

Irenaeus's Trinitarian Theology

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Introduction

IT IS STRANGE to observe that the most substantial account of Irenaeus's Trinitarian theology remains that of Jules Lebreton in his 1928 *Histoire du Dogme de la Trinité*, volume two.¹ Aspects of Irenaeus's Trinitarian theology—particularly his teaching on the Holy Spirit²—have been studied before Lebreton and after, but with few significant attempts to situate specific topics within a comprehensive account of Irenaeus's teaching on the Trinity. My purpose in this essay is to describe Irenaeus's Trinitarian theology as thoroughly as I can, short of a monograph, by close readings of what I regard as key passages in Irenaeus's writings, and by situating that theology within the context of Trinitarian theologies of the second half of the second century A.D. I will examine the central themes that Irenaeus himself announces, and I will examine the role of theological concepts that Irenaeus utilizes as givens, the conceptual “atoms” and “molecules” that go to build up the elements of Irenaeus's Trinitarian theology.³

¹ Jules Lebreton, *Histoire du Dogme de la Trinité des origines au concile de Nicée* (Paris: Gabriel Beauchesne, 1928). Volume one was published in 1912.

² Two treatments stand out: H. B. Swete's *The Holy Spirit in the Ancient Church*, also published in 1912, has a ten-page chapter on Irenaeus's pneumatology. Originally published by MacMillan and Company, London, 1912, it has been reprinted by Wipf and Stock Publishers, Eugene, Oregon, 1996. J. Armitage Robinson's Introduction to his 1920 English translation of Irenaeus's *Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching* (London: SPCK, 1920) includes an insightful and lengthy discussion of Irenaeus's pneumatology; see pages 24–68. (This work is available online at www.ccel.org/ccel/irenaeus/demonst.)

³ I wish to thank my anonymous reviewer for his or her helpful comments. Because this essay was written during my sabbatical, away from any academic library, I

The first and most important of these is *spirit*, which was for the first two centuries of Christian theology the principal term for naming the divine (as it was in late Second Temple Judaism and Hellenistic philosophy.) The statement in John 4:24 that “God is spirit” is a clear example of how fundamental “spirit” can be in theology of the early Common Era, for John’s statement is not a judgment peculiar to the theology of the fourth gospel: it expresses a generally recognized truth. When early Christians want to speak about the divinity of Jesus, they speak of the “Spirit” that has taken flesh.⁴ The divine is Spirit, and one talks about God by recognizing that he is Spirit. There are, as we shall see, other terms for identifying divinity, but the “first” term for Christians is Spirit. In the Hellenistic era the theological meaning of the term “spirit” is determined predominantly by its sense in Stoic philosophy.⁵ In particular, that God is Spirit and has/is a Logos is a basic, well-known, and influential Stoic doctrine during the first and second centuries of Christianity.⁶ Spirit, then, plays a significant role in the logic of Irenaeus’s Trinitarian theology; indeed, Irenaeus marks the end of an era in Christian Spirit theology, for the Monarchian controversy that follows close upon him triggers a change in how “economic” theologians use the concept.⁷

must thank my circle of “Irenophile” graduate students at Marquette University who volunteered research and logistical support: Anthony Briggman (who is presently writing his dissertation on Irenaeus’s pneumatology), Michael Harris, Jackson Lashier, and Daniel Lloyd. I am also grateful for the help of Chad Gerber.

⁴ See, for example, *Epistle of Barnabas* 7.3, which speaks of Christ’s flesh as “the vessel of the Spirit”; Ignatius of Antioch, *Epistle to the Smyrnians* 3.3, “Christ united in Spirit to the Father”; and *Second Clement* 9.5, “Christ being first, Spirit. . . .” The equation of divinity with Spirit is so ubiquitous in the early Church that Harnack’s term for the primitive Christian doctrine of a pre-existent divine agent who descends and lives in flesh is “*pneumatic* Christology” (which he contrasts with “adoptionist Christology.”) See *History of Dogma* I.III.4. Certainly the equation of divinity with spirit is common to Justin Martyr, Athenagoras, Tatian, and the *Shepherd of Hermas*, as well as Irenaeus.

⁵ “The Stoic ideas [on *pneuma*] had an enormous impact on the minds of scientists and philosophers during the first three centuries B.C. They were intensified and modified during the first centuries A.D. by the spread of the fundamental beliefs of the monotheistic religions. *Pneuma* was identified with the divine spirit, and its omnipresence became identical with the omnipresence of God.” Samuel Sambursky, *The Physical World of Late Antiquity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959/1987), 4.

⁶ “In Chrysippus’ system, *pneuma* becomes equivalent to god and equivalent to divine reason: either *nous* or *logos*.” Michael Lapidge, “Stoic Cosmology,” in *The Stoics*, ed. John M. Rist (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 161–85; here p. 170.

⁷ The Monarchian (“modalist”) theologies of the late second and early third centuries are not often recognized for what they were: *pneumatological* heresies. The

All the Apologists speak of the Second Person as the “Word,”⁸ and through their knowledge of the Jewish and pagan philosophical treatments of the term they gain a sense of what it says about his identity and associated actions. By understanding “Word” to include some of the meanings given it in Jewish and pagan philosophical literatures, it is possible for Christians to connect in exegesis scriptural passages that would otherwise have nothing in common with “Word” in the prologue of John. The Christian understanding of the identity of the Word is increased by recognizing that he is referred to in scriptural passages like “God *said*, Let there be light” (Gen 1:3), “By the *Word* of the Lord were the heavens made” (Ps 33:6), and “The *Word* of the Lord said, Before I formed you in the womb I knew you” (Jer 1:5.) The creative actions the prologue attributes to the Word in John are identified and amplified by scriptural passages such as Genesis 1:3, Psalm 33:6, and Jeremiah 1:5, as well as by philosophical senses from other writings. This train of thought, and the results it produces in Christian theology of the Second Person, is what is meant by “Logos theology.” Irenaeus has a definite “Logos theology,” that is, a Christology based upon an understanding of the spiritual Word active in the cosmos, and which identifies the divine in the Incarnation as that same spiritual Word.⁹ Any understatement of Irenaeus’s “Word Christology” would distort our appreciation of the content of his

Monarchians identify divine Spirit with God (the Father) alone, and the divinity in Jesus is the divine Spirit, the Father. As Ronald Heine says, “it is the concept of spirit, not Logos, which links Father and Son. Father and Son are one inseparable spirit. The spirit was made flesh in the virgin. This spirit was the Father.” “The Christology of Callistus,” *Journal of Theological Studies* 49 (1998): 56–91; here p. 64. To distinguish this Monarchian theology from later varieties I call it “Spirit Monarchianism.”

⁸ I use the anachronistic term “Second Person” because it does not appear in any of the texts I will discuss and conceptually belongs to another era in Christian Trinitarian theology. Irenaeus, in particular, does not use any word that resembles “person.” However, the virtue of the phrase is, for me, that it stands outside the language of second-century theology and cannot be mistaken by the reader as one of Irenaeus’s trinitarian terms I am commenting upon. The content and referent of the titles “Word,” “Son,” and “Christ,” among others, are precisely what are in question in the writings I treat in this essay. Careful attention to which title specifically is used by an author and under what circumstances is an essential part of my method. Scholarship which treats “Son” and “Word” as interchangeable titles for Irenaeus is of limited accuracy and utility. The title “Third Person” is likewise helpful for signaling when one is speaking of the Holy Spirit rather than the divine Spirit.

⁹ The Stoic understanding of divine Spirit and Word brings these two concepts together, and, under its influence, there is no opposition in theology between Spirit and Word. Spirit theology supports Word theology; Word theology is a specialization

Trinitarian theology, but, as will be seen, Irenaeus does not begin his account of the Trinity by identifying “Word” as the proper and exclusive title of the Second Person.

The best known application of philosophical concepts to second-century Christian teaching on the Word is perhaps “two-stage” Logos theology.¹⁰ This account of the origin and generation of W/word is used by Christians to speak of the eternal existence and the generation of the Word. Irenaeus rejects “two-stage” Logos theology as a way of providing this description; indeed he largely rejects the propriety of offering any such description, but he otherwise accepts Logos Christology and develops it beyond its previous understanding among the Apologists. (About the Word Irenaeus is more Johannine than John!)¹¹ However, to have a strong Logos theology does not necessarily mean that one has a weak Spirit theology.¹² the two can be two aspects of the same theology, as is the case in Stoic thought, as it is in the Gospel of John. The interconnection in Irenaeus’s theology of Spirit and Word, the logical connection between the two, is one reason why I speak of the Stoic influence upon his thought.¹³ The Johannine influence is obvious.

Irenaeus’s pneumatology has been the subject of much sympathetic study for more than a hundred years. For some past scholars, the history

in Spirit theology. The Gospel that announces the existence of God’s Word is the Gospel that proclaims that God is Spirit.

¹⁰ “Two-stage” Logos theology builds from the Stoic distinction between the interior word in the mind and the word expressed in speech. In the Christian adaptation of this model, the Word exists within God, and at the moment of creation, when God speaks (“Let there be light”), the Word takes on a distinct existence. This theology provides for continuity of nature between Father and Word, describes the generation of the Word, and asserts the eternal existence of the Word, though without supporting an eternal *distinct* existence. It is taught by all the Apologists, Clement of Alexandria, and Tertullian. See Jean Daniélou, *Gospel Message and Hellenistic Culture*, trans. John Austin Baker (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1973), 345–86.

¹¹ Irenaeus consistently uses “Logos” for the Second Person throughout his writings, and regularly develops his theology of the Second Person from the content of the concept of Logos. The same cannot be said of the Gospel of John. See Bernhard Mutschler, *Irenäus als johanneischer Theologe* (Münster: Mohr Siebeck, 2004).

¹² Despite what G. W. H. Lampe and others maintained, because the opposition was and is false. For Lampe’s opinion, so representative of a school of modern liberal theology, see *God as Spirit* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), 116 (for example).

