



The shape of Torrance theology

Andrew Purves

One is often asked to give titles to lectures before they are written, and one struggles, sometimes, later to fit the lecture to the previously stated title. The pre-given title for this lecture, however, created for me an unanticipated opportunity and thereby afforded the occasion to highlight my theme. The point is, I am not convinced there is a shape to Torrance theology, if by ‘shape’ one intends the outline of a fixed theological architecture. That is too static an image for the theology of Thomas F. Torrance.

Torrance was not a systematic theologian in the sense of having erected an edifice of thought constructed on certain fundamental conceptions.¹ With Barth, I suspect, he would have disavowed being called a systematic theologian. His work, rather, had a kinetic quality that was appropriate to its subject, the living, acting, and reigning Lord. ‘Real theological thinking’, he wrote in *Theological Science*, ‘is thus alive and on the move under the control of the Truth that makes it free from imprisonment in timeless logical connections.’² Later in the same book, he wrote that ‘the living Truth requires a *kinetic* mode of knowledge and thought.’³ For Torrance, theology is on the move because it is knowledge of God in, through, and as Jesus Christ. There are no fixed or anchoring points independent of Jesus Christ to which theology might appeal or that might restrict appropriate movement: he was anti-foundationalist before we had heard of that term.

God, he believed, had really come among us revealingly and savingly as Jesus Christ. And further, who and what God is toward us in Jesus Christ God is antecedently and eternally in himself.⁴ ‘Everything hinges upon the reality of God’s *self*-communication to us in Jesus Christ [...] so that for us to know God in Jesus Christ is really to know him as he is in himself.’⁵ The use of the word ‘everything’ here is not hyperbole. For Torrance, the shape of theology is worked out on the basis of this real becoming of God. The *egeneto sarx* is not

a metaphor. Christian theology is correspondingly ‘becoming’ in the sense of being tied at all points to the living Lord.

Torrance’s theology is worked out in terms of a critically realist and unitary outlook upon God and the universe in which Jesus Christ is known from the knowledge he gives us of himself in his own inner relation to God the Father, and in his incarnate Person as mediator.⁶ In this way Jesus Christ is known *a posteriori* in terms of the actual relations and reality that constitute him as the Logos of God. Torrance’s kinetic theology, therefore, is Christological in nature, and includes (1) what he called the homoousial relationship between Christ and the Father that he developed in the face of the cosmological dualism he insisted is inherent in Western thought; (2) the relationship between the incarnation and the atonement; and (3) the significance, following Athanasius, of the two-fold ministry of Jesus Christ in which he ministered the things of God to humankind and the things of humankind to God. Reflection on these three aspects of Torrance theology will illustrate the kinetic nature of his thinking.

1. The development of the Christian doctrine of the incarnation occurred as ‘[T]he Church found itself struggling with two powerful ideas that threatened to destroy its existence: (a) the idea that God himself does not intervene in the actual life of men in time and space for he is immutable and changeless, and (b) that the Word of God revealed in Christ is not grounded in the eternal Being of God but is detached and separated from him and therefore mutable and changeable.’⁷ If this two-fold disjunction holds, Christianity falls apart. A wedge is driven between God as creator and God as redeemer. ‘This created a real problem for the Church’s understanding of the Incarnation as a real *egeneto sarx* on the part of the Logos, for it inhibited a serious consideration of a real *becoming* of the intelligible in the sensible, or of the eternal in the contingent.’⁸

The effect of this two-fold disjunction was to shut God out of the world, in which case, the incarnation is apparent but not real.⁹ God and the creature remain separated. Redemption is collapsed into mythology and theology into the language of symbol. Salvation has no historical or empirical dimension; and Jesus is not ontologically

grounded in God. This leads to the loss of meaning in Christology for it has no objective reference in God.

