledging and blessing the action of the Church as his own, fulfilling in the baptised what he has already done for them and making them share in the fruit of his finished work. While in this sense *baptism is both the act of Christ and the act of the Church, they may well be distinguished but may not be separated*, for their content, reality and power are the same… in the one vicarious *baptisma* of Christ.[67]

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[65] Ibid., 83-84. My italic. For detailed account of baptism in the New Testament, see *CAC2*, 106-25.
[66] Ibid., 87. Author's italic. Torrance explicates as well that it is in this light we are to understand the commission of Christ to the church to baptise in the name of the Trinity. As Torrance says, 'to baptise in the Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit' is to carry in it 'both a reference back to Jesus, own baptism in the Jordan and a reference forward to its complement in the baptism of the Church at Pentecost.' See *TRci*, 86.
[67] Ibid. My italic.

> That is why in the New Testament the ordinance of baptism and the vicarious baptism of Christ are spoken of so indivisibly that it is impossible to separate our understanding of the ordinance from what has been done for us in the birth, life and death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is precisely that *union or inseparable relation which is the very meaning of the sacrament* in which we are baptised with Christ's baptism, and why the sacrament is spoken of, not as *baptismos*, but as *baptisma*.[68]

Torrance's avowal of the inseparability of the act of Christ and the act of humanity in baptism comes to the foreground when he criticises Barth of separating water baptism from Spirit baptism. To Torrance we are faced with two choices in our approach towards baptism. First, it is to ague for a sacramental dualism between water-baptism and Spirit-baptism, and to locate the meaning of baptism not in the direct act of God but in the ethical act of the person who makes the baptismal decision as a way of response to what God has done for him and on his behalf. Second, it is to argue for a stronger unity of water-baptism and Spirit-baptism by emphasising the saving act of Christ through the Spirit in *baptisma*.[69] Given Torrance's theological propensity, the first choice of sacramental dualism is understandably outside his consideration. Although expressing a sense of regret that his theological mentor has indeed taken the first choice, Torrance, as Molnar observes, 'does not believe Barth actually fell into Gnostic dualism'.[70] Torrance says, '[T]his seems to me to be deeply inconsistent with his dynamic doctrine of the Trinity and the *opera ad extra* in creation and redemption as well as with his doctrine of the Incarnation according to which God himself has come to us within the space-time structure of our worldly existence and communicated himself personally to us there in his own living being and reality as God.'[71] Torrance's argument is aptly recapitulated by John Yocum, when he remarks that Barth has posited 'a stark choice' of understanding it as either the divine action or the human action, and 'having established the necessity of a choice, chooses the latter option.'[72] On commenting

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[68] Ibid., 88. My italic.
[69] Ibid., 99.
[70] Paul D. Molnar, 'The Eucharist and the Mind of Christ: Some Trinitarian Implications of T. F. Torrance's Sacramental Theology,' in *Trinitarian Soundings in Systematic Theology*, ed. Paul L. Metzger (London: T & T Clark, 2005), 176.
[71] *TRci*, 99-100. See as well the brief discussion in Thomas F. Torrance, *Karl Barth: Biblical and Evangelical Theologian* (Edinburgh : T & T Clark, 1990), 134-35. For study of Torrance's synthesis of Barth and Calvin's thoughts on baptism and the Eucharist, see George Hunsinger, 'The Dimension of Depth: Thomas F. Torrance on the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper,' *Scottish Journal of Theology* 54, no. 2 (2001): 155-76.
[72] John Yocum, *Ecclesial Mediation in Karl Barth* (Hampshire: Ashgate, 2004), xii-xiii, 138. For detailed treatment of Barth's understanding and development of baptism, see 'The Baptism Fragment', 135-70.

Torrance's disagreement, Molnar explains, 'Torrance suggests, as did Alasdair Heron, that because Barth saw Christ as the only sacrament, he separated our ethical behaviour from God's direct actions so that the sacrament was seen as our *response* to what God has done in Christ rather than as the inclusion of our response in his ongoing objective priestly mediation of us to God.'[73]

If to argue for a stronger unity of water-baptism and Spirit-baptism is the only way, Torrance avers with the intent to avoid the sacramental dualism that what is needed is to work out a proper understanding of the direct act of God in baptism in terms of the economic activity of the triune God. This is the ontological and epistemological foundation of Torrance's argument: 'Everything depends in the last analysis upon whether we believe in a God who really acts or not, and by a "God who really acts" is meant… the mighty living God who interacts with what he has made in such a way that he creates genuine reciprocity between us and himself within the space-time structures of existence in which he had placed us.'[74] On this note, the reciprocity between God and humanity according to Torrance is undergirded by the 'two-fold mode in Christ and in the Spirit'; '*in Christ*, for it is in hypostatic union that the self-giving of God really breaks through to man, when God becomes himself what man is and assumes man into a binding relation with his own being; and *in the Spirit*, for then the self-giving of God actualises itself in us as the Holy Spirit creates in us the capacity to receive it and lifts us up to participate in the union and communion of the incarnate Son with the heavenly Father.'[75] To put it succinctly, we may say that it is not to separate dualistically the divine action from the human action in baptism, but to pivot on their relation of union and communion of which God has established in Christ and continued to do so through the work of the Spirit in the church. Torrance argues,

> It is the objective unity of the two-fold operation of God the Father in Christ and in the Spirit which enables us to discern in the relation between the act of man and the act of God in baptism a genuine reciprocity between the self-giving of God and the responsive reception of man, yet one within which the divine self-giving remains transcendent and free, precisely as grace.[76]

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[73] Molnar, 177. Author's italic. See Alasdair I. C. Heron, *Table and Tradition: Toward an Ecumenical Understanding of the Eucharist* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1983), 156-57.
[74] *TRci*, 99-100.
[75] Ibid., 100-01. Author's italic.
[76] Ibid., 102. The reciprocity between the divine and human action through the work of the Spirit in terms of God's self-giving and our responsive receiving is important as well to the concept of baptism as the sign and seal of regeneration. Torrance underlines that the significance of baptism will be diluted if two primary facts of regeneration are missed. First, he says that the concept of regeneration

The reciprocal relation between God and humanity in *baptisma* as Torrance claims does not compromise the sovereignty of God. The primacy of God in divine self-disclosure is not taken captive within the reciprocity as if the act of humanity in responding to God in baptism could supersede the act of Christ. Baptism, as Torrance pointedly says, essentially 'starts from and rests upon the free ground of God's being and grace in Jesus Christ… his act of grace remains sovereignly free and is not trapped within a reciprocity between man and God that begins with man and ends with man.'[77] Although the decision of baptism is undoubtedly a personal one of the believer and the administration of it is a corporate one of the church, both to Torrance are possible only out of God's prevenient grace. Thus, baptism as a sacrament is not solely about what we can do but what God through Christ by the Spirit in his freedom, love and grace has done soteriologically for us and on our behalf. That, at its simplest, is the import of baptism to Torrance. Hunsinger says, 'Like Calvin, that is, he sees the sacraments as vehicles of testimony that impart the very Christ whom they proclaim (by the gracious operation of the Holy Spirit), as opposed to Barth, who insists on seeing them "ethically" as no more than a grateful human response to a prior divine grace not mediated or set forth by the sacraments themselves.'[78] In affirming the mediatedness of baptism, Torrance says conclusively,

> This approach to the doctrine of baptism in terms of the economic acts of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, cut behind the false problems of sacramental dualism and monism that have constantly troubled the Church.… If baptism is to be understood properly in this way within the saving operation of the economic Trinity, then the focus of attention is necessarily directed upon Jesus Christ himself, for it is only *in him* that God is incarnate and it is *through him* alone that the saving operation of God takes

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'applies first of all to Christ Himself, to His birth of the Spirit and to His resurrection from the dead. Christ is One in whom the regeneration of our humanity has already taken place.' Second, to Torrance, the concept of regeneration is applied by the New Testament to Christ's second return in power to judge the world and to give rise to a new creation. Although baptismal rite in itself does not regenerate, Torrance underlines that its mediatory role cannot be debased as it is 'in Baptism that our regeneration in Christ is declared, and shown forth, and promised; it is sacramentally enacted as an image and likeness of the birth and resurrection of Christ.' Thus, like the miracles of Jesus, Torrance says that sacraments, both baptism and the Eucharist, are prophetic signs that have to do with the renewal of life and saving of creation. 'As the Sacraments of God's interaction with our physical existence in Jesus Christ,' Torrance claims, 'they are the counterparts in our ongoing life to the deeds of grace and power in the historical life of Jesus…. As such, the Sacraments both call for and provide a response in which the interaction of the spiritual and the physical is exhibited here and now in anticipation of the new creation.' See *CAC2*, 131-32; *GR*, 161.

[77] Ibid., 103.

[78] Hunsinger, 142-43.

> concrete form in our creaturely existence, and therefore it is only through *our union with him* that we share in all that God has done for us.[79]

As we end with the note of God's grace in baptism, we may ask if the intent to 'cut behind the false problems of sacramental dualism' is also behind Torrance's argument of the Holy Communion. We would now examine Torrance's thought on the Eucharist to ascertain the answer.

Torrance regards St. Paul's dictum 'Christ, our paschal lamb, has been sacrificed' (1Cor. 5:7) as the centre of a proper understanding of the Eucharist. Torrance says that in the act of instituting the Lord's Supper just before his crucifixion, Jesus, in linking his passion with the consecration of the bread and wine, has constituted himself as the mystery of the Last Supper and transformed it into the Eucharist of the church. Thus, 'the mystery of the Eucharist is not any mystery of the Eucharist itself but the paschal mystery of Christ which he set forth in the Eucharist for the participation of all who believe in him'.[80] To Torrance the mystery is unfolded in the eucharistic celebration, a time when the reality of Christ's revelatory presence is mediated by the work of the Spirit.[81] 'We believe that when the Church celebrates the Eucharist in the name of Jesus Christ', Torrance says, 'it is Christ himself who is really present pouring out his Spirit upon us, drawing us into the power of his vicarious life, in death and resurrection, and uniting us with his self-oblation and self-presentation before the face of the Father where he ever lives to make intercession for us.'[82] Thus, Torrance is unequivocal that the Eucharist fulfils its purpose only when it refers beyond itself to the paschal mystery which is the revelatory reality of the Mediator, the actuality of Christ's high-priestly duty in self-oblation and self-presentation. Torrance says,

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[79] *TRci*, 104. Author's italic.
[80] Ibid., 107. For detailed account of the Lord's Supper as the Eucharist, see *CAC2*, 148-51.
[81] *MC*, 92. Thus, Torrance says that 'the celebration of the Lord's Supper means that we through the Spirit are so intimately united to Christ, by communion in his body and blood, that we participate in his self-consecration and self-offering to the Father made on our behalf and in our place'.
[82] *TRci*, 107. To Torrance, the presence of Christ by the work of the Spirit mediated through the sacraments of the Eucharist and *baptisma* is similar to that of *kerygma*. Torrance says that 'the holy Sacraments which He has appointed to accompany the preaching of the Gospel as a means to beget faith, to help our weakness, and actually to convey Himself to us so that we have living communion with Him, and with Him are raised up in the fellowship and adoration to the face of our heavenly Father.' The close relation between the proclamation of the Word and the administration of the two sacraments in terms of mediating Christ by the Spirit in Torrance's thought could be traced back to the influence of Calvin, especially when the latter claims that the sacraments have the same office as the Word in offering to us Christ, and through him the treasures of heavenly grace. See Thomas F. Torrance, *When Christ Comes and Comes Again* (1957), 82. Hereafter abbreviated as *WCCA*. Also see *Institution*, IV.14.17 and Kruger 261-64.