¹³ Too often it is imagined that Irenaeus possessed the “virtue” of ignorance of high Greek culture, especially philosophy and rhetoric. Irenaeus’s knowledge of Greek philosophy is summarized by Robert M. Grant in “Irenaeus and Hellenistic Culture,” *Harvard Theological Review*, 42 (1949): 41–51.

of the theology of the Holy Spirit in the early Church goes from Paul to Irenaeus (as if Luke's pneumatology were a kind of subset of Paul's.) In ways Irenaeus's pneumatology is wide-ranging and profound: Swete says that Irenaeus was the first to recover and appreciate Paul's doctrine of the role of the Holy Spirit in perfecting and regenerating humanity in the life to come. "Irenaeus," Swete says, "has on this point caught the inspiration of S. Paul more nearly than any of his predecessors or contemporaries."¹⁴ In other ways, the virtue of Irenaeus's pneumatology is its relative clarity (for example, in his tripartite anthropology, or if compared to the "spiritual" anthropology of *Shepherd of Hermas*.) But there are significant parts of Irenaeus's pneumatology that are simply conventional in their articulation and content: the most important example of this would be his doctrine of the Holy Spirit as the source and agent of prophecy. The most common and fundamental early Christian understanding of the distinctive activity of the Holy Spirit is as source and agent of prophecy; such an understanding is, not surprisingly, also the most common and fundamental Late Second Temple understanding of the distinctive activity of the Holy Spirit. The proportion of Irenaeus's comments on the Holy Spirit as prophetic agent in all he has to say about the Holy Spirit puts him well within this trajectory. However, I am not here interested in any of the aspects of Irenaeus's pneumatology listed in this paragraph, and I name them only to acknowledge that it is not my intention to give a comprehensive description of Irenaeus's pneumatology.¹⁵

In this essay I am concerned with what might be called Irenaeus's "high" pneumatology, that is, a theology which attributes to the Holy Spirit the same functions by which the Word-Son is shown to be divine.¹⁶ For Irenaeus, the most important distinguishing function or activity of God is creation. This statement may seem obvious given that in the *Against Heresies* Irenaeus is writing a polemic against the Gnostics (who deny that the highest God creates); but beside the fact of Irenaeus's response to radical dualism there is the era's commonplace—which Irenaeus embraces as

¹⁴ Swete, *Ancient Church*, 93–94.

¹⁵ The work that is usually cited in scholarly footnotes on Irenaeus's pneumatology is Hans-Jochen Jaschke, *Der Heilige Geist im Bekenntnis der Kirche: eine Studie zur Pneumatologie des Irenäus von Lyon im Ausgang vom altchristlichen Glaubensbekenntnis* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1976.) Jaschke's purpose is not to provide a new understanding of Irenaeus's pneumatology—his understanding is largely that of Lebreton, Rousseau, and Orbe—but to suggest that the form of Irenaeus's pneumatology (i.e., governed by the *regula*, or "credal") is important for later pneumatology.

¹⁶ In the case of Irenaeus, I understand the criteria for the "divine" activities equated with those of God the Father, and an existence described as like the Father's and unlike the angels'.

his own—that “What we mean by ‘God’ is ‘creator.’”¹⁷ This commonplace owes nothing to the Gnostic controversies, either as it appears in the theological and philosophical culture of the time, or as it appears in Irenaeus’s theology. Irenaeus’s doctrine of the Holy Spirit as creator is tied to an exegetical tradition that begins in Second Temple Judaism, that is, *midrashim* on Psalm 33:6 (and *not* Gen 1:2b), but his doctrine does not owe its origins to that tradition, at least not directly.

My understanding of the chronology of *Against Heresies* is that the first two books were written in sequence, separately, but close in time.¹⁸ Some of book three may have been written at about the time of book two. The majority of book three belongs chronologically and conceptually with books four and five; books four and five belong to the same “sitting.” I am of the opinion that the *Demonstration* was not written before the majority of *Against Heresies*,¹⁹ or, more specifically, the *Demonstration* as we have it did not exist before the majority of *Against Heresies* had been written. The reader will find several occasions in which differences between doctrines in books of *Against Heresies* and the *Demonstration* make more sense if the *Demonstration* is later. In my account of Irenaeus’s Trinitarian theology I have followed the sequence in which he expressed his doctrines. For example, in the first two books of *Against Heresies* Irenaeus has no significant Word Christology, but there is such a Christology in book three and consistently in books four and five. I try to articulate Irenaeus’s point in any given passage without reaching forward to a part of the work that did not exist when Irenaeus wrote the passage

¹⁷ As articulated by Philo, *On the Change of Names* 29, “‘I am thy God’ is equivalent to ‘I am the Maker and Artificer.’”

¹⁸ A note on abbreviations: AH stands for *Against Heresies*, or, Irenaeus himself called it, *The Exposure and Overthrow of Knowledge Falsely So-called*. The only complete English translation of this work remains that in the *Ante-Nicene Fathers* series, which I abbreviate as ANF, with the volume and page number. There is a nine-volume critical edition (of the extant Latin translation), with French translation and copious notes, by A. Rousseau in the *Sources Chrétiennes* series. Irenaeus’s second extant work has various titles in English translations: Robinson called it *The Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching*; Smith, *Proof of the Apostolic Preaching*; and Behr, *On the Apostolic Preaching*. These are all the same work. I use Robinson’s title and translation, and abbreviate it as *Demonstration* or *Demo*. I prefer the title *Demonstration* in part because I believe Irenaeus’s work begins a Christian genre that is later manifested in Eusebius of Caesarea’s *Demonstration of the Gospel*.

¹⁹ John Behr, the most recent English translator of the *Demonstration*, thinks that the work pre-dates *Against Heresies*: see his *The Way to Nicaea* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2001), 112; and *St. Irenaeus of Lyons—On the Apostolic Teaching* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1997).

at hand, although I do not wholly succeed at keeping this method, nor is every explanation of mine formed by these limits. I freely reach back to an earlier part of the work to help explain a specific passage under examination. When I turn to the subject of Irenaeus's theology of the Holy Spirit I begin where the content of that theology can best be revealed, which means, generally speaking, moving backwards in *Against Heresies* and then returning to the last two books. If I err in judgment about the chronology of the parts of *Against Heresies*—a tentative business at the best of times²⁰—my account of the elements of Irenaeus's theology should still stand since I am working from the literary sequence of the entire work, not from the chronological strata—even though I believe that, in the case of *Against Heresies*, these two overlap substantially.

Scholarly accounts of Irenaeus's Trinitarian theology are usually built upon the following judgments and presuppositions. First, Irenaeus's thought on the Trinity takes its fundamental form as polemic against the Gnostics: the continuity of his theology with previous Trinitarian theology is assumed, and is descriptively limited to Justin and Theophilus.²¹ Second, Irenaeus speaks of the Trinity almost exclusively from the "economic" perspective:²² it makes sense to use the categories "immanent" and "economic" when describing Irenaeus's theology; the fact that there is no such distinction in Gnostic Trinitarian theology (where the economic and the immanent are one and the same) does not figure. Third, the key metaphor for conceptualizing the unity of Word and the Holy Spirit with the Father is "the hands of God": this language describes

²⁰ In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the *Against Heresies* was the subject of various source-critical hypotheses, principally by German scholars. The general hypothesis was that some books of the AH (particularly the early ones) were built up by Irenaeus editing previously existent small writings against the Gnostics and Marcion. (Friedrich Loofs maintained that the AH was built up from at least five different sources.) The hypothesis of Irenaeus as the redactor of several, disparate works, not all of which agree with one another, is now regarded as a dead letter. Another way in which Irenaeus's writings have been worked through using "Scripture studies" methodologies is Adelin Rousseau's retro-translation into the "original" Greek of the Armenian text of the *Demonstration*. Some good can come from this, but in the end we do not have, and cannot produce, Irenaeus's Greek text. See Joseph P. Smith's lucid summary of the literary history of the *Demonstration in St Irenaeus—Proof of the Apostolic Preaching*, *Ancient Christian Writers*, vol. 16 (New York: Paulist Press, 1952), 3–12.

²¹ John Behr is a notable exception to this specific presupposition: see his *The Way to Nicaea*.

²² See Basil Studer's strong reading of "two hands" theology as well as the "ladder" of Trinitarian revelation in his *Trinity and Incarnation: The Faith of the Early Church*, trans. Matthias Westerhoff (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1993), 60–62.

the cosmological work of the Son and Spirit, and may provide a logic for the immanent as well as economic Trinitarian theology of Irenaeus. Fourth, the Son is the visible God; the Father is the invisible God revealed in the Son: the character or mechanism of that sight by the Apostles, and by those after, is not examined. Fifth, Irenaeus does not much discuss the causal origins of the Son and Holy Spirit: this fact has no consequences. Sixth, it is meaningful to use “person” language for Irenaeus’s Trinitarian theology:²³ “spirit” language is not significant. By and large, my own account of Irenaeus’s Trinitarian theology is not built upon these judgments, and certainly none of the presuppositions figure in my reading. I am, however, greatly interested in the content of the fourth judgment, namely, that the Incarnate Son is the “visible of the invisible Father.”²⁴

Irenaeus against the Gnostics: God the Simple Mind

In his argument with the Gnostics Irenaeus does not only deconstruct the theology of radical dualism, he offers a positive description of God. That description emphasizes the noetic nature of God.

He is a simple, uncompounded Being, without diverse members, and altogether like, and equal to himself, since He is wholly understanding, and wholly spirit, and wholly thought, and wholly intelligence, and wholly reason, and wholly hearing, and wholly seeing, and wholly light, and the whole source of all that is good—even as the religious and pious are wont to speak concerning God.²⁵

But since God is all mind [nous], all reason, all active spirit, all light, and always exists one and the same . . .²⁶

Irenaeus’s language can be paralleled in earlier authors: Athenagoras says that God “is complete in himself, unapproachable light, perfect order, spirit, power, and reason”; Theophilus says about God (the Father), “If I call him Word, it is because he is the first principle; or Mind, it is as his

²³ See, for example, Denis Minns, *Irenaeus* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1994), 38–55. Minns provides a good illustration of how all these judgments and presuppositions come together to provide an account of Irenaeus’s Trinitarian theology.

²⁴ Surprisingly, Réal Tremblay is not concerned with explaining how the Incarnate Son makes the Father visible. His primary concern is with reading Irenaeus’s doctrine of the invisible Father revealed in the visible Son as anti-Gnostic. See *La manifestation et la vision de Dieu selon Irenée de Lyon*, Münsterische Beiträge zur Theologie, Heft 41 (Münster: Ascendorff, 1978).

²⁵ AH II.13.2, ANF I.374.

²⁶ AH II.28.4, ANF I.400.