For Torrance, then, a unitary approach to the doctrine of Christ is needed, one in which we understand him right from the start in his wholeness and integrity as one person who is both God and human being.¹⁰ In this way we come to know him as he discloses himself to us on his own terms in the unity of his incarnate personhood.

The answer to ‘this menace’ of dualism was the *homoousion* of the Nicene Creed, the doctrine that Jesus Christ, the Word of God, belongs to the divine side of reality, and is very God come into our world as a man to redeem us.¹¹ The *homoousion* functions as the primary heuristic theological instrument by which we come to a realist, unitary knowledge of Jesus Christ. It is a purely theological construct¹² by which the church has been able to apprehend and henceforth to protect the central evangelical truth of the gospel. Interpreting this, Torrance says that

[...] the [*homoousios to Patri*] was revolutionary and decisive: it expressed the fact that what God is ‘toward us’ and ‘in the midst of us’ in and through the Word made flesh, he really is **in himself**; that he is in the **internal relations** of his transcendent being the very same Father, Son and Holy Spirit that he is in his revealing and saving activity in time and space toward mankind.¹³

The incarnation falls within the structures of our humanity; the church confesses that it also falls within the life and being of God.¹⁴ As the hinge upon which the Creed turned, the *homoousion* remains still the cardinal concept to which the church has returned again and again in the understanding and proclamation of the gospel.

Central to the Creed, the *homoousion* means

[...] the Son of God in his incarnate Person is the place where we may know the Father as he is in himself, and know him accurately and truly in accordance with his own divine nature. The *homoousion* asserts that God *is* eternally in himself what he

is in Jesus Christ, and, therefore, that there is no dark unknown God behind the back of Jesus Christ, but only he who is made known to us in Jesus Christ.¹⁵

Jesus Christ is the mediating centre of revelation whereby all of our knowledge of God is controlled.¹⁶ The *homoousion* grounds the reality of our Lord's humanity, and all that he revealed and did for our sakes – 'for us men and for our salvation' – in an indivisible union with the eternal being of God.¹⁷ 'Only God can save, but he saves precisely as man' says Torrance in a summary way.¹⁸ In this case, 'the work of atoning salvation does *not* take place *outside* of Christ, as something external to him, but takes place *within* him, *within* the incarnate constitution of his Person as Mediator.'¹⁹

As a kinetic event, 'the incarnation is to be understood, then, as a real becoming on the part of God [...] but it also implies, therefore, that the human life and activity of Christ must be understood from beginning to end in a thoroughly personal and *vicarious* way.'²⁰ That is to say, we must now reflect on Torrance's kinetic theology of the *homoousion* from a soteriological perspective. There is no proper knowledge of the incarnation that is not soteriological, and there is no basis for the atonement that is not incarnational.

2. In Jesus Christ divine and human natures are united in his one person. This is the doctrine of the hypostatic union, about which, Torrance believed, Christian theology has not given enough thought since the early centuries,²¹ and which has tended to be developed in abstraction from the historical life and work of Jesus Christ.²² The hypostatic union, however, is not to be thought of as a doctrine that expresses only the mystery of the person of Christ. In this doctrine, Jesus Christ and his incarnation are understood also soteriologically as falling within the life of God in such a way that he is the personal bridge between God and humankind that is grounded in the being of God and anchored in the being of humankind. Thus the *homoousion* is to 'be taken along with a cognate conception about the indissoluble union of God and man in the one Person of Christ,'²³ for the *homoousion* and the hypostatic union together are two fundamental doctrines for understanding the church's faith in Jesus Christ.²⁴ Reconciliation is

not something that is added to the hypostatic union; it is the hypostatic union at work in expiation and atonement. That is to say, reconciliation also must be understood kinetically.