> Eucharist is regarded in a dimension of depth in which we are directed to look for its meaning not in itself as such, but in the paschal mystery of Christ himself, for then the teaching of Jesus about his coming down from heaven as the bread of life and the need to eat his flesh and drink his blood if we are to live by him as he lives by the Father, and the teaching of the Epistle to the Hebrews about the nature and mission of Christ Jesus as the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, through whom we may come boldly to the throne of grace, have direct and profound bearing upon the Eucharist. In this perspective the Eucharist by its very nature points us beyond itself to its constitutive reality in Jesus Christ himself, to the saving mystery which he is in the unity of his person and work and word as the one Mediator between God and man.[83]

As the medium it functions as a sign, not unlike the pointing-beyond-itself-to of *kerygma* and *baptisma* as discussed, leading to and mediating Christ's revelation. As Torrance says, 'The Lord's Supper as celebrated in the Church is a sign with a meaning; it is signitive, pointing beyond itself to what Christ had done and does for us'.[84] A twofold argument of Torrance's sacramental signification may be noted. First, with regard to the signifying, or the referential character, Torrance, as his discourse of the 'Body of Christ', underlines that 'the relation of the sign to what it signifies as involving neither a relation of identity nor a relation of difference, but of analogy involving something of identity and something of difference.' Second, 'this relation of sign to the matter signified depends entirely upon the nature of the matter, so that the analogical relation is determined by the nature of Christ Himself, who is the substance or the matter signified.'[85] One should not overlook that by itself neither the sign nor the analogical relation tells us anything substantive about the Eucharist. To Torrance they are basically bare and void of material content unless in union with Christ. By saying that it does not mean that Torrance is here elevating the matter signified and relegating the sign, or the medium. The crux is only in union with Christ the medium as sign has a valid role to play in divine revelation. As the 'true sign' it then has in itself something of that which it signifies. Torrance elucidates, 'In the ordinance of Christ, through His command and promise, the outward sign and the inward reality belong together as form and content of the sacramental communion; although the form is not the content… nevertheless it is the form in which the content is communicated to us'. To affirm and defend the mediatory validity, Torrance

[83] Ibid., 108. See *MC*, 90.
[84] *CAC2*, 141.
[85] Ibid.

makes an exceptional remark that when the outward sign or form 'is neglected or repudiated the inner content inevitably goes with it.'[86]

Torrance's argument of the inseparability of the eucharistic celebration and the church as one valid medium of divine revelation again evidences the point. '[T]he Eucharist is both the act of Christ and the act of the Church in his name' although 'in the nature of the case the act of the Church is one which serves the act of Christ and directs us away from itself to Christ.'[87] 'Attention must be focused, therefore, beyond all religious and ethical acts,' yet Torrance insists, 'indispensable as they may be'.[88] In addition, by stressing that 'the Eucharist is both the act of Christ and the act of the Church in his name', Torrance is here emphasising as well the central two-fold significance of the mediation of the Eucharist. First, by upholding the normative pattern of the union and communion of divine and human action that safeguards both the primacy of God and human participation in the eucharistic celebration, Torrance attempts to address the sacramental dualism that to him has troubled the worship and prayer of the Western church. Torrance's intent is evident in 'The Mind of Christ in Worship: The Problem of Apollinarianism in the Liturgy',[89] a magisterial paper according to Gunton provides much food for thought. The thesis, as Gunton aptly pinpoints, is that 'the human Christ has effectively been written out of the liturgy of the Western Church', and the theme here 'is taken up of the human priesthood of the ascended Christ present in the worship of the Church.'[90] To address the Apollinarian tendency and to bring to the foreground the essentiality of the humanity of Christ, Torrance accentuates the priestly duty of Christ and argues

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[86] Ibid.
[87] *TRci*, 107.
[88] Ibid., 108. One key factor undergirds Torrance's adamant of the indispensability of the sacraments is that the media are the supernatural act of Christ clothed in the natural act of church. In other words, the Eucharist and baptism are the earthly means or vessels that contain the miracle of God in Christ, and thus they are significant as media of divine revelation. According to Torrance, two types of miracles can be found in scripture. 'The first kind of miracle,' he says, 'we see in the miraculous acts of healing recorded in the Gospels, such as this, in which beyond the power of man and beyond the power of any human science'. The sacraments, however, belong to the second type of miracle which, according to Torrance, 'are also signs and wonders, but in them God always makes use of natural forms such as water and bread and wine. They are no less supernatural, for it is God's creative Word that is at work in them, but at work upon us under natural veil of water, bread and wine, in such a way that while water remains water, and bread and wine remain bread and wine, even when consecrated to this holy use, in and through them Jesus Christ crucified and risen comes to us and communicates Himself to us with all His saving power and grace, and blesses us with the gift of His Holy Spirit.' *WCCA*, 82-83; *STR*, 150.
[89] Ibid., 139-214.
[90] Colin Gunton, 'Being and Person: T. F. Torrance's Doctrine of God,' in *The Promise of Trinitarian Theology : Theologians in Dialogue with T.F. Torrance*, ed. Elmer M. Colyer (Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001), 132.

unequivocally that although 'the Eucharist is the act of the Church in his name and is also a human rite, it must be understood as act of prayer, thanksgiving and worship, i.e., as essentially *eucharistic* in nature, but as act in which through the Spirit we are given to share in the vicarious life, faith, prayer, worship, thanksgiving and self-offering of Jesus Christ to the Father, for in the final resort it is Jesus Christ himself who is our true worship.'[91] In other words, as Molnar succinctly states, the eucharistic worship and prayer to Torrance are directed 'through Christ the one Mediator to the Father so that we pray not only *in* and *through* Christ but *with* Christ.'[92] Torrance elucidates,

> Since the Son of God was made Priest in that he was made man, without ceasing to be God, he fulfils his priesthood as one who receives as well as one who *offers* prayer. Since Christ is not twofold but indivisibly one, the worship of our souls and the confession of our faith are offered *to him* as well as through him and by him to God the Father… since he is God become man, who in becoming man was made Priest, it is humanity which is the sphere of his priesthood, and it is the fulfilment of his priestly ministry as man offering himself on our behalf which becomes the focus of our worship of the Father.[93]

To use the language of John McLeod Campbell, Torrance says that it is the presentation of 'the mind of Christ' to the Father because what God accepts as our true worship is Christ himself who remains as the Priest and the Sacrifice, the Offerer and the Offering.[94] The claim of Torrance does not devalue the unique human act of worship of both the church and believers; it in fact brings to light the truism that only when in union with Christ by the Spirit our participation of worship in, through and with the High Priest finds its true and ultimate fulfilment. Thus, 'the Eucharist is not to be regarded as independent act on our part in response to what God has already done for us in Christ', a point of caution against Barth's sacramental dualism by Torrance. It, however, should be regarded as 'within the circle of the life of Christ', as Campbell says, to which human action is assimilated by the Spirit to the acknowledgment of all the Father has already fulfilled in the humanity of Christ in our place and on our behalf. On this note, Torrance argues that 'the Eucharist, while

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[91] *TRci*, 109. Author's italic. Torrance underlines that in the context of worship the sacraments bring forth the importance that liturgical language and activity derive their true forms only through assimilation to the vicarious life and work of Jesus Christ. Genuine worship occurs when liturgical language and activity exhibit in themselves the 'conformity to the normative pattern of worship in the humanity of Christ in so far as they make room for Him and direct us to Him as the actualised essence and core of man's true worship of God.' *GR*, 159.
[92] Molnar, 178. Author's italic.
[93] *TRci*, 175-76. Author's italic.
[94] Ibid., 139.

being the worship of the men on earth, is essentially a participation in the worship of the heavenly sanctuary which Jesus Christ their ascended High Priest renders to the Father in the oblation of his endless life, for it is worship in the same Spirit by whom we are made one with the Son as he is one with the Father, in whom we have assess to the Father, and through whom we are taken up into the eternal communion of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.'[95] Because the Eucharist is interpreted in the context of 'prayer, thanksgiving and worship', Torrance underlines that it is closer to *kerygma* than *baptisma* in terms of repetition and continuity. Torrance says,

> The two Sacraments of the Gospel enshrine together the two essential 'moments' of our participation in the new creation, while we are still implicated in the space and time of this passing world. Baptism is the Sacrament of our once and for all participation in Christ, and may be spoken of as the Sacrament of Justification, which is not to be repeated. The Eucharist is the Sacrament of our continuous participation in Christ and may be spoken of as the Sacrament of Sanctification, which is regularly to be repeated, until Christ comes again.[96]

Torrance's argument that is christologically and therefore trinitarianly oriented is regarded significant by Gunton because it pointedly addresses the neglect of the Holy Spirit and the underplaying of the human life and ministry of Jesus especially after his ascension.[97] Molnar affirms likewise and says that 'By focusing on "*God as Man* rather than upon God in Man", Torrance embraces a high Christology which concentrates on the humanity of the incarnate Son of God and a view of Eucharistic worship and life "in which the primacy is given to the priestly mediation of Jesus Christ"'.[98]

This leads us to the second significance of the eucharistic mediation that Torrance regards as the presence of the 'whole Christ'. On this note, Torrance reminds us that the inner relations of the incarnate Son who takes up human mortality and stands between the Father and humanity as the Mediator cannot be overlooked; as the presence is the presence of 'the incarnate, crucified, risen and ascended Son, is in himself in respect both of his activity from the Father towards mankind and of his

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[95] *TRci*, 109-10. See *MC*, 89-90

[96] *STR*, 150. Notwithstanding the variation, Torrance claims that *kerygma*, *baptisma* and the Eucharist in their totality expresses the core of the ontological and eschatological relation that is embodied within the crucified, risen and ascended Lord. For Torrance's discourse of the sacramental and eschatological relation to Christ, see *STR*, 148-58; *MC*, 91.

[97] Gunton, 132.