Thought; Spirit, from his breath; Wisdom, by which he begets; and Power, from his activity.”²⁷ Daniélou emphasizes the fact that all of these terms are applied to the Father as God; neither Athenagoras nor Theophilus is speaking about the Second Person.²⁸ Irenaeus's own understanding of the terms is clear:

But God being all Mind, and all Word [Logos] both speaks exactly what He thinks, and thinks exactly what He speaks. For His thought is Word and Word is Mind, and Mind comprehending all things is the Father Himself.²⁹

Some confusion can arise if the reader assumes that when Irenaeus speaks of Word he is speaking of the Second Person (or the “proto”-Second Person.) God is Word, as he is Mind, Spirit, and Power. These are, as Daniélou points out, “all designations of the divine nature.”³⁰ It is not because the Second Person is “God's Word [Logos]” that he is God, but because he is Word he is God, for only God is Word. The Second Person, as God, may rightly be called “Word” in some habitual way without necessarily identifying him as the Word that God has or is. We see in Irenaeus's writings a movement toward identifying “Word” as the proper title for the Second Person—Irenaeus clearly prefers the title—influenced certainly by John's prologue and possibly Philo (or a tradition like Philo's.) Irenaeus's need to identify a Second Lord that is distinct from the Father leads him towards identifying the Second Person with Word (since he is not yet comfortable with pre-existent “Son” language and has no neutral term like “Second [Person]”). Irenaeus moves to the point where he can say, “God is Spirit, and the Word was with God, is God (is Spirit), and took flesh.” There is thus an appropriation of “Word” to the Second Person, but it is not always to be pressed by the reader, as though Irenaeus wrote in the third or fourth centuries. In the early books (one, two, and parts of three) of *Against Heresies*, for example, it is certainly not to be pressed; in the later books the ambiguity is gone, and Irenaeus has a strong “Word Christology.” In the early books, however, Irenaeus's Trinitarian theology is articulated principally in terms of the divine Spirit and Mind.³¹ All noetic terms—including Word—take their significance by being spoken about God.

²⁷ The Athenagoras quotation is from *Plea* 10; the Theophilus quotation, *To Autolychus* I.3.

²⁸ Daniélou, *Gospel Message and Hellenistic Culture*, 350.

²⁹ AH II.28.5, ANF I.400.

³⁰ Daniélou, *Gospel Message and Hellenistic Culture*, 351.

³¹ The comparison of God's Word with the spoken word does not recommend to Irenaeus the doctrine of a “proper” association of Word with the Second Person.

The Divine Life of Spirit³²

For Irenaeus, radical dualism's hierarchical genealogies introduce a separation or distance into the godhead. The sequential and hierarchical generation of the gods and aeons means that each exists "circumscribed by an immense interval which separates them one from another."³³ This "interval" is, in radical dualist theology, the ontological basis (or expression of) the inferiority of each succeeding rank of super-celestial offspring: each degree of separation from the first cause produces offspring of diminished content and dignity compared to its antecedents. These topological and ontological distances produce an epistemological distance amongst the offspring: the first cause remains unknown and unknowable to its generation(s). The aetiology at work in the hierarchical genealogies produces offspring that are unlike their source.

Irenaeus will have none of this "spatial" understanding of the godhead: it denies the simplicity of God, who is without compound, and is "wholly" whatever he is—"wholly understanding, and wholly spirit, and wholly thought, and wholly intelligence, and wholly reason, and wholly hearing, and wholly seeing, and wholly light, and the whole source of all that is good."³⁴ Moreover, and it is this latter point that grows in importance as Irenaeus continues, the spatial understanding denies the spiritual nature of God, for an important characteristic of God's spiritual nature is the life of interpenetration and omnipresence. This is the life of *Spirit*.³⁵ "Spirit" is, I will suggest repeatedly in this essay, the single most important concept for understanding Irenaeus's Trinitarian theology; indeed, according to Irenaeus, to deny God's spiritual nature, directly or by implication, is the greatest blasphemy against God.³⁶

The polemical purpose of Irenaeus's emphasis on God as Spirit is to deny spatial language of God and His generation(s). Irenaeus understands

³² See A. D'Ales, "La doctrine de l'Esprit en saint Irénée," *Récherches de Science Religieuse* XIV (1924): 497–538, who says, on his first page, "Dieu est Esprit: nul ne le sait mieux qu' Irénée." D'Ales, however, is principally concerned with the Holy Spirit, that is, the Third Person, and reads some occasions of "Spirit" as referring to the Third Person where I would see a reference to the divine Spirit. (These differences of interpretation occur principally over passages in the first two books.)

³³ AH I.1.4, ANF I.360. For Irenaeus's argument on "place" and "two [or more] gods" see William R. Schoedel, "'Topological' Theology and Some Monistic Tendencies in Gnosticism," in *Essays on the Nag Hammadi Texts in Honour of Alexander Bohlig*, ed. Martin Krause (Leide: E. J. Brill, 1972), 88–108, here p. 99f.

³⁴ AH II.13.3, ANF I.374.

³⁵ Other important characteristics of Spirit are rationality and simplicity, both of which figure significantly in Irenaeus's argument.

³⁶ AH II.13.7, which I quote just below.

God's non-spatial and spiritual relationship with his offspring in terms of the indwelling of the offspring (i.e., the Word) in God the Father. The interior state of the Word is the basis for the equality of the Word with the Father as well as for the Word's complete knowledge of the Father. The fact that the Father *contains* the Son (and Holy Spirit) affirms the *spiritual* nature of the Father:

These [Son and Holy Spirit], then, cannot in such a case be ignorant of the Father, since they are within Him; nor, being all equally surrounded by the Father, can any one know Him less than another according to the descending order of their emission. And all of them must also in an equal measure continue impassible, since they exist in the bosom of their Father, and none of them can ever sink into a state of degeneracy or degradation. For with the Father there is no degeneracy. . . .

[T]hose also who are within Him all equally partake of the Father, ignorance having no place among them. . . .³⁷ If, indeed, He has filled all things, there will be no ignorance among them. . . . If, on the other hand, they say that He is [a] vacuity, then *they fall into the greatest blasphemy; they deny His spiritual nature*. For how can He be a spiritual being, who cannot fill even those things which are within Him?³⁸

In short, for Irenaeus the spiritual nature of God the Father means that the causal relationship between the Father and the Son is non-spatial (and thus non-subordinationist—no descending hierarchies): it is the nature of spirit to contain and to inner-penetrate, and from within this spirit Word (and Wisdom) are sent out—"emitted"—as spirit themselves. (See below for additional comments on how spirit is "emitted.") Irenaeus says nothing at this point to suggest that this emission accompanies the act of creating the

³⁷ This argument has a special application and a general application. The special application is determined by the specific point that Irenaeus is making: the Son knows the Father because the Son is "in" the Father. The general application arises within Irenaeus's greater argument against the Gnostic claim that creation gives no knowledge of the true God, and, as a result, one must gain "true knowledge," falsely called, from other sources. The greater application is, in other words, the argument that the created cosmos is itself "in" God, for God is present as its container, and thus the created cosmos can give knowledge about God (in short, Romans 1:20, which, strangely, Irenaeus never quotes in the AH).

³⁸ AH II.13.6–7, ANF I.374–75 (emphasis added). Something similar is said in *Teachings of Silvanus* 101. (There is enough common thought between Irenaeus and early Alexandrian Christian writings that at one time the thought was entertained that Irenaeus had read Clement of Alexandria! Now it seems the other way around is most likely, although even this hypothesis may not explain all the similarities. Compare, for example, Irenaeus's use of "in the bosom" at *Against Heresies* III.11.5 and III.11.6 with Origen's at *Commentary on the Song of Songs* I.2.)

cosmos (i.e., Genesis 1:1ff.)—indeed his argument would be weakened if this emission accompanied creation. Irenaeus's point is that the Son originates from within the Father, and that this interior generation and existence makes it impossible to speak of any distance, ignorance, or weakness on the part of those generated. Later in *Against Heresies* Irenaeus continues to develop the non-spatial, inter-penetration existence within the divine Spirit. The divine spirit of the Word, received with full equality from the Father, itself penetrates the Father, and is never separated from him spatially.

The Reciprocal Immanence of Father and Son

I have already suggested that, according to Irenaeus, the Father's and the Son's mutual interpenetration is understood in light of their spiritual existence: it is a feature of spirit to "fill" and to "contain," and to deny these actions of God is to deny His spiritual nature.³⁹ Irenaeus takes for granted the Stoic commonplace that spirit fills and contains all space:⁴⁰ the Stoic doctrine grounds and provides the logic for Irenaeus's own teaching on the kind of existence characteristic of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (strangely, in this last case often only by implication.)⁴¹ Athenagoras had used the Stoic doctrine of spirit "containing" (συνέχειν) in his doctrine that the Father and Son are "contained" in each other through the unity provided by the Spirit.⁴² Irenaeus teaches,

³⁹ Schoedel, "Topological Theology," 90–97, shows that Irenaeus understood God as "containing, but not contained" and places that understanding within the context of the philosophy of Irenaeus's era.

⁴⁰ "We must remember that, although the Stoics believed in the corporeal nature of the pneuma, they came to regard it as something not akin to matter, but rather to force [dunamis]. It was their conception of a continuous field of force interpenetrating matter and spreading through space. . . ." Samuel Sambursky, *Physics of the Stoics* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1959), 36. See also Philo in *On the Giants* 6 (27): "But now, the Spirit which is upon him is the wise, the divine, the indivisible, the undistributable, the good Spirit, the Spirit which is everywhere diffused, so as to fill the universe. . . ."

⁴¹ Gerard Verbeke discusses the Stoic content of Irenaeus's understanding of spirit in his study *L'evolution de la doctrine du pneuma* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1945), 332–33.