According to Torrance, '[p]erhaps the most fundamental truth which we have to learn in the Christian Church, or rather relearn since we have suppressed it, is that the Incarnation was the coming of God to save us in the heart of our *fallen* and *depraved* humanity, where humanity is at its wickedest in its enmity and violence against the reconciling love of God.'²⁵ Thus, the whole of our humanity has to be assumed by Christ in the personal union of his two natures, not only our corrupted physical nature, but also our spiritual nature in which we have become alienated from God in our minds. Because Christ's person and work are one, for in the New Testament he is redemption, he is righteousness, he is eternal life, atonement must be understood in terms of the internal relations established by the doctrines of the *homoousion* and the hypostatic union.²⁶ This means that atonement is not an act established externally to Jesus Christ, taking place outside of him, in an instrumental way. When this happens, atonement is understood only in terms of the moral order that is not yet redeemed or of a legal order that must be restored.²⁷ For Torrance, rather, atonement takes place within Jesus Christ, in the ontological depths of his incarnate life in such a way that the incarnation itself is essentially redemptive.²⁸

Thus the redemptive work of Christ was fully representative and truly universal in its range. Its vicarious efficacy has its force through the union of his divine Person as Creator and Lord with us in our creaturely being, whereby he lays hold of us in himself and acts for us from out of the inner depths of his coexistence with us and our existence in him, delivering us from the sentence of death upon us, and from the corruption and perdition that have overtaken us.²⁹

This does not imply that the incarnation as such is atonement – the so-called mechanistic argument. It is important to recall that as the Incarnate One, Christ acts *personally* on our behalf in such a way that the personal and the ontological are held very closely together.³⁰

On this ground Torrance developed the theology of atonement as a substitutionary act of God in Christ for us, making our sin and death his own that we might partake of his righteousness and life. Torrance cites Athanasius, that ‘the whole Christ became a curse for us,’ taking upon himself our Adamic humanity, but triumphing over the forces of evil embedded within our existence, bringing his own holiness and obedience to bear in such a way as to condemn sin and deliver us from its power.³¹ Again following Athanasius, Torrance especially emphasizes Christ’s assumption and healing of our human minds: ‘it is in the inner man, in his rational human soul, that man has fallen and become enslaved to sin. It is in the mind, not just in the flesh [...] that sin is entrenched.’³² Redemption is closely linked to revelation in which the teaching of Jesus also is to be regarded as an essential part of his saving work. Christ’s life, from cradle to grave, in which he took on our whole humanity, and not just his death, is part of the atoning reconciliation.

Now ‘[n]o one can provide for himself or for another a means of salvation which will be accepted in exchange for his life or soul. But this is precisely what Jesus claims to do: to give his *life* as a sacrificial propitiation or ransom [*lutron*], thereby giving an interpretation of his life and death in terms both of cultic atonement and of the suffering servant.’³³ Two key verses from the New Testament form the basis for the doctrine of atonement and redemption: ‘For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many’ (Mark 10:45 and par.); and ‘This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many’ (Mark 14:24 and par.). What does this mean?

According to Torrance, the New Testament conception of redemption is indebted to three Hebrew terms: *pdh*, *kpr*, and *g’l*. *pdh* refers to the nature of the act of redemption, *kpr* refers to the atoning expiation as a sacrifice, and *g’l* refers to the nature or person of the redeemer.³⁴ These overlapping concepts refer to the divine redemption of Israel out of Egypt, and, in Deutero-Isaiah, are used in association with the promise of a new Israel when God will redeem his people through an anointed servant.³⁵ In Torrance’s view the New Testament writers gathered up the conception of redemption in the Old Testament, and reinterpreted it, though nowhere systematically, in terms of what God had become and done in Jesus Christ. This is found especially in

the biblical concept of *apolytrolos* (redemption, deliverance) in which the main ingredients of the Hebrew usage are apparent though not schematized. Redemption by God's grace through the coming of Jesus Christ (e.g. Luke 21:28), redemption by expiation through the blood of Jesus Christ (Eph 1:7), and redemption in the Beloved (Eph 1:6), are apparent in New Testament usage.³⁶ *Apolytrolos*, in other words, is understood kinetically precisely in relation to the person and work of Jesus Christ.