[98] Molnar, 185. Author's italic.

activity from mankind towards the Father'.[99] 'It is in this union and communion with Christ the incarnate Son who represents God to us and us to God that the real import of the Lord's Supper becomes disclosed, for in eating his body and in drinking his blood we are given participation in his vicarious self-offering to the Father.'[100] That is to say, to Torrance, the inner relations of Christ in relation to both the Father and humanity as demonstrated in his two-fold movement of mediation (see chapter one) undergird the meaning of eucharistic sacrifice. However, notwithstanding 'neither is what it is without the other', Torrance underlines with regard to the eucharistic act of remembrance that it is the Godward aspect which is prominent. As noted earlier, the priority of God here 'is determined by the integral and essential place we give to the mind and will of Jesus in his divine-*human* agency in fulfilling his work of priestly self-oblation to the Father and in our union with him in body, mind and will in which we offer Christ eucharistically to the Father through prayers and thanksgiving in his name as our only true worship.'[101] Thus, as the church celebrates the Eucharist, Torrance could say that the 'whole Christ' is 'savingly and creatively present in his mediatorial agency… blessing what we do on earth at his command and accepting it as his own act done in heaven.'[102]

The real presence of Christ in the celebration of the Eucharist is an unquestionable reality to Torrance. He calls it the *eucharistic parousia* because it is in distinction to Christ's first advent in the past and his second coming in the future.[103] A question one may ask in responding to Torrance's *eucharistic parousia* is how the real presence of Christ is actually made present through the celebration of the Eucharist. Torrance's answer, if it is acceptable, is that it is only 'explicable from the side of God, in terms of his creative activity which by its very nature transcends any kind of explanation which we can offer.' 'But,' he avers, 'it is nevertheless the real presence (*parousia*) of the whole Christ, not just the presence of his body and blood, nor just the presence of his Spirit or Mind, but the presence of the actual Jesus

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[99] *TRci*, 109.
[100] Ibid., 111.
[101] Ibid., 118. Author's italic.
[102] Ibid., 109. Author's italic.
[103] *CAC2*, 170-71. By underpinning the distinctiveness of the *eucharistic parousia*, Torrance is not saying that it is unrelated to the first or the second advent of Christ. He clearly identifies the close relation between them when he says that the Eucharist is bound to historical time and space, and it 'reaches out into the past, to the death of Christ…[and] reaches out beyond the present into the future, and becomes the means whereby the Church in the present is brought under the power of the advent of Christ.' Thus, the coming of Christ in the Eucharist to Torrance may be said to be the *parousia* in between the first and the last. See *STR*, 148-50.

Christ, crucified, risen, ascended, glorified, in his whole, living and active reality and in his identity as Gift and Giver.'[104] It is a presence that is 'objectively grounded in *the presence of God to himself*, and such is the profoundest and most intensive kind of presence there could ever be'. Thus, 'it is impossible for us to construe the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist in terms of anything we can analyse naturally in this world.'[105] Torrance although is adamant that the *eucharistic parousia* is beyond the elements of the Eucharist, he endeavours not to shift our focus away but from and through them to their real ground in the whole paschal mystery of Christ that finally gives them their basis and meaning. The significant shift of attention is to avoid the 'fore-shortening [of] the meaning of the Eucharist by detaching it as a liturgical event from the objective reality with which it is integrated, and thus of phenomenalising it as something enshrining a hidden meaning or mystery in itself.'[106] Torrance's effort is consequential in the light of his intent to overcome what he perceives as the pitfall of dualism and phenomenalism in the Roman Catholic and Protestant understanding of the Eucharist. Torrance says pointedly,

> As we have seen difficulties began to arise in the understanding of the sacrament as soon as they were interpreted within the radical dualism… whenever the Eucharist has been set within a dualist context, whether that be Augustinian-Neoplatonic, Augustinian-Aristotle or Augustinian-Newtonian, its meaning tends to be found either in the rite itself and its performance or in the inward and moral experience of the participant, for then the Eucharist is regarded as a holy mystery in itself enshrining and guaranteeing the divine mystery of the Church in the host, or as the appointed ordinance which occasions and stimulates deeper spiritual consciousness and awareness in believers.[107]

To Torrance the indubitable outcome of interpreting the Eucharist in any form of dualism or phenomenalism is the separation of God from the world and the disjunction of the Gift and the Giver. When the Gift is no longer seen as being identical with the Giver, the real presence of Christ, as Torrance argues, is rendered impossible because the inherent oneness of the Gift and the Giver in the Eucharist is fractured. Although the Gift when separated from the Giver may still be able to be

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[104] *TRci*, 119.
[105] Ibid., 121. Author's italic.
[106] Ibid., 122. The sift of focus to the centrality of Christ in the Eucharist is crucial if it is to remain faithful as the appropriate medium God has ordained to mediate the *eucharistic parousia*. Together with *baptisma*, Torrance underscores that both are sacraments precisely because they are the 'sacraments of the Word made flesh.' Thus, they 'do not have existence or reality independently of the Word. To make them self-sufficient and independent of the Word would be to take away their sacramental character, for it would deny to them their element of mystery'. See *CAC2*, 164.
[107] Ibid., 130-31. For detailed criticism, see 123-32.

taken as the grace or the body and blood of Christ, it has basically degenerated into a created intermediary between God and humanity; a sort of 'substitute-Christ' standing in between the church and God. In a substantive statement, Torrance says,

> This is not to say that God does not communicate himself to us through created mediations… but that when the created mediations became through refraction merely intermediate between God and us, then in the last resort Jesus Christ is held back from us and remains at a distance. Thus when the relation between the Giver and the Gift is broken or refracted in this way we are thrown back either on the Eucharist itself as enshrining the Gift or upon ourselves as receivers over against the Giver. The former is the Catholic tendency, in concern for the real presence of the body and blood of Christ, an objectifying concentration on the Gift which comes to be thought of as inhering in the Eucharist as such, constituting it the centre which absorbs our attention and devotion. The latter is the Protestant tendency, in concern for personal encounter with Christ, an awareness of ourselves as receivers of divine grace which comes to be thought of in terms of God's creating in us a loving response to what he has done for us, but in which God in Christ has not come all the way to us in a fully real *self*-communication to us at our creaturely level.[108]

Torrance is confident that the way to overcome the sacramental dualism and phenomenalism is to return to the objective reality of Christ's presence that upholds the unity and oneness of the Giver and the Gift in the Eucharist. Torrance is unequivocal that such complete presence of God's self-giving in Christ that is mediated by the Eucharist has to be taken as the fruit of the activity of the Spirit in creating for us a relation of union and communion. Essentially, it is by the Spirit who 'comes to us from the Father through the Son and who gives us access through the Son to the Father' that the real presence of Christ as both the Giver and the Gift in the Eucharist becomes finally 'the most exalted kind, one grounded in the real presence of God to himself.'[109]

We have thus far argued that Torrance, in building his understanding of the Lord's Supper, has remained steadfast to the normative pattern of revelation and mediation. When he detects the problematic interpretations of the Eucharist by the Roman Catholic and evangelical churches, instead of relegating the mediatedness of the medium, Torrance stays in line with what has been built theologically for *kerygma* and *baptisma*, and argues consistently against the truncation of the paschal mystery by asserting the importance of the real and complete presence of Christ in the

[108] Ibid., 132. Author's italic. At the heart of Torrance's argument lies the pivotal point that the eucharistic proclamation in fact refers to the divine action of God's salvation in Christ which cannot be completely swallowed up by the human action of celebration without distorting its meaning and significance. See *CAC2*, 180-81.
[109] Ibid.

Eucharist. Thus, together with his discourse against the Apollinarian tendency of eucharistic worship, we may say conclusively that Torrance's arguments of the Eucharist as the vital medium of divine revelation corroborates his overall theology of revelation and multiple mediations. Before we move on to the creation, we may register a note that the Word and sacraments to Torrance indeed are indispensable media 'ordained by God and were to be regarded as the provision he had made for the way in which they were to respond to him' in divine revelation.[110]

Creation

The purpose of this section is to discuss Torrance's thought on the creation as an essential medium of divine self-disclosure. We would examine the nature of the mediation and the subject of natural theology of which it entails. We attempt to argue that Torrance's discourse of the creation-mediatedness sits consistently well with his theological framework of revelation and multiple mediations.

The importance of the contingent creation as the valid medium of divine self-disclosure cannot be undermined in Torrance's theological scheme. Its validity is evident in Torrance's claim that 'theological science, like natural science, cannot be pursued scientifically without being committed to a fundamental attitude to the universe'.[111] The truism of divine self-disclosure to Torrance is that it does not take place apart from the medium of the created order of space and time of which humanity belongs. Torrance says,

> Since we ourselves are members of the universe, it is only within that contingent and semantic reference of the universe to the Creator that we may develop knowledge of God that is, within the space and time which God has brought into being with universe as bearers of its rational order and through which he makes himself known to us and summons us to intelligent relation toward himself. Any attempt to explicate knowledge of God outside of or apart from those structures of space and time is inevitably and essentially irrational.[112]

Thus, in theological science, Torrance claims,

[110] *MC*, 89.
[111] *DCO*, 1.
[112] *RST*, 36.

> Neither the doctrine of creation nor the doctrine of the incarnation will allow theology to detach itself from, far less despise, natural or human science in which man is set by God to the task of exploring, and bringing to word, the order and harmony of the universe and all that takes place within it, for the universe is the sphere in which the believer glorifies and praises God the Creator, as well as the medium in and through which God makes himself known to man.[113]

It would be helpful for the cause of clarity to pin down at this juncture the fundamental ideas that undergird Torrance's understanding of the mediatedness of the creation. First, the created world is one of a harmonious system characterised by multiple structures of existence. In alluding to the classical Christian doctrine of creation, Torrance says, 'One God, the Father Almighty, is the Creator of heaven and earth… while the incarnate Son or Logos, through whom all things were made and in whom they hold together, is the central and creative source of all order and rationality within the created universe'.[114] Second, as the work of God's creation, the created reality is essentially contingent and rational. In following the Judaeo-Christian idea of *creatio ex nihilo*,[115] Torrance argues that the creation by itself is 'not self-sufficient or ultimately self-explaining but is given a rationality and reliability in its orderliness which depend on and reflect God's own eternal rationality and reliability.'[116] In the light of its contingent createdness, the creation ought to be given due attention if, as Torrance says, 'we are to have rational knowledge of God through the medium of space and time where he communicates himself to us, but even if we are to investigate the contingent processes of nature and discover their laws as far as they may be disclosed to us.'[117] Torrance's advocacy, as Roland Spjuth remarks, primarily builds on the conviction that contingency and rationality are united in the harmonious created order.[118] Third, God's relation to the created order is neither one of necessity nor arbitrariness, but freedom deriving out of love.[119] Because the creation is contingent upon God and his freedom, 'it is given a contingent freedom of its own, grounded in the transcendent freedom of God and maintained through his free interaction with the universe.' However, in distinction to God's freedom, the contingent freedom of the creation is limited. Torrance elucidates, 'Freedom in the

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[113] *STR*, 179. See *DCO*, 64.
[114] *DCO*, 2.
[115] See *TF*, 95-98.
[116] *DCO*, vii-viii.
[117] Ibid., 3-4. See *GG*, 54-57; *TF*, 102-04.
[118] Roland Spjuth, *Creation, Contingency and Divine Presence in the Theologies of Thomas F. Torrance and Eberhard Jüngel* (Lund: Lund University Press, 1995), 107.
[119] *CFM*, 82-83.

contingent universe is limited, but not less freedom because it is limited, for that which limits its freedom, the transcendent freedom of God, is the ground of its freedom as contingent. That is to say, limited freedom of this kind is the freedom proper to limited and contingent being, for it is inseparably bound up with its contingent rationality.'[120] Although it is limited, it embraces inexhaustible possibilities as it reposes continually upon God's unlimited freedom. An unlimited contingent freedom would basically be an inherent contradiction to Torrance. With these undergirding ideas in mind, Torrance is able to claim scientifically and theologically that,

> That is the universe to which we ourselves belong, with the structure of which we share in the distinctive structure of our own human being, so that we find our rationality intimately connected with its rationality and as open to what is beyond us as the universe itself to the ultimate source and ground of all that is in the unlimited reality and rationality of the Creator.[121]