⁴² Athenagoras, *Embassy* 10, trans. Joseph Hugh Crehan, *Ancient Christian Writers*, vol. 23 (New York: Newman Press), 40. Crehan says in his note to this sentence, "The idea of considering the Spirit as the uniting power of the Father and the Son is here set forth for the first time in Christian theology. No doubt one can derive it from certain Johannine phrases, but Athenagoras has supplied it with its first technical terms" (132, n. 59). Crehan does not offer an explicit opinion on whether the Spirit uniting the two is the divine spirit or the [Holy] Spirit, but he seems to suggest the Holy Spirit.

as we have seen, that the unity of God and His Word is an effect of their *spiritual nature*. Irenaeus also has, like Athenagoras before him,⁴³ a doctrine of the Spirit of God pervading and containing the universe:⁴⁴

And just as a cutting from the vine planted in the ground fructifies in its season, or as a corn of wheat falling into the earth and becoming decomposed, rises with manifold increase *by the Spirit of God, who contains all things*. . . .⁴⁵

In both cases, Athenagoras and Irenaeus, the “Spirit of God” is God the Father (or perhaps “the divine”) not the Holy Spirit.⁴⁶

Each time that Irenaeus speaks of the Word-Son existing in the Father he does so in order to support his assertion that the Son knows the Father and can thus reveal Him. One motivation for insisting that the Word knows the Father has already been discussed: to distinguish the Catholic Christian doctrine of the Word’s knowledge of God, His Source and Origin, from the Gnostic doctrine of the Aeons’ ignorance of their source and origin.⁴⁷ The second reason for insisting that the Word knows the Father has already been broached: in order to reveal the Father, the Logos-Son must know the Father. This knowledge, it turns out, is the effect of the Word-Son’s unity with the Father, which Irenaeus describes primarily in terms of the Word-Son’s “reciprocal immanence” with the Father,⁴⁸ and secondarily in terms of the Word-Son’s generation from the

⁴³ For Athenagoras’s quotation, see Embassy 6.

⁴⁴ In his *Exhortation to the Greeks* IV, Tatian distinguishes God as Spirit from the Stoic doctrine of divine Spirit: “God is a Spirit, not pervading matter, but the Maker of material spirits. . . . For the spirit that pervades matter is inferior to the more divine Spirit. . . .” Tatian, like Irenaeus, was a student of Justin Martyr.

⁴⁵ *Against Heresies* V.2.3. ANF 528 (emphasis added); see also III.11.11.

⁴⁶ Here is one occasion of my difference with D’Ales, “La doctrine de l’Esprit en saint Irénée,” who thinks that AH III.11.11 and V.2.3 refer to the Third Person: see his p. 500, especially note 13.

⁴⁷ See AH II.17.8, ANF I.382: “It cannot therefore longer be held, as these men teach, that Logos, as occupying the third place in generation, was ignorant of the Father. Such a thing might indeed perhaps be deemed probable in the case of the generation of human beings, inasmuch as these frequently know nothing of their parents; but it is altogether impossible in the case of the Logos of the Father. For if, existing in the Father, he knows him in whom he exists—that is, is not ignorant of himself—then those productions which issue from him being his powers (faculties), and always present with him, will not be ignorant of him who emitted them, any more than rays [may be supposed to be] of the sun.”

⁴⁸ The phrase—a good one—is from Lebreton’s *Histoire du Dogme de la Trinité*, i.e. vol. II, pp. 555–56.

Father.⁴⁹ Here I am presently concerned with the Father's and Word-Son's "reciprocal immanence" or interpenetration.

In *Against Heresies* III.11.5 and 6, Irenaeus twice, within the space of ten lines, speaks of the Son Who is "in" the Father declaring the invisible Father and giving knowledge of Him.⁵⁰ The chapter as a whole develops as exegeses on selected passages from John.⁵¹ The key passage for the doctrine of the Son "in" the Father is John 1:18: "No one has ever seen God: the only Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has made him known" (RSV).

[At the wedding feast of Cana—John 6:11—Jesus showed] that the God who made the earth, and commanded it to bring forth fruit, who established the waters, and brought forth the fountains, was He who in these last times bestowed upon mankind, by His Son, the blessing of food and the favour of drink: the Incomprehensible [acting thus] by means of the comprehensible, and the Invisible by the visible; since there is none beyond Him, *but He exists in the bosom of the Father*.⁵²

For "no man," he says, "has seen God at any time," unless "the only-begotten Son of God, which is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared [Him]." For He, *the Son who is in His bosom*, declares to all the Father who is invisible.⁵³

Irenaeus's exegesis of John 1:18 reflects his desire to maintain that the Word-Son's presence in the Father is not pre-empted by the Incarnation. The anti-Gnostic motivation here is clear: matter does not interrupt or block the continuity between Father and Word-Son.⁵⁴ A second motivation, less obvious perhaps but more fundamental to Irenaeus's Trinitarian theology, is to restate the truth about God's and the Word-Son's Spiritual

⁴⁹ Irenaeus's hesitancy to describe in any detail the aetiology of the Word-Son's generation limits his ability to develop the implications of that generation. He does make a few deductions, such as the following: "It necessarily follows, therefore, both that he who springs from Him as Logos, or rather that Nous himself, since He is Logos, must be perfect and impassible, and that those productions which proceed from Him, seeing that they are of the same substance with Himself, should be perfect and impassible, and should ever remain similar to Him Who produced them" (AH II.17.7, ANF I.382).

⁵⁰ ANF I.427.

⁵¹ For example, John 1:1, 1:10, 1:14, 1:18, 1:47, and 6:11.

⁵² AH III.11.5.

⁵³ AH III.11.6 (emphasis added).

⁵⁴ Later Irenaeus will argue that the cosmos had to be created by a good God, and to be good in itself, because a cosmos created by intermediaries—for example, angels—could not accept or bear the presence of the Word-Son. See AH V.18.1.

nature: the Word-Son's presence in the Incarnation does not pre-empt his presence in God the Father because Spirit is not bound by, nor localized in, place and distance. Therefore, in the Incarnation the Word-Son continues to dwell in the Father—"in His bosom"—and there is no ontological or epistemological distance between the two of them.

There are also, in Irenaeus's writings, passages which speak of the Father dwelling in the Son, most notably *Against Heresies* III.6.2:

And again, when the Son speaks to Moses, He says, "I am come down to deliver this people." For it is He who descended and ascended for the salvation of men. Therefore God has been declared through *the Son, who is in the Father, and has the Father in Himself*—He who is, the Father bearing witness to the Son, and the Son announcing the Father.⁵⁵

Irenaeus is more interested in the message of John 1:18 (the Son is in the Father) than he is in, for example, John 14:10 (the Father is in the Son).⁵⁶ However, the idea expressed in the above quotation—that the Father may be said to dwell in the Word-Son—is relevant to (and consistent with) Irenaeus's Trinitarian theology as I have sketched it, for the Word-Son may thus be said to "contain" the Father ("containing" without "enclosing"). Only if the Word-Son is divine Spirit, too, could he be thought to be able to contain the Father. There is a mutual containment or immanence because of the common divinity of the two. Through his generation the Word-Son goes from "in the Father" to "the Son in the Father and the Father in the Son." Both dynamics may be said to be indwelling, interpenetration, or reciprocal immanence, but in the second case the Word-Son's full divinity and the equal activity of that Spirit is a cause of the indwelling. In his generation from the Father, the Word-Son goes "from" being contained by the Father "to" containing the Father as well as being contained by the Father. As I shall explain below, this passage "from" and "to" is the only transition the emitting of the Word-Son involves. There is no movement.

Generation: "From" but not "Out of"

Scholars regularly remark that Irenaeus avoids giving an account of the generation of the Word-Son and Holy Spirit from God the Father; such

⁵⁵ ANF I.419.

⁵⁶ Irenaeus quotes John 14:10 only once, and it is in support of the argument that there were no doctrines kept secret from the Apostles since they saw God in Christ. Irenaeus's lack of interest in the doctrine expressed by John 14:10, the Father *in* the Son, marks his Trinitarian theology as being pre-Monarchian.

accounts strike him as the vanity-driven overreaching typical of the Gnostics.⁵⁷ However, in *Against Heresies* II.13.8, while criticizing Gnostic speculation, Irenaeus gives the reader a brief glimpse of his understanding of the generation of the Word. The Gnostics teach the production—emission—of Aeons (e.g., Logos, Zoe) in a sequence; the proper sequence of the emission of these Aeons is a matter of doctrine among the different Gnostic schools. The Gnostics argue for the existence and identity of these Aeons by means of an analogy between the Nous, progenitor of the Pleroma, and human mental life: in humans is life, thought, feelings, etc., and so too in the Nous is Life and Thought, etc. These noetic existents are emitted by Nous sequentially, according to a logic: Life must precede Thought (for what is lifeless cannot think.)⁵⁸ Irenaeus first rejects the Gnostic logic of emissions—“those who transfer the generation of the word to which men give utterance to the eternal Word of God”—on the grounds that it introduces heterogeneity in God and denies his simplicity:

[T]hey conceive an emission of Logos, the Word after the analogy of human feelings, and rashly form conjectures respecting God. . . . But in Him who is God over all, since He is all Nous and all Logos, as I have said before, and has in Himself nothing more ancient or late than another, and nothing at variance with another, but continues altogether equal, and similar, and homogeneous, there is no longer ground for conceiving of such production in the order just mentioned.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ Lebreton observes, *La Trinité* 2:554, that Irenaeus's reserve has been judged “excessive” by some scholars, and in a footnote (1) he refers to Harnack's severe judgment on Irenaeus for his habitual silence. Modern apologists for Irenaeus's reserve attribute it to the anti-Gnostic character of his work which, they seem to suggest, could have allowed no other response on his part. However, Irenaeus's caution has precedent in a context which has nothing to do with radical dualism. David Winston notes that Philo declined to use specific causal language to describe the Logos's origin. “[W]hen it comes to the Logos itself, he [Philo] prefers to use verbs which clearly imply that it is a divine emanation without actually so designating it.” David Winston, *Wisdom of Solomon*, Anchor Bible Commentary Series 43 (Garden City: Doubleday & Company, 1979), 185. Perhaps Irenaeus belonged to a tradition which, however Hellenized, maintained a reticence about the origins of the Word based upon a judgment about Scripture. The judgment that a theologian is “Hellenized,” as Irenaeus clearly is, often involves the presupposition that Hellenized thought is by its nature explicit and without reticence. Philo proves this assumption wrong.

⁵⁸ For theologies that can be built upon non-radical dualist understandings of the hierarchical—vertical or horizontal—generation of Life and Thought, see *Chaldean Oracles*, Porphyry, and Marius Victorinus.

⁵⁹ AH II.13.8, I.375

In short, there are in God/Nous no multiple divine noetic states in queue for emission. The second reason Irenaeus has for rejecting the Gnostic "psychological analogy" is that with it they teach a beginning and a duration of existence for each of these emitted Aeons. Irenaeus says repeatedly, and quite strongly, that the Word, *who is God* (John 1:1), was with God always (John 2).