One final aspect of Torrance's kinetic teaching on the atonement is briefly noted, namely, the 'wonderful exchange' (*katallagel* reconciliation) in which Christ took our place that we might have his place.³⁷ It is 'upon this concept of atoning exchange as its inner hinge that the whole doctrine of incarnational redemption through the descent [*katabasis*] and ascent [*anabasis*], the death and resurrection, the humiliation and exaltation, of the Son of God rests.'³⁸ This has its biblical basis in the Pauline doctrine expressed at 2 Cor 8:9 (see also 5:21). Commenting on this text Torrance noted 'the great soteriological principle of sacrificial atoning exchange [*antallagma*], *the unassumed is the unredeemed*'.³⁹ It embraces the entirety of the relationship between Christ and us. For Torrance the whole sweep of redemption is now covered in this notion. Human nature is anchored in God as Christ Jesus himself, crucified and risen. It is for this reason that theological anthropology begins first here, with the atonement.⁴⁰

Redemption through the atoning exchange is not accomplished by divine *fiat*, or by some transaction conducted above our heads, but by a real incarnation into the heart of our humanity to save us from within and from below by an act of love and grace. In this way too we see the kinetic 'shape' of Torrance's theology.

3. Learning from Athanasius, Torrance developed the dynamic theology of Christ exercising a two-fold ministry⁴¹ in which he '*ministered not only the things of God to man but ministered the things of man to God*'.⁴² When this is thought through in relation to the doctrine of union with Christ the specific forms of response that are called forth by the gospel clearly come into view.

In the depth of the vicarious humanity of Christ in the incarnation there is both a humanward and a Godward direction, in which Christ

mediates God to us and us to God in the unity of his incarnate personhood. This is the correlate of the hypostatic union. Thus Torrance refers to the

[...] double fact that in Jesus Christ the Word of God has become man, has assumed a human form, in order as such to be God's language to man, and that in Jesus Christ there is gathered up and embodied, in obedient response to God, man's true word to God and his true speech about God. 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.⁴³

The Word of God has been addressed to us, and, as such, has actually reached us because it has been addressed to us in Jesus Christ; further, in Christ the Word has found a response in our hearing and understanding. That is, we do not begin with God alone or with humankind alone,

[...] but with God and man as they are posited together in a movement of creative self-communication by the Word of God. [...] A profound reciprocity is created in which God addresses His Word to man by giving it human form without any diminishment of its divine reality as God Himself speaks it, and in which He enables man to hear His Word and respond to it without any cancellation of his human mode of being. [...] Thus 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 the word of man in answer to God.⁴⁴

Jesus Christ has fulfilled the covenant from God's side and from our side. In the incarnate unity of his person he is the divine-human Word '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.'⁴⁵ 'Expressed otherwise, in the hypostatic union between God and man

in Jesus Christ there is included a union between the Word of God and the word of man'.⁴⁶ The gospel is not then to be understood as the Word of God coming to us, inviting our response, but as including 'the all-significant middle term, the divinely provided response in the vicarious humanity of Jesus Christ.'⁴⁷

It is in terms of the vicarious humanity of God in Christ that the full meaning of the obedience of Christ and the cross are understood. Torrance often cited Heb 3:1–6, where reference is made to Christ as the Apostle and High Priest of our confession. 'Here we have described Christ's twofold function in priestly mediation. He is the Apostle or *Sāliah* of God, and He is also our High Priest made in all points as we are, but without sin.'⁴⁸ As High Priest, Jesus is contrasted with Moses, who was faithful in all his house as a servant (Num 12:7 and Heb 3:5), while Jesus is Son over his own house (Heb 3:6).