Thus,

> What confronts us is an inner correlation between the structure of human knowledge and the structure of the world known by man, for while the universe unfolds its structure in coordination with the scientific inquiries of man, man himself develops along with the disclosure of the structured universe around him.[122]

To address the question how the creation as the medium actually mediates the self-disclosing reality and rationality of God, Torrance finds the realist epistemology of Einsteinian-Polanyian science helpful in providing the needed apparatus, in particular the concept that the multi-levelled structure of scientific knowledge indeed corresponds to the stratified structure of objective reality. On this note, while Einstein postulates the stratified structure of individual science into at least three levels and Polanyi advocates the hierarchical structure of all sciences, the difference between them does not disturb Torrance. In fact, Torrance regards their works complemental and often uses them correspondingly in building his arguments. The appropriation is manifest when Torrance underlines that 'each science reveals a stratified structure of at least three layers or levels, in additional to that of pre-

[120] *DCO*, 4-5. Torrance underlines that 'it was this doctrine of the freedom of the creation contingent upon the freedom of God which liberated Christian thought from the tyranny of the fate, necessity, and determinism which for the pagan mind was clamped down upon creaturely existence by the inexorably cyclic processes of a self-sufficient universe.' See *GG*, 57-60.
[121] Ibid., 20.
[122] *TCFK*, 85.

scientific experience and thought, the physical, the theoretical and the meta-theoretical (which has been Einstein's principal interest), but with the fact that the various sciences themselves, ranging from physicals and chemistry to the humanities and theology can be regarded as constituting a hierarchical structure of levels of inquiry which are open upwards into wider and more comprehensive systems of knowledge but are not reducible downwards (which has been of special interest to Polanyi).'[123] By appropriating their arguments, Torrance intends to achieve the objective of laying the scientific foundation that investigative events, either within a particular science or a collective of sciences, become coherent and intelligible only by referring them to a higher hierarchical level. That is to say, from the side of epistemic knowing, scientific understanding of investigative events is often attained by the introduction of an additional factor from above the original level; 'a dimension of depth involving cross-level reference'.[124] It is in this mode of multi-dimensional perspective that, according to Torrance, particularly in theological science, a profounder knowing of the object is achieved through the human action of scientific inquiry and the divine action of self-disclosure; as Sue Patterson remarks, 'For Torrance, contingent worldly rationality necessarily reveals and is revealed by transcendent divine rationality.'[125]

One important argument Torrance makes with regard to the principle of hierarchical structure of knowledge is that it is not a theoretical abstraction imposing upon the creation like the old school of Cartesian or Kantian epistemology. On the contrary, he claims that the concept 'is increasingly being forced on scientific thought under the constraint of the intrinsic rationality of nature'.[126] Alternatively put, the universe in Torrance's view is indeed a multi-levelled complex of rational order. It is 'a stratified structure, for we have to do not only with levels of knowledge but with different levels of existence or reality.'[127] Torrance encapsulates the mediation of the creation in the following assertion,

> [W]ithin the universe itself we must surely operate with the principle of directive control between the many levels of order which, as we have seen, characterise the stratified structure of the universe. Each level remains 'indeterminate' or 'uncertain' or 'incomplete' in such a way that it is open at its boundary conditions to external

[123] *STR*, 188.
[124] Ibid., 188-89.
[125] Sue Patterson, *Realist Christian Theology in a Postmodern Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge, 1999), 14.
[126] *DCO*, 102.
[127] *STR*, 190.

> direction from another level…. Hence, we may hold as a general principle that within the coherent structure of the universe the 'lower' levels of reality disclose the full measure of their proper order when the 'higher' levels interact creatively with them, and conversely that through the interaction of the 'higher' levels with the 'lower' the latter are given direction and purpose within the meaningful organisation of the multi-levelled complex of the universe.[128]

Torrance is in congruence with Polanyi with regard to the principle of hierarchical structure of the universe. To him Polanyi's principle has laid the crucial foundation for the discovery of the universe as an intrinsic intelligibility of a deepening dimension that is both independent of our *a priori* presupposition and beyond our finite comprehension; it evokes a sense of transcendental awe in us as we are confronted and overwhelmed by its indefinite capacity of compelling self-disclosure.[129] On this note, scientific inquiry as human action of the normative pattern of revelation and mediation must move away from the traditional flat understanding of the natural world to one that is concerned with the complex relations between things and events at different levels within the objective reality. While Torrance baptises Einsteinian-Polanyian principles in theological science, he is not unaware of the dissimilarity between science and theology. Torrance says, 'Here, of course, we have to reckon with a considerable difference between the kind of knowledge that obtains in physical science, for the created universe does not disclose or declare itself to us as God does'.[130] Although in science we do speak of nature disclosing itself to our inquiry and experiment, Torrance is unequivocal that it in fact is silent in relation to God's self-revelation to humanity through his Son by the Spirit. Essentially, God communicates himself with us through Jesus Christ in such a dynamic way that no created order can compare. '[God] is not dumb but supremely eloquent in his divine Being, characterised by what Anselm used to speak of as *inima locutio apud Summam Substantiam*.'[131] Thus, the being that confronts theology is the Subject-being and not just the Object-being in natural science.[132] Nevertheless, notwithstanding the difference, Torrance is adamant that the common ground the two disciplines share cannot be undermined. He says conclusively,

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[128] *DCO*, 127-28.
[129] *STR*, 191. Torrance says, 'As the universe becomes progressively disclosed to our scientific inquiries it is found to be characterised by an intrinsic intelligibility of an ever deepening dimension which far outrages our power of comprehension, invoking from us awe and wonder.'
[130] *RST*, 138.
[131] *CDG*, 87.
[132] See *RST*, 138-39.

> However we consider it, it seems clear that theological science and natural science operate within the same world, and within the same medium, the medium of space and time, which are the bearers of contingent order or intelligibility in which all created realities share. Within that medium, natural science is concerned to explore the stratified structure of contingent existence, and theological science inquires of God their Creator who reveals himself through them.[133]

The discussion of the similarity and difference between science and theology leads us to the heart of the subject of natural theology that not only marks Torrance's reformative understanding, but also distinguishes his approach from that of his theological mentor. In the preface of an important work, *Space, Time and Resurrection*, Torrance recalls his last conversation with Barth about Barth's persistent rejection of an independent natural theology and the possibility of a workable basis for the subject in the light of modern science.[134] Torrance believes that if a deep natural connection exists between science and theology, 'that common basis surely be the proper ground for a natural theology.'[135] However, Torrance is unambiguous that should there be a viable reconstruction, it can only be on the basis of a restored ontology in which we function with a realist epistemology of integrating form and being within the contingent, intelligible and multi-levelled-structure universe. In distinction to some critics who, according to Torrance, have erroneously averred that Barth's objection is based on 'some form of Marcionite dualism' or 'a scepticism coupled with a false fideism', he states that it in fact rests upon an immense stress of God's dynamic interaction in creation and upon the refusal to accept 'natural reason' could alone limit God's self-revelation to humanity.[136] On theological ground, if our knowledge of God as Trinity, as Barth says, is made possible only through Jesus Christ, natural theology indubitably has no place in theology as it leads not to the Being of the Trinity but some Being of God in general. Torrance underscores,

> Natural theology by its very operation abstracts the existence of God from his act, so that if it does not begin with deism, it imposes deism upon theology. If really to know God through his saving activity in our world is to know him as Trinity, then the doctrine of the Trinity belongs to the very groundwork of knowledge of God from the very start, which calls in question any doctrine of God as the One God

[133] *RET*, 30.
[134] *STR*, ix-x.
[135] *GG*, 76.
[136] Ibid., 87.

> gained apart from his trinitarian activity---but that is the kind of knowledge of God that is yielded in natural theology of the traditional kind.[137]

Barth underlines the importance for every scientific discipline to develop specific method of inquiry appropriate to the nature of its investigative object.[138] Theology as an *a posteriori* science therefore necessarily involves the questioning of all presuppositions and structures of thoughts independent of or antecedent to its own operation. 'This is why,' Torrance says, 'Barth makes so much of the epistemological implications of justification by grace alone, for it forces upon us relentless questioning of all we thought we knew beforehand… in such a way that in the last resort theology is thrown back wholly upon the nature and activity of God for the justification or verification of our concepts and statements about him.'[139]

Torrance notes that Barth in fact does not reject natural theology on the ground of its argumentation or rational structure, but its independent character. When Barth rejects natural theology as a *praeambula fidei*, he is rejecting it as an independent epistemological system antecedent to actual knowledge of God that is revealed in Jesus Christ.[140] The main problem of independent or traditional natural theology according to Torrance's reading of Barth lies in the tendency to split the knowledge of God into two parts; namely, natural knowledge of the One God and revealed knowledge of the Trinity, which is both scientifically and theologically unacceptable. However, instead of rejecting it *tout court*, Torrance underlines that Barth has transposed it into the material content of theology and in a changed form it constitutes the epistemological structure of our knowledge of God. On this note, natural theology, properly understood, cannot stand on its own as an independent system apart from the actual knowledge of God revealed in Jesus Christ, although it is open to philosophical analysis. Torrance claims that Einstein's treatment of the relation between geometry and physics could illustrate well Barth's approach. Instead of idealising geometry (like Euclidean geometry) by detaching it from experience as an independent conceptual system, Einstein, according to Torrance, underscores that it must be brought into unification with physics where it becomes a kind of natural science, or an epistemological structure, in the heart of physics.[141]

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[137] Ibid., 89.
[138] See *CD*, I/1, 4-9.
[139] *GG*, 90.
[140] *STR*, ix-x.
[141] Ibid. See *GG*, 91-92. Is there a danger of compromising theology in Torrance's use of geometry analogy? McGrath draws our attention to the question that Frederick Norris raises in the light that the

Thus, 'natural' in a similar way, natural theology then 'constitutes the epistemological "geometry", as it were, within the fabric of "revealed theology" as it is apprehended and articulated within the objectivities and intelligibilities of the space-time medium through which God has made himself known to us.'[142] Indeed, Barth's reworking of natural theology by providing it with a 'dependent' character in positive theology according to Torrance has set aside the *a priori* difficulty. However, the question now is could the 'dependent' natural theology fully assume its role in the light of Einsteinian-Polanyian science? Torrance says, 'But if Barth's position is to be accepted, as I believe it is, then I also believe that there must be a deeper connection between the basic concepts of theological science and natural science than he seemed to allow.'[143] In other words, given the natural connection between the two disciplines, Torrance believes a proper natural theology 'should be *natural* both to theological science and natural science.' Torrance elucidates,

> A natural theology in this full sense will have its proper place in the dialogue between theological science and natural science within their common sharing of the rational structures of space and time conferred on the universe by God in his creating of it, and within their common sharing in the basic conceptions of the unitary rationality of the universe, its contingent intelligibility and contingent freedom---which derive, as we have seen, from a Christian understanding of the relation of God to the universe.[144]

In order to develop his argument, Torrance turns to Athanasius and Anselm. Torrance underlines that Athanasius in *Contra Gentes* has showed us that 'as we let our minds tune in to the rational order that pervades the universe, they are already on the way that leads to the really existence of God.' Thus, 'No attempt was made there to find a way of reaching God by logical reasoning, but rather to point out a way of communicating with the regulative and providential activity of God in the rational order of the universe'.[145] Because theology and science share common basis that does not derive from any cosmological reason but the uncreated Word of God,

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relation between natural and revealed theology may be determined by an analogy outside its discipline. McGrath argues that the analogy to Torrance is simply 'a convenient way of illustrating something which he already knew to be true on other grounds. In other words, the analogy is to be understood as illustrative, not determinative or constitutive.' Alister E. McGrath, *Thomas F. Torrance: An Intellectual Biography* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999), 187. Also see Frederick W. Norris, 'Mathematics, Physics and Religion: A Need for Candor and Rigor,' *Scottish Journal of Theology* 37 (1984): 466-67.