The logic of Irenaeus's theology of the generation of the Word is determined by the fact that God and His offspring are by nature *Spirit*. Whatever is said about God cannot run contrary to the reality or nature of Spirit. In particular, if we think about the generation of the Word we cannot think of a transition in the life of the Word from "in" God to "out" of God, since these are spatial notions which cannot be applied to Spirit. As spirit, the Word is always entirely "in" God and "outside" of God. We must completely purge our thoughts of any place-related notions of causality. The Word is so completely and perfectly present "here" and "there" that we must think of a continuous presence, distinguished not according to place by activity, not in any sort of either/or localization.⁶⁰ When the Word is generated from the Father, he is not by that fact removed from previous indwelling "in" the Father.⁶¹ When the Word is present "in" union with the flesh, he is not by that fact removed from any "where" he was before. The Word is in the Father, in the cosmos, and, later, in the flesh of Jesus. The "kinds" of unity or presence

⁶⁰ T. S. Eliot once said that criticizing the *Essays* of Montaigne was like throwing a hand grenade into a fog; Irenaeus could say that a spatial generation of the Word-Son would be like pushing a cloud. (In neither case would the author properly be taken literally.)

⁶¹ In his article, "The Theogony of Theophilus," *Vigilae Christianae* 42 (1988): 318–26, Carl Curry says in his account of Theophilus's theology of the Logos, "To say that the Logos was present in a certain place might cause one to question how the Logos could be found somewhere and be always 'innate in the heart of God' (2.10, 22). Theophilus does not satisfactorily answer this question" (320). Curry identifies in Theophilus's thought the same non-spatial description of the Logos that I have identified in Irenaeus's, and he expresses the same puzzlement over how Theophilus could say such things as scholars have expressed over Irenaeus's silence. My theory of the significance of the Stoic doctrine of pneuma for Irenaeus's Trinitarian theology provides an explanation for the puzzling statements by Irenaeus that are similar to puzzling statements by Theophilus, but I cannot now say whether my theory of the importance of the concept of pneuma in Irenaeus's theology applies equally to Theophilus. The interesting thing about Curry's remark is that he is speaking about Theophilus's failure to make his "deep logic" and connections clear, a failure that occurs even given Theophilus's philosophical background (usually assumed to exceed Irenaeus's).

differ in each case.⁶² the Word is not “in” the flesh the way he is “in” the Father, nor is he “in” the flesh the same way that he is “in” the cosmos, but each presence does not exclude or even modify the continuing reality of the others.⁶³ The Word-Son is *in* the Father (in one way) and *in* the cosmos creating and ordering (in another): the change in how we speak about “where” the Word-Son “is” is simply—and no more or less than—our change of focus as we reflect upon the economy of salvation. We remember and tell that the Word-Son is from the Father, that the Word-Son created the cosmos, and that the Word-Son took on flesh for our sake. The sequence of places where the Word-Son “is” is an effect of the episodic happening in history and in the telling—a fact which is dramatized in the *Demonstration*, with its structure of narrative cycles. Here it may be useful to make an apparently minor point about Irenaeus’s Trinitarian theology: it has no word to answer “two (or three) *what?*”⁶⁴ The need which drives that question does not appear in Irenaeus’s thought, much less does an answer. We may at some point speak of the limitations of Irenaeus’s thought on the Trinity, but we cannot say that we understand that thought until we understand how his Trinitarian theology has a logic with no intrinsic need for “person” (etc.).

The strength of Irenaeus’s description of the Trinity via the concepts and logic of Spirit’s reciprocal immanence or interpenetration is its faithfulness to the fact that God is Spirit: in particular, that God is not localized in a place, that the generation of the Word-Son does not occur through any kind of topological separation, and that the Father and Word-Son remain united (in the sense of co-inherent) even during the Incarnation. One limitation of the reciprocal immanence doctrine is that it makes little conceptual use of sonship (although the title “Son” is used in great abundance).⁶⁵ Similarly, the reciprocal immanence doctrine allows but

⁶² Irenaeus could find an introduction to the “kinds” of unity or the different indwelling presences of spirit in the Stoic distinctions among the different kinds of unity, tenor, physique, soul and rational soul. The Stoic distinctions among these kinds of unity were well known in the early Common Era. Philo reports these distinctions at *God’s Immutability* 35–36.

⁶³ As an analogy: according to the Stoics, the existence of a tension field at one point in spirit does not prevent the existence of a tension field at another point in spirit.

⁶⁴ That is, he has no theological notion or term that corresponds to, for example, Tertullian’s “persona.”

⁶⁵ In chapter five of the *Demonstration* Irenaeus explains the propriety of the name “Son” on the basis of the actions of the Word. Irenaeus does not otherwise introduce the title “Son” as an article of Christian belief—that is, in the regula—until chapter six. The relevant part of *Demonstration* 5 is worth quoting at length here:

does not significantly utilize (much less embrace) the traditional language of the “sending” and “descent” of the Word-Son. Finally, when spirit language is used in support of a reciprocal immanence doctrine, there are fewer linguistic resources for talking about the Holy Spirit specifically. Any remedy to these limitations would require Irenaeus to speak in the *aetiological* language he so associates with the Gnostics, which he will not do, and so the “reciprocal co-inherence” language of Spirit remains dominant.

The Word of the Spirit

For Irenaeus, the divine presence in the union of the Incarnation is the Word, the same Word who, in the beginning, created and gave order to the cosmos. The one who acted in the heavens to create is the same one who acts on earth to save. When the Gospels speak of Jesus acting, it is the Word who acts.⁶⁶ The depth of Irenaeus's theology of the Word can be illustrated by citing his exegesis of John's story of Jesus and the man born blind (i.e., John 9:3ff.) in *Against Heresies* V.⁶⁷ Irenaeus recognizes the connection to the formation of Adam described at Genesis 2:7 when, at John 9:6, Jesus

“Thus then there is shown forth One God, the Father, not made, invisible, creator of all things; above whom there is no other God, and after whom there is no other God. And, since God is rational, therefore by (the) Word He created the things that were made, and God is Spirit, and by (the) Spirit He adorned all things: as also the prophet says: ‘By the word of the Lord were the heavens established, and by his spirit all their power.’ *Since then the Word establishes*, that is to say, gives body and grants the reality of being, and the Spirit gives order and form to the diversity of the powers; *rightly and fittingly is the Word called the Son*, and the Spirit the Wisdom of God.” Robinson, trans., *Demonstration*, pp. 73f. (emphasis added). That “gives order and form” suggests *Wisdom* is a straight-forward deduction; that “gives body and grants the reality of being” suggests a *Son* is not a straight-forward claim. Jean Daniélou may provide the explanation, however, when he refers to Athenagoras's *Plea* 10, “The *Son* came forth from God to give form and actuality to all material things. . . .” Daniélou, *Gospel Message and Hellenistic Culture*, p. 348 (emphasis added); similarly from Theophilus, *Ad Auto.* II.10: “The Word of God is also His Son. . . .” p. 353.

⁶⁶ The identification of the Word as the one who acts in Jesus is already present in Book III. When Irenaeus describes the baptism at the Jordan—a very important event in the ministry of Jesus in Irenaeus's eyes—he says that the Father anointed, through the gift of the Holy Spirit, *the Word*. In Matthew's account, which Irenaeus quotes, the Father says, “This is my beloved *Son*, in whom I am well pleased.” Irenaeus glosses the passage: “[T]he Word—Who is the Savior of all, and the ruler of heaven and earth, who is Jesus, as I have already pointed out, who did also take upon him flesh, and was anointed by the Spirit from the Father—was made Jesus Christ. . . .” AH III.9.3, p. 423.

⁶⁷ Irenaeus is the first author to cite John 9, unless one thinks that the *Clementine Homily* XVI predates him.

makes clay from spit and dirt. The clay points to “the original fashioning, how it was effected, and manifesting the hand of God to those who can understand by what hand man was formed out of the dust.” It was the Word who formed the man in his mother’s womb, just as it was the Word who formed Adam.⁶⁸ Jeremiah, Irenaeus says, testifies (at 1:5) that the Word of God formed us in the womb: “this very same Word formed the visual power in him who had been blind from birth; showing openly who it is that fashions us in secret, since the Word himself had been made manifest to men.”⁶⁹ In short, the same Word who formed Adam, who has formed all humans in wombs, was present before the blind man and restored his sight. My point here is not that Irenaeus always speaks of the *Word* when treating the creation of man; he does not, and, in particular, when he uses “two hands” language he almost always identifies those hands with “the *Son* and Holy Spirit.” My point is to show how Irenaeus relates the life and work of the Incarnated Word to the life and work of the pre-Incarnated Word, a relationship which we perhaps take for granted, so many centuries later, but which marks Irenaeus’s theology as a finely nuanced model for a Christology of the Word.⁷⁰

Justin Martyr’s Logos theology is, in comparison, limited in its scope, and is distinguished only for the presence of a “two-stage” model of the generation of the Word, and by the continuity he illustrates between Jewish and Christian use of the title. To say that Justin’s theology of the Word, which attributes all truth and virtue in the world to the Word, is “limited in its scope” may, I admit, seem bizarre and indefensible to some readers.⁷¹ Like the Gospel of John, Justin attributes cosmological activities to the Word, but he (again like the Fourth Gospel) does not speak of Jesus in His earthly ministry as the Word.⁷² Irenaeus does. Irenaeus makes

⁶⁸ One expects a “two hands” reference, but it is not there.

⁶⁹ AHV.15.3, p. 543.

⁷⁰ The key passage, much discussed by scholars, is chapter 43; see especially Adelin Rousseau, “La doctrine de saint Irenée sur la preexistence du fils de Dieu dans Dem. 43,” *Muséon* 89 (1971): 5–42.

⁷¹ Ernest Evans says, in *Tertullian’s Treatise Against Proxenus* (London: SPCK, 1948), 33, that the term Logos is “no fundamental element” in Justin’s thought. Justin never cites the prologue to John, and “in the *Dialogue* he paraphrases λόγος into λόγος τις λογική.” “*Son* is nearer to his mind than *Word*” (34). It is Tatian whose thought “is based on λόγος rather than υἱός or γέννημα and that the λόγος concept is essential to his argument” (35).