In this particular passage the work of Christ as Apostle and High Priest, both in the sense of 'the Son over the House,' is described in terms of confession, [*homologia*], a word which comes in three other passages (3.1; 4.14; 10.23). In each case it sets forth primarily the confession made by the High Priest as he enters within the veil. It is the confession of our sin before God and the confession of God's righteous judgment upon our sin. As Apostle Christ bears witness for God, that He is Holy. As High Priest He acknowledges that witness and says Amen to it. Again as Apostle of God He confesses the mercy and grace of God, His will to pardon and reconcile. As High Priest He intercedes for men, and confesses them before the face of God.⁴⁹

This confession of Christ as Apostle and High Priest is not in word only, but includes the judgment of God at the cross and the submission of Christ in full obedience. The obedience of Christ to the judgment of God must not be limited to his passive obedience, however, in which he was 'made under the Law' to bear its condemnation in our name and on our behalf. For he lived also to bend back the will of humankind into a perfect submission to the will of God through a life lived in active filial obedience to his heavenly Father. The humanity

of Christ was not external to the atonement. Rather, Jesus Christ ‘is our human response to God’⁵⁰ for he not only suffered the judgment of God on the cross for us, but fulfilled the will of God in an obedient life of filial love. In view of the vicarious humanity of Christ it is clear why Torrance insisted that incarnation and atonement must be thought together, and why revelation and reconciliation are inseparable, and must be thought out together in a kinetic way.

Torrance’s doctrine of union with Christ must be noted, for it is only through this union that we partake of the blessings of his holy and obedient life.⁵¹ Writing on the doctrine of deification through grace he notes that

Reformed theology interprets participation in the divine nature as the union and communion we are given to have with Christ in his human nature, as participation in his Incarnate Sonship, and therefore as sharing in him in the divine Life and Love. That is to say, it interprets ‘deification’ precisely in the same way as Athanasius in the *Contra Arianos*. It is only through *real and substantial union* (Calvin’s expression) with him in his human nature that we partake of all his benefits, such as justification and sanctification and regeneration, but because in him human nature is hypostatically united to divine nature so that the Godhead dwells in him ‘bodily’, in him we really are made partakers of the eternal Life of God himself.⁵²

Scottish theology at the Reformation gave a central place to the union of God and humankind in Christ, and to the understanding of the Christian life therefore as an offering to God only ‘by the hand of Christ’ (Knox).⁵³ Thus, ‘it is in and through our union with him, that all that is his becomes ours.’⁵⁴ And again: ‘It is only through union with Christ that we partake of the blessings of Christ, that is through union with him in his holy and obedient life [...] Through union with him we share in his faith, in his obedience, in his trust and his appropriation of the Father’s blessing.’⁵⁵ Union with Christ is given through the gift of the Holy Spirit, and is the ground of the church. According to Torrance, ‘[t]he Christian Church is what it is because of its indissoluble union with Christ through the Spirit, for in him is

concentrated the Church and all ministry [...] [Thus], there is only one ministry, that of Christ in his Body.’⁵⁶ The Holy Spirit constitutes the church in union with its Head, joining us to Christ to share in his communion with the Father, and to bear witness to him in the life of the world.

The specific forms of response through participation in Christ’s mediation of our human response to God are briefly indicated with regard to faith, worship, and service.

- a) **Faith.** Before we refer to our own faith, faith must be understood first of all in terms of ‘Jesus as stepping into the relation between the faithfulness of God and the actual unfaithfulness of human beings, actualising the faithfulness of God and restoring the faithfulness of human beings by grounding it in the incarnate medium of his own faithfulness so that it answers perfectly to the divine faithfulness.’⁵⁷ Jesus acts in our place from within our unfaithfulness, giving us a faithfulness in which we may share. He is both the truth of God and human being keeping faith, and truth with God in the unity of God revealing himself and human being hearing, believing, obeying and speaking his Word.⁵⁸ Faith is grounded objectively yet personally in the One who believes for us; faith depends upon the faithfulness of God in Christ for us.