[142] *RST*, 39.

[143] *GG*, 94.

[144] Ibid.

[145] Ibid., 76.

Torrance claims that *Contra Gentes* and *De Incarnatione* together disclose 'what Athanasius is doing there is to show that knowledge of God and knowledge of the world share the same ultimate foundations in the *Logos*, or Rationality, of God the Creator.'[146] Since no distinction is made between natural and supernatural knowledge, Athanasius' argument provides the needed way for Torrance to articulate that God's revelation is mediated as well through the contingent creation as both human action of scientific inquiry and divine action of compulsive self-disclosure take place within the field of God-man-world or God-world-man interconnections. Torrance says, 'It is within the compass of that integrated theological understanding of creation and incarnation that we have embedded the argumentation that some would regard as "natural theology."' Thus, knowledge of God as spoken by natural theology derived from the mediation of the contingent creation 'cannot be abstracted and made to stand on its own, for it holds good and is consistent only in a deep and unbreakable polarity with our actual knowledge of God revealed in and through Jesus Christ.'[147] On this note, Anselm's ontological argument is instrumental to Torrance. Torrance says that the unity of intelligibility and being in Anselm's thought characterises all created realities so that when we investigate, we are under the compulsion to understand and interpret them in accordance with their contingent rationality. However, since created intelligibility, or the contingent creation, is under the compulsion of the unlimited intelligibility of God and thus points beyond itself to God's ultimate reality, the use of inferential argument to ascertain God's existence in this regard, according to Torrance, is perceived to be inadequate by Anselm because with its contingent nature it could only break off before terminating on God.[148] But, 'as *contingent* creaturely *being* and *intelligibility* require a sufficient ground and reason beyond themselves in order to be what they actually are,' Torrance claims that by existing they in fact 'constitute a rational question requiring rational answer.'[149] '[I]t does have something to "say" to us, simply by being what it is, contingent *and* intelligible in its contingency, for that makes its lack of self-explanation inescapably problematic, and it is precisely through that problematic character that it points beyond itself with a mute cry for sufficient reason.'[150] Torrance says,

[146] Ibid., 77.
[147] Ibid., 77-78.
[148] Ibid., 100. Also see *RST*, 48.
[149] *RST*, 44. Author's italic.
[150] Ibid., 52. Author's italic.

> On the other hand, if our thought along these lines really has to do with an active Agent who is the creative Source of the intelligibility of the universe, then we know him not because we succeed in penetrating through the intelligible structures of the universe to net him… but rather because he actually interacts with us and the universe, constitutes himself the active Object of our knowledge, and discloses himself in a positive way to us as the created universe by virtue of its sheer contingency is quite unable to do…. Yet it is not with *discovery* that we have to do here, as in our inquires into mute and determinate realities when we seek to let them 'disclose' themselves to our questioning, but with *revelation* in which our seeking and inquiring are anticipated, prompted and supported by creative activity on God's part.[151]

Here is the key of Torrance's transformed natural theology. The fact that the contingent creation is intrinsically rational means that it is capable of mediating rational explanation from beyond itself, its completeness will only be fulfilled if it is met with the act of God's actual self-revelation. This is also the strength of Torrance's ontological argument; as Colyer says, 'This is the core of Torrance's reformulation… that it does identify the kind of subtle, yet intelligible, way the universe coming to articulation by the new science seems to point (in the form of a question) in the direction of the Christian God as the sufficient reason for this universe.'[152] Natural theology in this regard is connected and integrated with revealed theology. That is to say, 'natural theology properly arises under the dynamic impact of God's own Being and Word, but in the context of the relation of God the Creator to the universe he has made and to the whole integrated complex of created intelligibilities that that entails.'[153] The multi-levelled structure of the contingent creation as Torrance argues is irrefutably the crucial medium of divine self-disclosure that cannot be undermined. In rejecting the deistic disjuncture between God and the creation, Torrance is unequivocal that natural theology cannot be pursued in its independent or traditional form. If natural theology is to have a workable basis, it has to be brought into revealed theology and be pursued in unbreakable unity with it. 'No longer extrinsic but intrinsic to actual knowledge of God, it will function as the necessary *intra-structure* of theological science,' Torrance underscores.[154] On this note, Torrance, in alluding to Henri Bouillard, stresses that natural theology in a transformed way constitutes a necessary but not a sufficient

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[151] Ibid., 59. Author's italic.
[152] Elmer M. Colyer, *How to Read T.F. Torrance: Understanding His Trinitarian & Scientific Theology* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 202-03.
[153] *GG*, 100.
[154] *RST*, 40. Author's italic. The term *intra-structure* is borrowed from Henri Bouillard, *The Knowledge of God* (London: Burns & Oates, 1969).

condition for theological knowledge. It essentially is an '*open, pliant structure*, involving basic concepts that are decided only on other grounds or at another level of thought.'[155] Torrance says conclusively that 'now the whole character of natural theology becomes transformed, for pursued within the actual inquiry of theological science, where we must think rigorously in accordance with the self-disclosure of God in his own intelligible relations, it will become *natural* to the material content theology and will fall under the determination of its intelligibility.'[156] Essentially, Torrance's natural theology, as Molnar observes, attempts 'an account of our relations with God in grace, faith and revelation that do not destroy human nature or the created world of nature but place them on their proper footing in relation to the incarnation and resurrection in particular.'[157] Natural theology finally is dependent upon God's ultimate revelation in Christ.

We have thus far analysed the importance of the contingent creation as the ordained medium of divine self-disclosure in Torrance's theology of revelation and multiple mediations. We show that the mediatedness of the creation, as Torrance argues, is constituted by its endowed nature of contingency, rationality and intelligibility. Being the medium of contingent nature it thus unfolds the divine action of compulsive self-disclosure and points the human action of scientific inquiry to the ultimate reality in God. The mediation of the creation is again affirmed in Torrance's argument of a needed transformed natural theology. As the analysis draws near to the end, we cannot let the question if Torrance is successful in his case of natural theology to go by unmentioned. In general, Torrance is commended by scholars such as McGrath, Morrison and Colyer for the success of shifting natural theology to a new paradigm not only without compromising the christological foundation of Barth of which it is built, but also engendering a closer inter-disciplinary dialogue and interaction between science and theology.[158] Molnar

[155] Ibid., 41. Torrance regards Bouillard as a penetrating and creative critic of Barth especially in relation to the subject of natural theology. However, Torrance disagrees with Bouillard when the latter stresses the prior character of natural theology. Torrance says that 'when Bouillard speaks of this natural theology as an *a priori* and links it with Bultmann's "prior understanding" or "precomprehension", he seems to be confounding a *logical* with an *epistemological a priori, and to be thinking in static rather than in dynamic terms*.' To Torrance the confusion is one that Barth attempts to surmount in his advocacy of scientific method in theology. See *KBBET*, 157.

[156] *GG*, 92-93. Author's italic.

[157] Paul D. Molnar, 'Natural Theology Revisited: A Comparison of T. F. Torrance and Karl Barth,' *Zeitschrift für Dialektische Theologie* 20 (2005): 72.

[158] McGrath, *Thomas F. Torrance: An Intellectual Biography*, 179; John D. Morrison, 'Thomas Torrance's Reformulation of Karl Barth's Christological Rejection of Natural Theology,' *The Evangelical Quarterly* 73, no. 1 (2001): 74; Colyer, 207.

recognises the solution of Torrance has undoubtedly escaped two problems that trouble much contemporary theology; namely, there is no 'logical bridge' between our knowledge of the world and knowledge of God, and thus an *a priori* knowledge of God is not possible.[159] However, Molnar suspects that Torrance in his appropriation of Bouillard may have parted company with Barth more than he realises, and thus introduced an inconsistency to his argument.[160] A point implicated in Molnar's discussion about the indispensable role the contingent creation plays in mediating divine self-disclosure concerns us most closely here. On the ground that the mediatedness of the contingent creation finds its fulfilment finally in Christ, we are in congruence with Molnar to state that Torrance's project would have been more plausible if he refers it as a theology of nature instead of natural theology.[161] Unquestionably, as we argue, Torrance's discourse of the creation as the crucial medium of divine self-disclosure harmonises well with his overall framework of revelation and multiple mediations. On this note, a statement of Torrance in the preface of *Reality and Evangelical Theology* aptly ends the discussion,

> Now since God had endorsed his creation with a rationality and beauty of its own in created correspondence to his transcendent rationality and beauty, the more the created universe unfolds its marvellous symmetries and harmonies to our scientific inquiry, the more it… reflects the glory of the Creator and resounds to his praise. But this is the very universe to which we human beings belong and which God has ordained as the creaturely medium through which he makes himself known to mankind, in his historical dialogue with Israel and above all in the incarnation of his Word in Jesus Christ; therefore the increasing scientific understanding of the universe, as under God it becomes disclosed to our inquires, must be taken into account in our deepening understanding of his self-communication in Jesus Christ.[162]

Conclusion

This chapter pivots on Torrance's arguments of the church, Word and sacraments, and contingent creation as the irreplaceable media of God's self-disclosure in Christ by the Spirit. Our discussion shows that the normative pattern of the union and communion of divine and human action of revelation and mediation is paramount to Torrance undergirding his discourse and enabling him to surmount the dualistic

[159] Molnar, 62.
[160] For detailed discussion, see Molnar, 73-76.
[161] Molnar, 83.
[162] *RET*, 10-11.

tension of separating God from the world. The cardinal principle serves as the anchorage aiding Torrance to stay in line with the intent to uphold both the divine and the human in revelation, and preventing him from going off at a tangent towards the immediacy of revelation. Torrance's arguments of the church as the body of Christ, the proclamation of the Word as the indivisible ministry of Christ and the believers in the Spirit, the inseparability of water baptism and Spirit baptism, the conjoint 'act of Christ and the act of man' in the Eucharist, and the correlation between human scientific knowing and divine self-disclosure in creation-mediatedness, as noted, evidence the significance of the principle. To Torrance it is not *a priori* but *a posteriori* because it has for its foundation the Mediator who fulfils the revelation and mediation between God and humanity with the act of God and the act of humanity both united as one in union and communion within himself, as our chapter one claims. Because the normative pattern of revelation and mediation has been fulfilled and set by Christ himself, our understanding of the human and earthly media participate in Christ through the work of the Spirit in mediating God's revelation in human history cannot derail from it without falling into the peril of dualism. This essentially is the core of Torrance's argument that cannot be overlooked by any attempt to explore and apprehend his theology of revelation and multiple mediations.