⁷² In the *Second Apology* II.6, Justin says, “[A]nd His Son, who alone is properly called Son, the Word, who also was with Him and was begotten before the works, when at first He created and arranged all things, is called Christ” (ANF I.190). Here Justin gives priority to the title/relationship “Son”—it is the Son who is called “Christ.” Passages in Irenaeus where “Son” is given priority over

the Word described in the Prologue the explicit subject of actions and events described in the body of the Gospel.

However, if we look to the *Demonstration*, the concept (and not simply the title) of Son figures more directly in Irenaeus's exposition than it did in the *Against Heresies*, and Spirit theology is proportionately less present in the *Demonstration*. The latter work includes a number of statements of the eternal existence of *the Son*, particularly in chapter 43, where Irenaeus understands that the Hebrew of Genesis 1:1 means, "A Son in the beginning God established, then heaven and earth." For Irenaeus this passage parallels John 1:1, and he concludes that "In the beginning was the Word" shows with certainty "that the Word, who was in the beginning with the Father, and by whom all things were made, this is His Son."⁷³

This brings us to another key passage in the *Demonstration*, chapter 47, where Irenaeus says, "The Father is Lord and the Son is Lord, and the Father is God and the Son is God, for that which is begotten of God is God. And so in the substance and power of His being there is shown forth one God."⁷⁴ This is one of Irenaeus's strongest statements of the full divinity of the Second Person, and the strongest statement of the full divinity of the "Son" specifically. In particular, the language of "[Son] born of God is God" is remarkable, for it has no precedent in Irenaeus's writings. The closest Irenaeus comes to some kind of "X from X" statement is to critique some understandings of the "fire from fire" model for divine generation. Similarly, there is no prior occurrence of the statement that the Father and Son are one God in the being and power of their nature in all of Irenaeus's writings. Irenaeus never uses the argument, "If a common power, then a common essence or nature." To the best of my knowledge, outside of *Demonstration*, chapter 47, this argument is first offered in writings against the Monarchians (either by Tertullian in his *Against Praxeus* or by Hippolytus in his *Against Noetus*, depending on which work one judges to be the earliest.) The presence in the *Demonstration* of either "born of God is God" or one "being and power [and therefore His nature]" is therefore remarkable and somewhat puzzling. The appearance of both arguments side by side leads me to this judgment: either these lines in chapter 47 are the product of Irenaeus encountering anti-Monarchian polemic and incorporating it; or these two arguments are the product of a sympathetic Armenian translator with Nicene beliefs "improving" Irenaeus's theology. Stated baldly, "the Father and Son are

"Word" are rare, and, as I just pointed out, at AH III.9.3 Irenaeus says that it is the Word who is anointed, that is, made the "Christ."

⁷³ Robinson, trans., *Demonstration*, p. 109.

⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 112.

each Lord, the Father and Son are God” can, from a post-Nicene perspective, seem problematic. To say, “God born from God” and “one essence, one power” glosses the previous statements as Nicene orthodoxy.

The Word Reveals the Father

One of the distinctive features of Irenaeus’s theology is his understanding that humans can know only through the senses, through the visible and material; this is true of humans because they were created visible and material. The means by which the Word-Son reveals the Father is the material condition taken in the Incarnation; the content of that revelation is the Father who dwells within the Son.

And through the Word Himself who had been made visible and palpable, was the Father shown forth, although all did not equally believe in Him; but all saw the Father in the Son: for the Father is the invisible of the Son, but the Son the visible of the Father. And for this reason all spoke with Christ when He was present [upon earth], and they named Him God.⁷⁵

The Word-Son’s revelation of the Father does not begin at the Incarnation, but has occurred in stages since the creation. Irenaeus understands each stage of creation to be a stage in the revelation of God the Father; since the Logos-Son is the creative agent of God, it is the Logos-Son who causes God to be revealed. In each stage the Word-Son reveals God using material instruments or artifacts. The Word’s progressive revelation, in material mediums, of God the Father culminates in the Incarnation.

By the creation of the cosmos itself, the Word reveals God the Creator; and by means of the creation of the world [He declares] the Lord the Maker of the world; and by means of the formation [of man the Word declares God to be] the Artificer who formed him; and as Son [the Word declares God to be] the Father who begat the Son. . . .⁷⁶

The Son’s visibility, which for Irenaeus is the same as His materiality, is the necessary means for making the invisible known to the visible, the immaterial known to the material, for humans know and learn through material senses. Without that visibility and materiality, God—as well as his Word—would remain incomprehensible. If our salvation lies in our knowledge of God, then it is only through material means that our salvation can be accomplished, since it is only through material means that we can know

⁷⁵ AH IV.6.6, ANF I.469.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

God. God can be known only through sensibles, which range from the created cosmos to his actions in history to his imperfect image (man), and, finally, to the perfect Image, his Word in flesh. Although man's true life consists in the knowledge of God, without sense perception he remains ignorant of God. The great revelation the Incarnation brings is that the invisible and immaterial God is seen in the visible and material flesh of Jesus. (Strangely, Irenaeus does not cite John 14:9–10 for this.) Irenaeus offers no epistemology, no description of knowledge, beyond the statement that all rational beings know according to their natures: for example, angels, being spiritual and not material, know intellectually. Whatever further thoughts Irenaeus might have had on epistemology are left unsaid, and all that we know is Irenaeus's strict empiricism, which, indeed, might have been the single form of human knowledge he recognized. This strict empiricism needs to be kept in mind as one follows Irenaeus's statements on God the Father being seen in the Incarnated Word.

What does Irenaeus mean by "see"? We can say that it is not an imaginary or abstracted "vision" of God or of Christ, nor is it the action of Christ that "images" the Father, nor is it identified with a postponed eschatological vision of the risen and glorified Christ. The reader takes from Irenaeus the impression that God is seen in Jesus with the same kind of vision as that by which I see my wife, that is, the empirical sight of Jesus, seen as everyone is seen.⁷⁷ When the apostles looked at Jesus they saw God in the normal sense of the word "see." They saw the Father in the only way he could be seen by humans, that is, through his indwelling in the Incarnated Son.⁷⁸ The Incarnation also brings to sight the invisible Word, and by gazing upon Jesus the apostles saw him.⁷⁹ There is no other content to that vision that must be supplied by deduction, or

⁷⁷ Who could see God in Christ? Those who knew and believed the promises to the prophets that God would walk among us, and could recognize that Jesus fulfilled the prophets' announcements of details of the Savior's birth and mission, would know, then, that they were indeed looking upon God united to man. The kind of exegetical identification of Jesus as the Messiah that is the subject of Justin's *Dialogue with Trypho* looms large for Irenaeus, as does the very work by Justin. In Irenaeus's understanding some kind of exegetical identification happened amongst Jesus' first followers (given the example of Jesus himself, who identified himself through these means).

⁷⁸ For the Johannine background of Irenaeus's doctrine, see the excellent "Jesus: 'The One Who Sees God,'" by Marianne Meye Thompson, in *Israel's God and Rebecca's Children: Christology and Community in Early Judaism and Christianity*, ed. David B. Capes, April D. DeConick, Helen K. Bond and Troy A. Miller (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2008), 215–26.

⁷⁹ AH IV.6.3, ANF I.468.

deferred in time. The vision of God presented to those who, speaking historically, saw him is like (but better than) the vision Adam and Eve had of God walking in the garden. Moses did not see God: nor did Elijah, nor Ezekiel, nor any of the prophets: they saw God revealed in similitudes, created representations of himself, peculiar to the moment and chosen in accordance with the full economy of salvation, for “God is seen when He pleases, by whom He decides, when He decides, and in whatever form He decides.”⁸⁰ The vision of God does occur in a true and complete form by sight of the Incarnate Word, who dwells in the bosom of the Father and thus is one with the Father and who can reveal him as no theophany ever did. This sight of Jesus, the Incarnate Word, walking the streets of Jerusalem and talking with His followers, is the recapitulation of the sight of God walking in the garden and talking to Adam and Eve. “And for this reason all spoke with Christ when He was present [upon earth], and they named Him God.”⁸¹ To look at Jesus is to see God: this is an action of our senses, not of our faculty for deduction. The “historical vision” is sufficient for Irenaeus (who never saw Jesus) because those who did see Jesus lived not further in time from him than someone’s grandfather. I personally have mental images—visual “memories”—of combat in Italy during the Second World War because of my father’s vivid recollections, for he was there. Moreover, Irenaeus understands the Church as that community in continuity with those who saw Jesus and called him “God.”

Lebreton⁸² suggests Ignatius’s *Epistle to Polycarp* 3.2 as a precedent (and possible source) for Irenaeus’s doctrine of our soteriological need for the immaterial to become material, the invisible to become visible:

Be more diligent than you are now. Mark the seasons. Await Him that is above every season, the Eternal; *the Invisible, who became visible for our sake*; the Incorporeal and the Impassible, who suffered for our sake and who endured in all ways for our sake.⁸³

A potentially more interesting testimony is Celsus’s, as he is closer in time to Irenaeus.

⁸⁰ AH IV.20.5, ANF I.489.

⁸¹ AH IV.6.6, ANF I.469. In its other particulars this paragraph is a restatement of what Irenaeus writes in AH IV.20.10–11, ANF I.490–91. Irenaeus himself quotes John 1:18 in IV.20.11.

⁸² *La Trinité*, 2:558 n. 1.

⁸³ Emphasis added.

Since God is great and difficult to see, He put His own Spirit into a body that resembled ours, and sent it down to us, that we might be enabled to hear Him and become acquainted with Him.⁸⁴

Celsus reports with the rough edge of the hostile witness he admittedly is, although, despite this hostility, he renders the Christian doctrine more “normal” (to him) by stating it in terms borrowed from Plato: God is *great and difficult to see* (*see equals know*). But otherwise the report is accurate, even to the point of including a detail that is not always obvious in early Christian writing: that the divinity that enters the body is the “*Spirit of God*.”⁸⁵ From Celsus’s remarks we see that the role of a “visible God” was understood outside Christian theology, and we can also glimpse how a statement like “the Spirit of God in a human” could be understood in a modalist fashion.