Thus the very faith which we confess is the faith of Christ Jesus who loved us and gave himself for us in a life and death of utter trust and belief in God the Father. Our faith is altogether grounded in him who is ‘author and finisher’, on whom faith depends from start to finish.⁵⁹

We are summoned to faith in such a way ‘in which our faith is laid hold of, enveloped, and upheld by his unswerving faithfulness.’⁶⁰ We do not rely upon our own faith, ‘but wholly upon [Christ’s] vicarious response of faithfulness toward God.’⁶¹

- b) **Worship.** Torrance insists that Jesus Christ has embodied for us the response of human beings to God in such a way that henceforth all worship and prayer is grounded in him. ‘Jesus Christ in his own

self-oblation to the Father *is* our worship and prayer in an acutely personalised form, so that it is only through him and with him that we may draw near to God with the hands of our faith filled with no other offering but that which he has made on our behalf and in our place once and for all.’⁶² All approach to God is in the name of Jesus Christ, ‘for worship and prayer are not ways in which we express ourselves but ways in which we hold up before the Father his beloved Son, take refuge in his atoning sacrifice, and make that our only plea.’⁶³ Christ has united himself to us in such a way that he gathers up our faltering worship into himself, so that in presenting himself to the Father he presents also the worship of all creation to share in his own communion with the Father. In worship, as in faith, Christ’s takes our place, and we trust solely in his vicarious self-offering to the Father.

- c) **Christian service.** The essential nature of the church, as of individual Christians, is participation in the humanity of Jesus Christ who is the love of God poured out for us. That is, ‘the Church *is* Church as it participates in the active operation of the divine love.’⁶⁴ As the Son is sent from the Father, so the being of the church in love involves a sharing in the mission of Jesus Christ. In this way, ministry is grounded upon a Christological pattern. Thus, ‘as the Body of which He is the Head the Church participates in His ministry by serving Him in history where it is sent by Him in fulfilment of His ministry of reconciliation’.⁶⁵ The ministry of the church is not another ministry, different from the ministry of Christ or separate from it, but takes its essential form and content from the servant-existence and mission of Jesus. The mission of the church is not an extension of the mission of Jesus, but is a sharing in the mission of Jesus. ‘Thus Jesus Christ constitutes in Himself, in His own vicarious human life and service, the creative source and norm and pattern of all true Christian service.’⁶⁶

In a summary fashion, Torrance often cited Gal 2:20: *I yet not I but Christ.*⁶⁷ The whole of the Christian life is included in the *I yet not I but Christ*, for in Jesus Christ all human responses

[...] are laid hold of, sanctified and informed by his vicarious life of obedience and response to the Father. They are in fact so indissolubly united to the life of Jesus Christ which he lived out among us and which he has offered to the Father, as arising out of our human being and nature, that they are *our responses* toward the love of the Father poured out upon us through the mediation of the Son and in the unity of the Holy Spirit.⁶⁸

Allow now a closing paragraph. I have tried to show in three areas of Christological development the kinetic ‘shape’ of Torrance theology. The problem I have been faced with is analogous to taking a still photograph of an express train in motion. By means of a fast shutter speed, the train looks at rest. The photograph is an abstraction. Torrance taught us that theology is a dynamic, even a fluid discipline because our object of enquiry is the living, relating, and personalizing Lord. To project Torrance theology by way of a ‘theological photograph’ is to make static and abstract what is alive and moving. He often insisted that his concepts were required to be open-ended, rather than closed off. It was his way, I think, of schematizing the kinetic nature of theology. Because the Lord who became flesh comes and comes again in the power of the Holy Spirit, all our attempts to represent him are, by virtue of their subject matter, themselves always on the move in obedient thinking that responds in gratitude to the God known in and as the *egeneto sarx*.