Conclusion

In the first part that encompasses three chapters of the thesis, our primary aim is to establish the first claim that divine self-disclosure in Torrance's theological scheme is the mediation of the incarnate Son Jesus Christ. We have, in chapter one, focused on Torrance's understanding of Christ as the Mediator between God and humanity, and in him the foundation of the normative pattern of revelation and mediation is set. Torrance's argument of the nature of Christ's revelation and mediation is analysed. We argue that Torrance primarily pivots on the hypostatic union of Christ as fully God and fully man in one person to demonstrate that in him one finds the culmination of the two-way movement of God's revelation and mediation. Because of the fulfilment in Jesus Christ, Torrance underscores the importance of the union and communion of divine and human action as the normative pattern of revelation and mediation.

We shift our focus to dualism in chapter two and examine, in Torrance's view, its threat and detriment to Christ's revelation and mediation. Our discussion shows that Arian dualism and Newtonian dualism demean Christ's revelation and mediation by separating God from the world. The main problem of dualism, as Torrance argues relentlessly, lies in distorting our knowing of divine self-disclosure by moving the centre of interpretation erroneously from God in Christ to humanity. In order to repair the damage, Torrance postulates realism as the pertinent corrective.

Riding on the advancement of Einsteinian-Polanyian science and building on the theological foundation of Barth, Torrance advocates theological science, the subject of our chapter three, as the answer of theological reconstruction. We discuss Torrance's understanding of scientific inquiry as the proper theological action because it acts in accordance with the compulsive nature of God's self-revelation in Christ. If scientific inquiry of theological science constitutes the human action, then the work of the Spirit in Torrance's framework forms the divine action of the normative pattern of revelation and mediation. Thus, our analysis of Torrance's pneumatology in chapter four begins the second part of the thesis and sets the stage for subsequent discussions of revelation and multiple mediations.

The discussion in chapter four shows that notwithstanding the dynamic and non-formal features, Torrance's understanding of the epistemic work of the Spirit is

essentially rational and intelligible. To Torrance the Spirit as the divine action corresponds to the human action of scientific inquiry in bringing about God's self-revelation in Christ through multiple mediations. Since the Spirit works through human and earthly media, we argue, in subsequent chapters, that any attempt by Torrance to relegate them in any way will not only undermine his theology of revelation and multiple mediations, but also weaken his pneumatology.

Chapter five and six involve the second claim of the thesis. The examination of Torrance's understanding of scripture in chapter five shows that notwithstanding his intent to uphold the primacy of scripture in mediating divine revelation, he makes the unusual move to relegate the mediatedness by advocating its effacement when responding to what he perceives as the dualistic threat of liberal, fundamentalist and modern historical-critical biblical scholarship. The extensive discussion affirms our claim that such move is unnecessary and unjustifiable, as it derails not only from the normative pattern of revelation and mediation, it also creates problems and exacerbates tension that is embedded in his theological structure, and runs the risk of gravitating revelation from mediation to immediacy. We claim that what is required of Torrance when he senses the peril of dualism is to stay in line with that which is built and argue consistently from the theological foundation of the union and communion of divine and human action of revelation and mediation.

Our analysis of Torrance's discourse of the church, Word and sacraments, and creation in chapter six evidences just that. By remaining steadfast to the cardinal principle, Torrance demonstrates his theological stamina in sustaining a dynamic understanding of the ordained media as essential forms of mediation without compromising either the divine or the human. In this regard, one could not help but to feel that if only Torrance has taken heed of his own construction, the argument of scripture as the primary medium of divine revelation would be less problematic. If it is true that at times one needs alternate voices to be reminded of certain 'blind spot', the question then is who, in the case of Torrance, could do the job? Without question there are able voices in the Christian tradition for the purpose. We however recommend Tillich and Gunton, believing that Tillich's thought on the revelatory role of religious symbol[1] and Gunton's view of propositional revelation would provide

[1] Morrison underlines that Torrance has two choices to overcome his theological negation of historical and human participation in Christ's revelation. He says, 'Either Torrance must theologically go in the way of Paul Tillich or in the way of John Calvin.' However, due to the apparent theological differences between Torrance and Tillich, Morrison eventually opts for Calvin to develop his

Torrance with food for thought. Tillich and Gunton are chosen for another two reasons. First, they are contemporaries of Torrance and therefore belong to the same historical era. Second, their contrasting theological positions are able to give Torrance distinctive stimulants to reassess the whole issue of scripture as the primary medium of divine revelation.

Human Logos as Symbol

To Tillich the importance of human logos in theology should not be confined only to the function of mediating the self-revelation of God in Jesus Christ, as it is also indispensable in communicating almost all doctrinal and human expressions. Tillich says, 'Man's rational structure cannot be understood without the word in which he grasps the rational structure of reality. Revelation cannot be understood without the word as a medium of revelation.'[2] Tillich argues that we could only understand the meaning of the 'Word of God' and 'Logos' when we gain an insight into the general nature of the words. And, our understanding of the knowledge of God has to do with the semantic analysis of the symbolic 'word' used in revelation. Similarly, our interpretation of the biblical message cannot be done without involving semantic and hermeneutic principle. Tillich's understanding of the close relation between the human logos and divine revelation reverberates notably Torrance's argument of the asymmetric relation between scripture and revelation as discussed in chapter five.

From the side of Torrance, he would welcome Tillich when the latter says, 'Revelation through words must not be confused with "revealed words."'[3] To Tillich human logos whether it is used in the context of sacred or secular language, is nothing more than the product of humanity that is based on the experiential correlation between mind and reality in the process of history. Tillich claims that fundamentally no apparent distinction could be made between religious or ordinary language. Tillich says, 'Revelation uses ordinary language, just as it uses nature and history, man's psychic and spiritual life, as mediums of revelation. Ordinary

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corrective as he believes that Calvin's theological approach may contribute to 'Torrance's Barthian understanding of "the Being of God in his Act and the Act of God in his Being" and the simultaneous authority and humanity of the scripture, which Torrance seems to indirectly acknowledge, another needed and complimentary dimension.' See Morrison, 320-21.

[2] Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology Vol. 1* (London: Nisbet, 1953), 136.

[3] Ibid.

language, which expresses and denotes the ordinary experience of mind and reality in their categorical structure, is made a vehicle for expressing and denoting the extraordinary experience of mind and reality in ecstasy and sign-event.'[4] In this regard, human language remains primarily as the communicative tool of divine revelation to Tillich and thus one should not be confounded with the other. As revelation is distinct from ordinary language, Tillich, like Torrance, does uphold the sovereignty of God's revelation in relation to the media of divine revelation. In someway similar to Torrance's argument of the necessity to allow the compulsive self-disclosure of God to shape human language in such a fashion that it could be used as the 'appropriate tool' to depict accurately the revelation of Christ, Tillich underlines that revelation, or the experience of revelation, like any human experience, could contribute to the formation and transformation of our understanding and use of words. However, Torrance may not accept lock, stock and barrel of Tillich's claim that by itself revelation 'cannot create a language of its own which must be learned as in the case of foreign language.'[5] As our discussion of his understanding of the proficiency of human language in chapter three evidences, Torrance believes that a 'new' language, or a specialised language as scientific language, could and ought to be created under the compulsion of divine self-disclosure and human participation so that theological language is able to speak accurately of divine revelation. Notwithstanding his rhetoric, as we argue, the human logos used in articulating God's revelation in Christ although is theologically specialised, is not altogether different from ordinary language, a point Torrance himself eventually concedes. On this note, we may say that Tillich's argument could not be entirely unacceptable to Torrance. In the light of what has been said, one could agree that both Torrance and Tillich are rather likeminded with regard to the importance of correlating the human logos to divine revelation. The difference between them nevertheless surfaces when we take a closer look at the nature how the human logos is in fact related to divine revelation. And, it is here we believe that Tillich's perspective could be an alternative to Torrance. Tillich says,

> The preaching of the church presupposes an understanding of the expressive and denotative functions of the word in addition to its communication function. Under these circumstances it is not surprising that an attempt has been made to reduce the whole of theology to an enlarged doctrine of the "Word of God" (Barth). But if this

[4] Ibid., 137.
[5] Ibid., 136-37.

> is done, "word" must either be identified with revelation and the term "word" must be used with such a wide meaning that every divine self-manifestation can be subsumed under it, or revelation must be restricted to the spoken word and the "Word of God" taken literary instead of symbolically.[6]

If Tillich is right in his comment, the latter option is clearly the one Torrance inclines to take, given his theological propensity. Having said that, one should recall the attempt to take scriptural words as literal revelation of God's Word, such as the propositional model of revelation, is one that Torrance rejects unquestionably. Torrance's twofold order of the asymmetric relation between the human and divine Logos may be regarded as a sophisticated answer to tackle what he perceives to be a simplistic and literal association between the two. As we would return to the subject of propositional revelation, it is suffice at this juncture to say that given that which has been laid down by Tillich, Torrance would find the latter option more acceptable than the former.

But there is a price for taking the latter option, according to Tillich. It 'contradicts not only the meaning of God's power but also the religious symbolism inside and outside the biblical literature, which uses seeing, feeling, and tasting as often as hearing in describing the experience of the divine presence.'[7] Torrance, on the one hand, may disagree with Tillich on a twofold ground. First, Torrance underpins that the ultimate of 'hearing' has its root in the Hebraic tradition of which the shaping of theological form is determined largely by its hearing of the Word of God in distinction to the Hellenic tradition of focusing on the primacy of vision and the perception of the true, the beauty and the good.[8] Second, Torrance claims that the objective reality of God's self-revelation in Christ is the incarnate Word who speaks to us in person and he is not mute. As Torrance says, 'we are concerned mainly to insist that theological concepts have an aspect that cannot be appropriated so long as we insist on construing them only in modes of vision.'[9] While his argument without question warrants our attention, Torrance, on the other hand, has to concede as well that 'This is not to say that there is no place for knowledge construed on the pattern of visionary experience; on the contrary, it has an essential and unavoidable place'.[10]

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[6] Ibid., 136.
[7] Ibid.
[8] *TS*, 22.
[9] Ibid., 29. Torrance claims that the element of 'hearing' is the uniqueness of Christian theology. He says, 'The outstanding characteristic of theology is that it operates with a direct act of cognition in hearing God and engages in the act of conception through audition.' *TS*, 23, 30-31, 39-40.
[10] Ibid., 22.