What Spirit Can Mean

I said earlier that a weakness in Irenaeus’s use of Spirit language to describe the Trinity is that it offers few resources for talking about the Holy Spirit specifically. I can summarize the widespread role Spirit language plays in Irenaeus’s theology before discussing his theology of the Holy Spirit. “Spirit” is used by Irenaeus for the divinity of the Father, of the Word, and of the Holy Spirit, as well as for the divine presence in Jesus in the Incarnation, to name or specify the Holy Spirit, and to name or specify the highest element in human tripartite anthropology (i.e., body, soul, and *spirit*), which in itself may or may not be understood by Irenaeus to be other than the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit, insofar as each is called “Spirit.” Most of these different uses can be found, for example, in a passage from *Against Heresies* V.9.3.

The flesh, therefore, when destitute of the *Spirit of God*, is dead, not having life, and cannot possess the kingdom of God: [it is as] irrational blood, like water poured out upon the ground. And therefore he says, “As is the earthy, such are they that are earthy” [1 Cor 15:48]. But where

⁸⁴ *Against Celsus*, VI.69.

⁸⁵ Harnack’s summary of the strengths of “pneumatic” Christology reads like a description of Irenaeus’s theology: “The future belonged to this Christology because the current exposition of the Old Testament seemed directly to require it, because it alone permitted the close connection between creation and redemption, because it furnished the proof that the world and religion rest upon the same Divine basis, because it was represented in the most valuable writings of the early period of Christianity, and finally, because it had room for the speculations about the Logos.” Adolf von Harnack, *History of Dogma*, vol. 1, trans. Neil Buchanan (New York: Dover Publications, 1958) I.III.4, p. 198.

the *Spirit of the Father* is, there is a living man; [there is] the rational blood preserved by God for the avenging [of those that shed it]; [there is] the flesh possessed by *the Spirit*, forgetful indeed of what belongs to it, and adopting the quality of *the Spirit*, being made conformable to the Word of God. And on this account he (the apostle) declares, "As we have borne the image of him who is of the earth, we shall also bear the image of Him who is from heaven." What, therefore, is the earthly? That which was fashioned. And what is the heavenly? *The Spirit*. As therefore he says, when we were destitute of *the celestial Spirit*, we walked in former times in the oldness of the flesh, not obeying God; so now let us, receiving *the Spirit*, walk in newness of life, obeying God. Inasmuch, therefore, as without *the Spirit of God* we cannot be saved, the apostle exhorts us through faith and chaste conversation to preserve *the Spirit of God*, lest, having become non-participants of *the Divine Spirit*, we lose the kingdom of heaven; and he exclaims, that flesh in itself, and blood, cannot possess the kingdom of God.

It seems useful for me to gloss this passage to draw out the various senses Irenaeus attaches to the term. I hope the reader will forgive any tediousness on my part. I will begin with Irenaeus quoting Paul. "As we have borne the image of him who is of the earth, we shall also bear the image of Him who is from heaven." What, therefore, is the earthly? That which was fashioned. And what is the heavenly? *The Spirit*." Irenaeus here quotes First Corinthians 15:49, where Paul contrasts the first Adam, a man of dust, with the second Adam, Christ, the man from heaven. The passage in Paul's epistle is not without its own ambiguities in the use of "spiritual" but it is clear that the "second Adam" is Christ. Irenaeus has supplied a word for the pre-existent One who comes from heaven when he says that the heavenly is "the Spirit." (We might more easily expect "Lord," "Son," or "Word.") Irenaeus then says, "As therefore he [Paul] says, when we were destitute of *the celestial Spirit*, we walked in former times in the oldness of the flesh, not obeying God; so now let us, receiving *the Spirit*, walk in newness of life, obeying God." We expect the "celestial spirit" to be a reference to the Holy Spirit, and "receiving the Spirit" to refer to baptism. But "celestial spirit" could continue the connotation from the previous sentence's glossing of First Corinthians 15:49 (the heavenly Spirit), and the Spirit that we were formerly destitute of but "we have now received" can refer to the divine spirit in Christ, who *walked* among us in the Incarnation. Finally, "Spirit" in other of the sentences likely means the Holy Spirit, with a possible identification between that Spirit and the [S]pirit constituent, with flesh and soul, of our human nature.

From this passage in *Against Heresies* V.9.3, and from others in Irenaeus, Lebreton concludes, "This imprecision of language [regarding "spirit"]

creates in Irenaeus, as in other authors of his era, confusion or at least obscurity; [as the passage from V.9.3 illustrates] . . . the word 'spirit' can sometimes mean the Holy Spirit and sometimes the divine nature of the Son."⁸⁶ Ambiguities in Irenaeus's language do exist and they impose real limits on attempts to give an account of his theology. Irenaeus's words on the Spirit did not travel well—which may be why they had so little effect in third- and fourth-century Christianity. With the beginning of the third century and with the Monarchian controversies, Catholic communities began to move away from the multivalent use of "spirit," with its continuities of referent (divinity, the divine in Christ, the Holy Spirit, our Spirit, etc.). Irenaeus's use of "spirit" sits on the far side of the Monarchian controversy; his Trinitarian theology represents the pinnacle of "economic" theology before it confronts Monarchianism, with the result that sometimes his theology is expressed in language that a Monarchian would find convivial.⁸⁷ Irenaeus's pneumatology was less aided and more hindered than was his Christology by his dependence upon the metaphysics of Spirit and by his sparing use of causal language. The strength of Irenaeus's Trinitarian theology of the Holy Spirit came from other ways of talking about God, namely, from the notion of God as creator and from the late Second Temple association of the Spirit of God with the act of creating.

The Origin of the Holy Spirit

The remainder of this essay is concerned with the ways in which Irenaeus may be said to have a "high" pneumatology, that is, may be said to have a theology which attributes to the Holy Spirit the same functions by which the Word-Son is shown to be divine.⁸⁸ In books one through three of *Against Heresies*, where Irenaeus gives a muted but real description of the origin of the Word, he establishes the uniqueness of the Word as a generation from God and as eternal. While in books one through three of *Against Heresies* God is said to create through his Word, it is not until book four that Irenaeus identifies the Holy Spirit as Wisdom and as

⁸⁶ Lebreton, *La Trinité* 2:573.

⁸⁷ My point here is that Irenaeus was no Monarchian, while Callistus was, but that some of Irenaeus's expressions were susceptible to a Monarchian interpretation. John Behr has argued the contrary: that Callistus was no Monarchian, and that his theology "stood within the tradition represented by Irenaeus." *The Way to Nicaea*, 145. I side with Heine, "The Christology of Callistus," against Behr.

⁸⁸ In the case of Irenaeus, I understand the criteria for the "divine" activities equated with those of God the Father, and an existence described as like the Father's and unlike the angels'. (I do not assume that seraphim and cherubim are angels.)

co-creator.⁸⁹ Similarly, it is not until book four that Irenaeus introduces the famous image of God's "two hands" to describe the Word/Son and Wisdom/Holy Spirit as co-creators of Adam. These doctrines remain consistent from book four through book five and into the *Demonstration*. Until the middle of book three of *Against Heresies*, Irenaeus's pneumatology is similar to Justin's; from the middle of book three to the *Demonstration* his pneumatology is very much like Theophilus's.⁹⁰

The strong account in the first three books of *Against Heresies* of the Word as "mapping" or containing the whole content of God, as the single offspring,⁹¹ and as co-creator is not matched by a comparable account of the Holy Spirit. Indeed, Irenaeus's arguments that the Word contains the whole content of God and is the single offspring of God make it difficult for him to speak in similar terms of the Holy Spirit, if he wanted to. When, in the last two books of *Against Heresies*, Irenaeus does articulate a theology of the Holy Spirit as co-creator and as the Wisdom of God, he nonetheless never furnishes any description of the Holy Spirit's generation from God (as Spirit or as Wisdom) nor of the content/nature of divine Wisdom (in its relationship to the content/nature of God.) There is nothing comparable, for example, to Athenagoras's description of the Holy Spirit's origins:

The Holy Spirit Himself also, which operates in the prophets, we assert to be an effluence of God, flowing from Him, and returning back again like a beam of the sun.⁹²

⁸⁹ D'Ales, "La doctrine de l'Esprit en saint Irénée," 500 n. 12, points out that the identification of the Holy Spirit with Wisdom occurs in Theophilus, who cites the same supporting Scripture texts as Irenaeus. Lebreton calls the identification of Wisdom with Holy Spirit an "orientale" (i.e., from Asia Minor) Christian tradition, which he contrasts with the Alexandrian identification of Wisdom with the Word. See Lebreton's "La théologie de la Trinité chez Clément d'Alexandrie," *Recherches de Science religieuse* 34 (1947), 55–76, 142–79; here p. 160. On the "Alexandrian" identification, see A. H. B. Logan, "Origen and Alexandrian Wisdom Christology," in *Origeniana Tertia*, ed. R. P. C. Hanson and Henri Crouzel (Rome: Edizioni dell'Ateneo, 1985), 123–29.

⁹⁰ A good argument can be made that "Irenaeus acquired *To Autolytus* by the time he penned AH 3.22.4 through 3.24.1" and that the pneumatology of those later works—that the Spirit is creator, that the Holy Spirit is Wisdom—depends upon Irenaeus reading Theophilus. See Anthony Briggman, "Dating Irenaeus' Acquisition of Theophilus' Correspondence *To Autolytus*: A Pneumatological Perspective," *Studia Patristica* (forthcoming).

⁹¹ Articulated against the Gnostic theology of multiple emissions.

⁹² Athenagoras, *Embassy for the Christians* X, ANF II.13.