Notes

- ¹ Thus Karl Barth, “Foreword to the Torchbook Edition,” *Dogmatics in Outline* (New York: Harper & Row, 1959), 5.
- ² Thomas F. Torrance, *Theological Science* (London: Oxford University Press, 1969), 154.
- ³ *Ibid.*, 209.
- ⁴ Thomas F. Torrance, *Theology in Reconstruction* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1965), 36. Thus, ‘[w]hat God the Father has revealed of himself in Jesus Christ his Son, he is in himself; and what he is in himself as God the Father he reveals in Jesus Christ

his Son. The Father and the Son are One, one in Being and one in Agency. Thus in Jesus Christ the Mediation of divine Revelation and the Person of the Mediator perfectly coincide. In Jesus Christ God has given us a Revelation which is identical with himself. Jesus Christ *is* the Revelation of God.’ Thomas F. Torrance, *The Mediation of Christ* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1983), 33. Torrance often makes reference to an illustration of this point in a story from his years as a military chaplain during the Second World War, when a dying soldier asked him if God was really like Jesus – see, for example, *The Mediation of Christ*, 70, and Thomas F. Torrance, *Preaching Christ Today: The Gospel and Scientific Thinking* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1994), 55. For an account and its interpretation see Alister E. McGrath, *T. F. Torrance: An Intellectual Biography* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999), 74, where he cites the story at length from Torrance’s unpublished war memoir.

- 5 Thomas F. Torrance, *Reality and Evangelical Theology* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1982), 23.
- 6 *The Mediation of Christ*, 60.
- 7 *Theology in Reconstruction*, 261.
- 8 *Ibid.*, 175.
- 9 Thomas F. Torrance, *The Trinitarian Faith: The Evangelical Theology of the Ancient Catholic Church* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1993), 112 f.
- 10 *The Mediation of Christ*, 63.
- 11 *Theology in Reconstruction*, 261. Thomas F. Torrance, *The Christian Doctrine of God: One Being, Three Persons* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996), 21.
- 12 *The Christian Doctrine of God*, 80.
- 13 *The Trinitarian Faith*, 130.
- 14 Thomas F. Torrance, *The Ground and Grammar of Theology* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1980), 160.
- 15 *The Trinitarian Faith*, 135. See also *The Mediation of Christ*, 70.
- 16 *The Mediation of Christ*, 65.
- 17 *The Trinitarian Faith*, 135.
- 18 *Ibid.*, 149.
- 19 *Ibid.*, 155.

- ²⁰ Ibid., 150 f.
- ²¹ *Preaching Christ Today*, 57.
- ²² Thomas F. Torrance, “Atonement and the Oneness of the Church,” *Scottish Journal of Theology*, 7.3 (1954): 245 f., also published in Thomas F. Torrance, *Conflict and Agreement in the Church: Volume 1 Order and Disorder* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1959), 238–62.
- ²³ *The Christian Doctrine of God*, 94. See also *The Ground and Grammar of Theology*, 165, and *Preaching Christ Today*, 57.
- ²⁴ Torrance is clear that in the development of the hypostatic union we respect the mystery and ineffability of the Incarnate One. This is exactly what he finds in the Chalcedonian development of the doctrine where the attempt was made to go no further than the carefully worked adverbs allowed.
- ²⁵ *The Mediation of Christ*, 48.
- ²⁶ *Preaching Christ Today*, 58.
- ²⁷ For indeed the moral order is restored in the atonement, and set on a new basis. See *The Trinitarian Faith*, 160.
- ²⁸ *Preaching Christ Today*, 59. The influence of Athanasius becomes very clear at this point in Torrance’s exposition of the doctrine of the atonement. The ‘atonement is not an act of God done *ab extra* upon man, but an act of God become man, done *ab intra*, in his stead and on his behalf; it is an act of God as man, translated into human actuality and made to issue out of the depths of man’s being and life toward God.’ *The Trinitarian Faith*, 158 f.
- ²⁹ *The Trinitarian Faith*, 155 f.
- ³⁰ Ibid., 156 f.
- ³¹ Ibid., 161. Torrance cites Gregory of Nazianzus approvingly, from *Orations* 30.5: ‘As long, therefore as I am disobedient and rebellious by the denial of God and by my passions, Christ also is called disobedient on my account. But when all things have been subjected to him, then he himself will have fulfilled his subjection, bringing me whom he has saved to God.’ Ibid., 162 f.
- ³² Ibid., 164.
- ³³ Ibid., 169.
- ³⁴ *pdh* refers to a mighty act of God redeeming from unlawful thralldom, as in the bringing of Israel out of Egypt by the hand of