We may underscore three main reasons for Torrance's possible acknowledgement and thus the prospect of his eventual congruence with Tillich. First, Torrance would have rejected Tillich completely if the latter claims that all knowledge is construed only through the model of vision.[11] Clearly this is not the argument of Tillich as he unequivocally states that, as the above citation shows, the aesthetic experience of vision, touch and taste would not supplant but complement our experience of the revelatory presence that derives through hearing. Second, the argument of Tillich may enrich Torrance's discourse of the inseparableness of the Gift and the Giver in the Eucharist. It could possibly serve as a workable basis for Torrance to deepen the nuance of the 'whole Christ' present in the eucharistic celebration. For example, giving more weight to the 'seeing, feeling and tasting' of the elements would enrich our apprehension and experience of the presence of the 'whole Christ' in the Eucharist. Third, the argument of Tillich does not jeopardise the primacy of God's revelation. In fact, Tillich, like Torrance, is adamant that human logos and divine revelation cannot be confounded. Tillich unequivocally says that ordinary language by itself even when it is dealing with matters of ultimate concern is not a medium of revelation. He says, 'When speaking of the ultimate, of being and meaning, ordinary language brings it down to the level of the preliminary, the conditioned, the finite, thus muffling its revelatory power.'[12] If ordinary language by itself is handicapped, the question naturally is how could it become a medium of divine revelation? Tillich answers, 'Language as a medium of revelation… has the "sound" and "voice" of the divine mystery in and through the sound and voice of human expression and denotation. Language with this power is the "Word of God."' He continues,

> If it is possible to use an optical metaphor for the characterisation of language, one could say that the Word of God as the word of revelation is *transparent* language. Something *shines* (more precisely, *sounds*) through ordinary language which is the self-manifestation of the depth of being and meaning.[13]

[11] Ibid. Torrance says that 'it would be false to construe all knowledge on the model of vision.'
[12] Tillich, 137.
[13] Ibid. My italic. In delimiting the denotation and expression of ordinary language, Tillich says that the denotative power of language is about its ability to grasp and communicate general meaning, and the expressive power of language is about its ability to disclose and communicate personal states. He gives examples to explain his points. He says, 'An algebraic equation has an almost exclusively denotative character, an outcry has an almost expressive character. But even in the case of an outcry a definite content of feeling is indicated, and even the case of a mathematical equation a satisfaction about the evidence of the result and the adequacy of the method can be expressed.' Thus, to Tillich, most language moves between the two poles. The more technical and scientific language would

At times one can be surprised by how close Tillich and Torrance are on certain matters. The fact is the optical metaphor of Tillich is almost identical to Torrance's claim that scriptural words 'serve as *transparent* media',[14] and we could 'rely upon the Bible for its guidance in directing our understanding to the Word of God which *sounds through it*, or the Truth of God which *shines through it*.'[15] Another aspect of Tillich's assertion of which Torrance would again agree regards the fact that scripture is not solely about information. Tillich says, 'If it were this, if revelation were information, no "transparency" of language would be needed. Ordinary language, transmitting no "sound" of ultimacy, could give information about "divine matters." Such information… would lack the characteristics of revelation.'[16] Torrance could support Tillich on the ground of safeguarding the authenticity of God's self-revelation by pinpointing that scripture is not any ordinary work. Gunton's comment on this note is helpful in enriching our discussion. Gunton says, 'One of the proposals sometimes heard… is that we consider the Bible as a kind of classic: a work that retains its hold as an indispensable work of literature, providing clues to our being in the world that are unavailable elsewhere. On such an account, however, we reach a similar difficulty, for there are many classics, and they give us all kinds of information…. But they are not the Bible.'[17] Gunton argues that scripture, being the mediation of divine revelation, is marked by its unique good news of the salvific truth of Christ. The Bible is not something that provides us with helpful information; it is about the salvation of God made possible in Jesus Christ, the divine Logos becomes human words so that humanity may hear and see the revelatory glory of God. As Tillich says, the centre of our concern essentially is the 'power of grasping, shaking, and transforming', which is the attribute of the 'Word of God' in revelation.[18]

After establishing the symbolic characteristic of human logos in relation to the revelation of God, Tillich continues to underline the importance of positing the relation of human and divine Logos within the events of revelation. This leads to the recollection of Morrison's criticism that pinpoints the lacuna of Torrance's God-

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incline towards the denotative pole, and the more poetical and communal one would move to the expressive pole.

[14] *RET*, 96.
[15] Ibid., 97. My italic.
[16] Tillich, 138.
[17] Gunton, 72-73.
[18] Tillich, 138.

world-human relation, the problem of historical relatedness of divine revelation. Tillich says,

> If the word as a medium of revelation is not information, it cannot be spoken apart from revelatory events in nature, history, and man…. A collection of assumed divine revelations concerning "faith and morals" without a revelatory event which they interpret is a lawbook with divine authorisation, but it is not the Word of God, and it has no revelatory power…. The "Word of God" contains neither revealed commandments nor revealed doctrines; it accompanies and interprets revelatory situations.[19]

Tillich argues that human logos as the medium of divine revelation will lose its revelatory meaning if it is severed from 'revelatory events in nature, history, and man'. He gives two examples to substantiate the point. Tillich says, 'When the prophets spoke, they spoke about the "great deeds of God," the revelatory events in the history of Israel. When the apostles spoke, they spoke about the one great deed of God, the revelatory event which is called Jesus, the Christ.'[20] Revelatory events are crucial to Tillich because they assume a critical two-fold function. First, they provide the historical anchorage for the divine and human logos. Second, they serve as historical contexts of interpretation and make possible the hermeneutical understanding of the message in accordance with the intent of the giver; as, 'divine revelations… without a revelatory event which they interpret is a lawbook with divine authorisation, but it is not the Word of God, and it has no revelatory power'. The strength of Tillich's argument in this regard lies in opening up a wider scope beyond the subjectivity of the human knower for the Spirit to mediate God's self-revelation in Christ. In other words, the revelatory events are platforms the Spirit as the source of revelatory power could work to transform ordinary language into revelatory language, a point comparable to Torrance's rhetoric of the epistemic dynamic of the Spirit (see chapter four).

Tillich's emphasis of the revelatory events brings to mind the concern of Anderson that without the historical contexts the historical transcendence of scripture is at stake; 'if the cognitive link with the content of God's transcendence as historical act is broken, the act of faith must supply its own content to the divine Word.'[21] These are important issues Torrance has to wrestle with, as we clearly identify in chapter five. No doubt there is valid cause for Torrance to claim that the ontological

[19] Ibid., 138-39.
[20] Ibid., 138.
[21] Anderson, 213.

reality of revelation is independent of the human logos. However, as argued, we cannot forget the point as well that it is through the platform of scripture the Spirit mediates the revelation of God by working closely with the human counterparts first in the events of forming it, then in the process of passing it down from one generation to the next in human history, and finally in the moment of interpreting it. Torrance himself agrees that scriptural words 'are much more than that for they have been adapted by God under the impact of his Spirit for his own self-testimony'.[22] Would Torrance eventually take cognisance of Tillich's argument? The common ground both share seems to suggest that Torrance's theological framework is able to accommodate Tillich's thought as an auxiliary. Thus, the possibility cannot be ruled out simply because of their general theological differences.

Proposition and Inspiration

To do justice to Torrance, it has to be said from the outset that while he rejects propositional revelation, he indeed says that 'the divine revelation does certainly involve the communication of truths and ideas and propositions' and 'without all that the Scriptures in the saving purpose of God have come to embody, we would not be able to know God or to have intelligible communion with him within our continuing human historical existence'.[23] Thus, it would be helpful to set the stage by bringing to light the reasons of Torrance's objection before we engage Gunton in conversation. Kruger's concise observation would aptly serve the purpose as he rightly pinpoints the questions Torrance raises as,

> [I]s it 'in and through' these truths and idea and propositions that 'God speaks to us personally and confronts us with the majesty and dignity of his own Truth'? Does our knowing and faith terminate on the statements of the Bible and its information, or upon the living Jesus Christ? Is the Holy Scripture the ordained and inspired and authoritative medium of the personal communication of the living Christ Himself or is Holy Scripture the content of the mediation itself?'[24]

[22] *TRst*, 257.
[23] See *TRst*, 91 and *STR*, 12-13. Cited in C. B. Kruger, 'Thesis: Participation in the Self-Knowledge of God: The Nature and Means of Our Knowledge of God in the Theology of T. F. Torrance' (The University of Aberdeen, 1990), 234.
[24] Kruger, 234.

From the questions we may infer three main reasons of Torrance's objection. With Gunton's help in providing critical alternative, Torrance may reassess the viability of the subject in question. First, the objection involves the misrepresentation of the relation between reality and language. The so-called one to one correspondence between the human logos and divine revelation in scripture is perceived to be inaccurate and unacceptable. To put it in Torrance's terms, scriptural word can never be the incarnate Word; the 'Holy Scripture is not Jesus Christ'.[25] However, the problem of such approach is that it takes the theory unnecessarily in its most simplistic way. In alluding to McGrath, Gunton says that even the mediaevals who are the proponents of proposition believe that 'doctrines were reliable, yet incomplete descriptions of reality.'[26] The argument is built upon the claim that no theory of metaphorical truth would base on a naïve understanding of the one to one correlation of word and reality. The undergirding principle of the appropriation of propositonal statements lies in the referential characteristic of language; a salient point in fact sits well with Torrance's emphasis of the referential feature of the media of divine revelation. Gunton asks, 'Does our language or does it not refer, or affect to refer, to realities which lie beyond it, however elusively? Does it or does it not affect to describe, albeit partially, obliquely and inadequately, those things which truly are?'[27] Gunton says, 'If it was once true that Jesus died for our sins on the cross, then it is always true. I take that sentence to be propositional, cognitive, in that it makes claims for the truth of that which lies beyond its formulation in words, and to form one dimension of what it is to claim that Christianity is a revealed religion.'[28] Torrance would have no difficulty in accepting Gunton's argument on the account of the importance of the referential feature of proposition.

Second, if the question is about whether 'the object of our faith accurate propositions or is it the living Christ',[29] the issue in fact is about the suspicion that propositional form is too cognitive and it has reduced the salvation of Christ into abstract concept or statement. The concern of Torrance is legitimate in this regard, as Gunton himself recognises as well that 'there have been in the history of theology the development of propositions that appear to stand in rather tenuous relation to the

[25] *RET*, 95.
[26] Gunton, 8. See Alister McGrath, *The Genesis of Doctrine: A Study in the Foundation of Doctrinal Criticism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990), 16-17.
[27] Ibid., 9.
[28] Ibid., 8.
[29] Kruger, 234.

nature of Christian faith'.[30] But, Gunton, in alluding to Calvin, explicates that the issue is more complex than just about propositional against non-propositional. He comments that Calvin, though a propositionalist theologian, has a conception of knowledge far from being intellectualist in the narrow sense. 'The shape of his theology,' Gunton says, 'from the beginning seeking to integrate the knowledge of God and ourselves, is witness to theology as wisdom: not abstract, but saving and existentially relevant knowledge.'[31] Having said that, it however does not fully resolve the suspicion that some propositions may be merely abstract and conceptual. The way to go, as Gunton suggests, is to distinguish those that are not from those that are. For example, the patristic slogan that says that 'the unassumed is unhealed' is clearly not just a conceptual abstraction, although it is expressed cognitively in propositional form.[32] The point is by making a distinction between various forms of proposition, we are able to avoid generalisation and give proper recognition to the role it plays. The indisputable fact is the incarnate Word is indeed mediated by the words and testimonies of the apostles and those who are involved in the events of Christ within a unique historical and communal context. Torrance himself clearly recognises the point as our analyses in the preceding chapters evidence.