- God and with the substitutionary sacrifice of the Passover. It carries overtones of grace. The emphasis is upon the cost and nature of the redeeming act, and not upon the redeemer. *kpr* means to blot out or to cover sin and guilt. It is primarily a cultic conception of redemption in which God is the subject, never the object, who makes atonement. It carries the notions of both judgment upon wrong through a life for a life and restoration to favour. *g'l* refers to redemption out of bondage undertaken by a kinsperson. The focus here is upon the redeemer, the person of the *go'el* who stands in for the person enslaved and who cannot redeem him or herself.
- ³⁵ Ibid., 171.
- ³⁶ Only later did the concept of redemption come to an explicit systematic formulation. Thus Torrance finds in the Greek Fathers, for example, especially in Irenaeus, Athanasius and Gregory of Nazianzus, the development of the doctrine of the atonement in such a way that the dramatic, the priestly and the ontological aspects of redemption were never separated, but held together.
- ³⁷ For what follows see *The Trinitarian Faith*, 179–90, *The Christian Doctrine of God*, 250. See also especially John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, IV.17.2.
- ³⁸ *The Trinitarian Faith*, 180.
- ³⁹ *The Christian Doctrine of God*, 250.
- ⁴⁰ ‘It is precisely in Jesus [...] that we are to think of the whole human race, and indeed of the whole creation, as in a profound sense already redeemed, resurrected, and consecrated for the glory and worship of God.’ *The Trinitarian Faith*, 183.
- ⁴¹ *The Mediation of Christ*, 83. References to Athanasius include *Contra Arianos*, I.41, 50; II.7, 12, 50, 65, 74; III.30, 38; IV.6.
- ⁴² Thomas F. Torrance, *Theology in Reconciliation: Essays Towards Evangelical and Catholic Unity in East and West* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), 228.
- ⁴³ *Theology in Reconstruction*, 129.
- ⁴⁴ Thomas F. Torrance, *God and Rationality* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), 137 f.
- ⁴⁵ Ibid., 138.
- ⁴⁶ Ibid., 142.
- ⁴⁷ Ibid., 145.

- 48 Thomas F. Torrance, *Royal Priesthood: A Theology of Ordained Ministry* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1955), 11.
- 49 *Ibid.*, 12.
- 50 *The Mediation of Christ*, 90.
- 51 *Theology in Reconstruction*, 158.
- 52 *Ibid.*, 184.
- 53 See Thomas F. Torrance, *Scottish Theology: From John Knox to John McLeod Campbell* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996), 42.
- 54 *Theology in Reconstruction*, 151.
- 55 *Ibid.*, 158 f.
- 56 *Ibid.*, 208.
- 57 *The Mediation of Christ*, 92.
- 58 *God and Rationality*, 154.
- 59 *The Mediation of Christ*, 94.
- 60 *Preaching Christ Today*, 31.
- 61 *God and Rationality*, 154.
- 62 *The Mediation of Christ*, 97.
- 63 *Ibid.*, 97 f.
- 64 *Royal Priesthood*, 30.
- 65 *Ibid.*, 35.
- 66 *God and Rationality*, 162.
- 67 *The Mediation of Christ*, 107. See also *Preaching Christ Today*, 31.
- 68 *The Mediation of Christ*, 108.