Third, when the focus of our faith is placed primarily on the 'living Christ' instead of the 'accurate propositions', we may deduce the undertone is about the assumption that propositions are primarily static and fixed. In other words, as the scriptural records of revelation are in someway tied to the past, the presupposition is 'there is no further divine action, only the working out of what God has done already.'[33] It however does not have to be understood in that way, as Gunton argues that notwithstanding the seemingly static, fixed and textual character of biblical revelation, it in fact provides the foundation for the belief that there are further divine acts to come.[34] Gunton cites Isaiah 43:19 that says that 'Behold, I am doing a new thing' to substantiate his argument. He claims that the propositional form of biblical revelation does not relegate the truism that 'the ascended Christ is a living and active advocate with the Father, or that the Spirit works to perfect the creation.' In addition, in spite of its association with the past, Gunton says that propositional form of revelation encourages inquiry and revision in the belief that 'we shall learn greater

[30] Gunton, 9.
[31] Ibid.
[32] Ibid.
[33] Ibid., 80.
[34] Ibid.

things, and that the servant of the kingdom is like a scribe bringing out his treasure things both new and old (Matt. 13:52).'[35] The crux of Gunton's argument lies in riding on Calvin's claim that the Spirit enables us through the mediation of scripture to see the world in a different perspective. Alternatively put, while the mediation of revelation is unchanging, our apprehension of its content through the guidance of the Spirit may change. Gunton says pointedly,

> That is where the discipline of theology must necessarily differ from other disciplines, which are not tied *in the same way* to the past history. If God is the one who creates and redeems through Christ and Spirit, and is made known as such by the incarnate, crucified, risen and ascended Jesus, then that is the one he always is. Any new action, therefore, can be expected within the framework of this eternal revelation (or revelation of the eternal gospel)... the possibility of progress in theology which is grounded in the revelation, and in particular the promise that the Spirit will lead the church 'into all truth'. Therefore dogma and theology are revisable, scripture is in certain respects open to question, but revelation, mediated through scripture, is not.'[36]

From the arguments we may derive the notion that Gunton's understanding of the nature of revelation and mediation is not unlike that of Torrance. The emphasis of God's self-disclosure in Christ, the dynamic work of the Spirit in unfolding and leading all to the truth, and the fact that dogma and theology are human formulations which under the leading of God require to be revised constantly are salient points close to the heart of Torrance's theology of revelation and multiple mediations. Torrance would appreciate Gunton when the latter endeavours to uphold the sovereignty of God's revelation by emphasising that, like theological statements, 'scripture is in certain respects open to question, but revelation, mediated through scripture, is not.' Gunton's view of proposition is food for thought to Torrance especially when, in one moment, he concedes that 'By their very nature theological statements [and scriptural texts] involved propositional relations with God and propositional relations between human subjects'.[37]

We may now turn to the related issue of the inspiredness of scripture and continue to allow Gunton to dialogue with Torrance. In order to commence our discussion we should return to the statement of Torrance that says, 'if we become too obsessed with the Bible, as so often happens in the stress that is laid upon its inspiration when our attention is directed to the Bible itself instead of to what it is

[35] Ibid.
[36] Ibid., 80-81. Author's italic.
[37] *GR*, 190.

intended to bear witness.'[38] From the articulation we may construe that Torrance adopts a position akin to that of Barth by putting the weight of revelation not so much on the past process by which it occurs under the pen of the inspired writers of scripture. The emphasis, however, is placed more on the present process by which scripture, through inspiration, becomes revelation to its readers. To put it succinctly, the focus is on the 'now' instead of the 'then' event of revelation. When the 'now' outweighs the 'then', Gunton says that the upholding of the dogma of the humanity of scripture is achieved at the cost of paying too little attention to the intrinsic inspiredness of the text.[39] We believe Gunton's reflection may lend Torrance a hand to reconsider his position.

Gunton says that a common view of how scripture becomes the mediation of revelation through the process of inspiration could be captured briefly in a picture depicting the image of a shadowy figure of the Spirit hovering over the writer prompting him in his writing, either by dictation or by giving guidance.[40] Whether this is how the Spirit works is a point of discussion. However, according to Gunton, the main concern here is that it is too individualist a picture to give an adequate account of the two features of the characteristic work of the Spirit. Gunton says, 'In the first place, the Spirit is the one whose gift is communion, community, both with God and with the other. The Spirit is thus, among other things, the Spirit of the church.'[41] As much as it is commonly understood as a work of the individual writers, the argument is that scripture is also a product of the early Christian community. Gunton argues that the Paraclete is the one who guides the community into all truth, and the Bible's inspiration may be perceived to derive from the fact that 'it is the book of a community, or rather of the people of God who are variously Israel and the church.'[42] Principally Torrance is congruent with Gunton particularly when the latter builds his discourse of the inspiredness of scripture on the conjoint action of the Spirit and the chosen communities. It harmonises well with Torrance's normative pattern of revelation and mediation that puts much stock in the union and communion of divine and human action. Our analysis thus far shows that the formation of scripture

[38] *RET*, 96.
[39] Gunton, 67.
[40] Ibid., 74. Gunton does not deny the possibility. He says that artists and scientists sometimes do feel that they have been given insight from beyond to solve the problem they face. For example, Anselm is granted his wish to find one argument with which to put beyond all doubt the existence of God.
[41] Ibid., 75.
[42] Ibid., Gunton remarks that the scriptural writers are sometimes called redactors. Their job is to piece together parts of the tradition into literary wholes in the light of the needs of the community of which they are also a part.

to Torrance is never a one-sided process carried out singularly either by the divine or the human (see chapter five). Nevertheless, attention should be directed to Gunton's argument of giving more weight to the inspiredness of scriptural texts. This is crucial because it involves in Torrance's thought a critical decision of shifting the focus from the 'now' to the 'then' event of revelation.

The second feature, according to Gunton, lies in the fact that the Spirit is the one who leads us through Christ back to the Father. Gunton says,

> If we are to rely on the testimony of the New Testament, and particularly that of the Fourth Gospel, it is noteworthy that their emphasis is not on Jesus Christ as revealing himself…. It is rather on Jesus as the one who makes known, mediates indeed, God the Father. Within the complex interrelations of the persons of the Trinity, the function of the Spirit is to guide to Jesus as the one who reveals the Father. The Spirit is thus the one who points away from himself to Jesus, whose will is to do the work of the one who sends him.[43]

Gunton claims that the inspiration of scripture is to be found somewhere here: by the Spirit, in the Son, and to the Father. The significance of the apostles and the believing community as the witness for Christ in the first days of the church cannot be undermined. Gunton observes part of what it means to say scripture is inspired is the affirmation that the Spirit enables the Christian individual and community to bear the witness of Christ. However, Gunton does concede a weakness in the metaphor as at times the witnesses may speak of what they see in their own strength; for example, the account of the Palm Sunday (John 12:16-19) indicates that the witnesses are the ones who in fact misconstrued what is to happen. Nevertheless, despite the weakness, Gunton claims that the metaphor is indeed helpful in suggesting the importance of the work of the Spirit in turning the human logos of the scriptural writers into the words of God.[44] Torrance would concur with Gunton in relation to the significance of the apostolic witness in unfolding the revelation of God in Christ. Our foregoing chapter clearly indicates that the church to Torrance is the indispensable medium of divine revelation because the Spirit works within the faith community in pointing all to Christ, and through Christ to the Father. If Torrance is to accept that it is here, as Gunton avers, where the inspiration of scripture is to be found, he would have to bestow upon the Spirit a greater role in turning the human words of scripture into the words of God; not an impossible task to Torrance as he

[43] Ibid., 75-76.
[44] Ibid., 76-77.

possesses a dynamic understanding of the epistemic work of the Spirit (see chapter four). Gunton aptly says,

> It is first to express a little more adequately the fact of the work of the Spirit in ordering the community and its writings around and to the incarnate Lord, and thus of a process of formation both of the community and of its documents, in which the words are, as human, already and as a result of that process in an important sense the words of God. P. T. Forsyth put it thus: 'This interpretation of theirs, this exposition of Christ, was a providential, integral, and, we may say, polar part of the action of the total fact itself, and not a searchlight thrown on it from without.' 'The Apostles were not panes of bad glass, but crystal cups the master filled.' There is thus, to use an expression I owe to Alan Torrance, an intrinsic relation between revelation and the words used to enable it to come to expression.[45]

Another way to approach the inspiredness of scripture has to do with the advantage of being the contemporary of Jesus Christ. Gunton is aware of the discourse of Kierkegaard in bringing to light the relevant point that contemporaries of Jesus in fact have no advantage over us in the reception of God's revelation. While he acknowledges the argument, Gunton underlines that the advantage here lies in the givenness of the peculiar function of apostolicity. Gunton delineates,

> There is a particular function to be performed by those who are apostles because of their unique relation with that 'which', in the opening words of the First Letter of John, 'we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life….' Their unique and unrepeatable function is to 'proclaim also to you', but in such a way that revelation and more than revelation is mediated: 'that you may have fellowship with us; and our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ'. The function of the contemporary, of the apostles, is to act as mediator of salvation to the one who is not. According to John, that was the aim of his writing his Gospel: 'these [things] are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name' (Jn. 20.31)[46]

Gunton's argument is not altogether unfamiliar to Torrance. Our preceding chapter shows that the uniqueness of Jesus' contemporary in bearing witness to him and unfolding his revelation in the course of time is theologically significant to Torrance. Gunton's stress of the unrepeatable function of the apostles in proclaiming and mediating Christ's revelation resonates Torrance's understanding of their role as 'hinges'. In addition, Gunton expresses that analogous argument could be developed for the inspiration of the Old Testament texts, as the Old Testament writers' revelatory function derives as well from their place in a community of faith.

[45] Ibid., 77.
[46] Ibid., 78.

Notwithstanding the similarity, Gunton is aware that the question of revelation is far more complex in the Old Testament. Among others, Gunton pinpoints two main reasons that account for the complexity. First, although it is necessary to understand Jesus' identity and his saving reality within the context of the Old Testament, Jesus' ministry represents one among other possibilities offered by the Old Testament for the shape of being the people of God. That is the reason, according to Gunton, why while the New Testament writers as a whole recognises Jesus as the fulfilment of the Old Testament, they are free to draw upon some strands of tradition at the expense of others; in particular, those which express the vicarious suffering rather than military glory of the messiah.[47] Second, in the revelation of the Old Testament God in Jesus 'is personally present in a way only anticipated in Israel.' That is why Gunton says that we need not be embarrassed about the less acceptable sides of the record for 'it is only to be expected that the trumpet will at times give a more uncertain sound.'[48] The complexity of the Old Testament revelation and its relation to the self-disclosure of God in Christ are crucial issues Torrance acknowledges and addresses as well. Since we have analysed them in the earlier chapters, it is sufficient at this juncture to highlight that Torrance's analogy of Israel as the womb of the incarnate Word would be able to contribute significantly to the interaction. In the light of what has been discussed, we may conclude by saying that Gunton's understanding of the inspiredness of scripture would be the impetus for Torrance to reassess the question of the 'now' and 'then' event of revelation, and to bestow more weight upon the mediatedness of scripture.

As the end is at hand, we may close our discussion by stating that Tillich and Gunton are suitable dialogue partners to Torrance particularly on the issue of scriptural mediation. Their distinctive views are the stimuli needed in engendering theological reconsideration and revision, as all agree unanimously that dogma and theology are revisable, but not revelation. If the current analysis is able to bear some fruit, it would be, as indicated, in pointing to the direction of moving from immediacy to mediation by giving scripture the legitimate weight of mediation. It is a return to the primacy of scripture in Torrance's theology of revelation and multiple mediations. Essentially as Torrance says, the compulsive self-disclosure of God eventually takes 'verbal and even written form through the shared understanding and shared response',

[47] Ibid., 79.
[48] Ibid.

and in and through scripture 'men continued to hear God addressing them directly and backing up His Word by the living power and majesty of His divine Person.'[49]

[49] *GR*, 148.

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