The closest Irenaeus comes to a description of the origin of the Holy Spirit is *en passant* when he quotes Proverbs 8:22, “The Lord created me the beginning of His ways in His work.” If we read Justin’s use of the same passage, we see that the point of the text for Justin is not that it describes the origins of Wisdom (i.e., created), but that it establishes that Wisdom “was begotten by the Father before all things created; and that that which is begotten is numerically distinct from that which begets. . . .”⁹³ In a similar way, Irenaeus uses the passage to establish that the Holy Spirit (Wisdom) pre-exists creation and is a co-creator.⁹⁴

Any reader familiar with patristic Trinitarian theology will recognize Proverbs 8:22 as a central text in the controversies of the fourth century. It is this passage from Proverbs that Arians and anti-Nicenes will focus upon in their argument that the Son (whom all sides recognize by the title “Wisdom”) is a creature: “In the beginning of His ways the Lord *created* [κτίζειν] me [i.e., Wisdom]. . . .” But second-century exegetical hermeneutics is not fourth-century exegetical hermeneutics. Wisdom’s full speech, 8:22–26, is a complex, ambiguous and interesting description of her origins. God “established” (ἐμελιούv) and “brought forth/made” (ποιεῖv) Wisdom “in the beginning” (ἐν ἀρχῇ). Wisdom was “generated/born” (γεννᾶv) by God.⁹⁵ No second-century reader could imagine that God performed four separate actions upon Wisdom, so the four verbs must be understood as synonyms; if any of the four verbs can be said to govern the sense(s) of the other three, it is certainly the meaning of the last term—γεννᾶv—that governs the reading of κτίζειν, ἐμελιούv and ποιεῖv. The density of causal language in the scriptural passage supports an exegetically based account of Wisdom’s origins. When Tertullian cites Proverbs 8:22 in *Against Praxeus* 6, he explicitly exegetes it in the manner I have suggested: he first cites 8:22ff., and then glosses it with, “establishing and begetting, of course, in his [God’s] own consciousness.”⁹⁶ In *Against Praxeus* 6 (etc.) Tertullian is interested in giving an account of the origins of Wisdom; it is

⁹³ Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho* 130, p. 264. (The passage is one of a number of texts from a *Testimonia* that Justin cites to build his argument for two powers in heaven.) Justin has nothing to say about Wisdom being “created,” only that the text witnesses to Wisdom existing before all created things.

⁹⁴ Irenaeus does not appeal to Wisdom 7:25–26, which does describe the aetiological origin of Wisdom. Forty years later Origen will make the passage the centerpiece of his account in *On First Principles* of the Son’s origin (as Wisdom).

⁹⁵ Tertullian is working from his own reading of the LXX, not from a *vetus*.

⁹⁶ Tertullian, *Against Praxeus*, trans. Evans, p. 94.19 for the Latin and p. 136 for the translation: “in sensu suo scilicet condens et generans.”

this sort of elaboration that is lacking in Irenaeus.⁹⁷ It is important to understand that while it is true that Irenaeus's arguments against Gnostic doctrines of the emissions of Aeons pre-empt whatever account of the origin of the Holy Spirit he might have developed out of his own theological "logic," it is also the case that he seems unacquainted with, and unable to imagine, the kind of argument offered by Athenagoras. One does not take from reading Irenaeus the sense that he has an aetiology of the Holy Spirit that he is, due to present circumstances, holding back in silence.

The Holy Spirit Creates

In the first three books of the *Against Heresies*, Irenaeus's subject matter, including the scriptural passages he exegetes, are determined by the driving polemical motive of the work. The last two books of the *Against Heresies* have a different character to them: in these books Irenaeus seems to turn more freely to topics (and Scripture) that express his theology on its own terms. In this way, the last two books of the *Against Heresies* foreshadow Irenaeus's theology in the *Demonstration*. Most of what I will have to say about Irenaeus's theology of the Holy Spirit as creator owes to passages in either *Against Heresies*, books four and five, or the *Demonstration*.

The passages from Irenaeus that I will first discuss include one from *Against Heresies* II, at one of the rare occasions in which Irenaeus does cite Genesis one.⁹⁸ *Against Heresies* II.2.4–5 has an early articulation by Irenaeus of thought that he will treat again in *Demonstration*, chapter 5. The first passage does not contain a pneumatology; the second one does. The two passages are otherwise clearly related to each other in subject matter (creation) and in Scripture citations, and thus it is the doctrinal differences between the two that I find remarkable. The first passage, *Against Heresies* II.2.4–5, follows, with observations:

5. For this is a peculiarity of the pre-eminence of God, not to stand in need of other instruments for the creation of those things which are

⁹⁷ Evans, in *Against Praxeus*, pages 216–19, has an excellent discussion of the role of Proverbs 8:22 in Tertullian's theology, and, as well, a useful list of second-century expositors of the scriptural text. Evans, page 218, remarks that Tertullian "is almost the last to make *positive* use of it: later writers needed to interpret it allegorically."

⁹⁸ One is stunned to discover the almost complete lack of interest on Irenaeus's part in the six days in Genesis one. The only passage in the Genesis one account that receives any serious attention, or figures with any significance, in Irenaeus's theology is Genesis 1:25–26; that passage—it cannot be denied—is very important for Irenaeus. It is, as we shall see, Genesis 1:25–26 that is the occasion for the well known Irenaeian description of the Word and the Holy Spirit as the "two hands of God."

summoned into existence. His own Word is both suitable and sufficient for the formation of all things, even as John, the disciple of the Lord, declares regarding him: "All things were made by him, and without him was nothing made" [Jn 1:3]. Now, among the "all things" our world must be embraced. It too, therefore, was made by his Word, as Scripture tells us in the book of Genesis that he made all things connected with our world by his Word. *David also expresses the same truth [when he says,] "For he spoke, and they were made; he commanded, and they were created" [Ps 33/2:9].* Whom, therefore, shall we believe as to the creation of the world—these heretics who have been mentioned that prate so foolishly and inconsistently on the subject, or the disciples of the Lord, and Moses, who was both a faithful servant of God and a prophet? He at first narrated the formation of the world in these words: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth," [Gen 1:1] and all other things in succession; but neither gods nor angels had any share in the work.

Now, that this God is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Paul the apostle also has declared, "There is one God, the Father, who is above all, and through all things, and in us all" [Eph. 4:6]. I have indeed proved already that there is only one God. . . .

In this passage Irenaeus refers to these Old Testament and New Testament passages: Gospel of John 1:3, Psalm 33/2:9, Genesis 1:1 and Epistle to the Ephesians 4:6. The first two passages—John 1:3, and Psalm 33/2:9—are used to support the statement that God's "own Word is both suitable and sufficient for the formation of all things"; in particular, suitable and sufficient for the formation of the world (in its cosmic, not local, sense.) Genesis 1:1 excludes the teaching that God was aided in the act of creation by gods or angels: it is this teaching by the Bythian dualists that is the nominal reason for Irenaeus's statement at *Against Heresies* II.2.4–5 that the world was created by God alone using his Word. The passage ends with Irenaeus referring Ephesians 4:6 to God the Father as he identifies the one creator God with the "Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." There is no mention whatsoever of the Holy Spirit. Irenaeus leads with a New Testament Logos passage (John 1:3—one of the very, very few New Testament passages that speak at all about creation), and then cites Old Testament material that supports a doctrine of the Word active in creation (Psalm 33/2:9). There is, then, similar testimony (i.e., both Testaments) to support belief in one creator God (Gen 1:1 and Eph 4:6.)

Now we turn to the passage in chapter five of the *Demonstration* that revisits the interests of *Against Heresies* II.2.4–5:

Thus then there is shown forth One God, the Father, not made, invisible, creator of all things, above whom there is no other God, and after

whom there is no other God. And, since God is rational, therefore by His Word He created the things that were made; and God is Spirit, and by the Spirit He adorned all things: as also the prophet says, “By the *Word* of the Lord, the heavens were spread out, And by the *Spirit* of His mouth all their *power*” [Ps. 33/2:6]. Since then the Word establishes, that is to say gives body and grants the reality of being, and the Spirit gives order and form to the diverse powers, rightly and fittingly is the Word called Son, and the Spirit the Wisdom of God.⁹⁹

The Old Testament and New Testament passages clearly referred to by Irenaeus in the *Demonstration*, chapter 5 are Psalm 33/2:6, Ephesians 4:6, and Romans 8:15. The scriptural citations that are in common with *Against Heresies* II.2.4–5 are Psalm 33/2 and Ephesians 4:6, although this time Irenaeus cites verse six of Psalm 33/2 rather than verse nine. Psalm 33/2:6 is, of course, a key *Holy Spirit as creator* text with its signature “In the beginning the Word, and the Spirit” understanding of Genesis 1:1–3.¹⁰⁰ Also, in this quotation Irenaeus refers Ephesians 4:6 to all three Persons of the Trinity: “because ‘above all’ is the Father, and ‘through all’ is the Word—since through Him everything was made by the Father—while ‘in us all’ is the Spirit.” John 1:3, cited in the *Against Heresies* II passage, does not appear at all in the *Demonstration* passage, and indeed could be said to be replaced by Romans 8:15, a quote that highlights the Holy Spirit. Moreover, the Genesis 1:1 passage drops away, seemingly superfluous to Irenaeus’s argument. Irenaeus has found a suitable authority in the new, Christian “Scriptures” for the doctrine that God is the creator, and he quotes the passage at both *Against Heresies* IV.20.2 and *Demonstration* I.4: “Truly, then, the Scripture declared, which says, ‘First of all believe that there is one God, who has established all things, and completed them, and having caused that from what had no being, all things should come into existence. . . .’” The quoted passage is from *Shepherd of Hermas*. Sometime between the writing of *Against Heresies* II and IV, between the writing of *Against Heresies* II and *The Demonstration*, Irenaeus found a reason to change his theology. Now the Holy Spirit is understood to be an agent of creation together with the Word.

The first passage is an account of creation that identifies the role of the Word in the divine creative act. This account of creation that speaks only of God and His Word seems complete with only these two. The second

⁹⁹ Robinson, trans., *Demonstration*, pp. 73f.

¹⁰⁰ However, while Psalm 33/2:6 supports Irenaeus’s understanding that God created through the two, the Word and the Spirit, in Irenaeus there is no association of the passage with Genesis 1:2b, as there is in Theophilus’s writing, *To Autolytus* II.10.

passage is an account of creation that identifies the roles of both the Word and the Holy Spirit in the divine creative act; the centering of creation on the Word that comes from John 1:3 is gone, and a passage (Eph 4:6) that was referred only to God the Father is now referred to the Three. The least that can be said about what happens in *Demonstration* 1.5 is that Irenaeus has felt the effects of, first, a theology of the Holy Spirit as creator centered on Psalm 33/2:6; and second, a “two agent” exegesis of creation, particularly the creation of man (at Gen 1:25–26). Irenaeus's theology is marked by his assimilation and unification of these two theologies of creation. This assimilation and unification may be observed in *Against Heresies* IV and V, for the theology expressed in these two books is not determined simply by an easing of genre “limitations” but by developments in Irenaeus's theology. (It is not the case that in books one and two, Irenaeus had a theology of the Holy Spirit as creator but declined, under the circumstances, to express it.) Throughout this process, throughout his writings, Irenaeus remains, however, either disinterested or unaffected by Genesis 1:1–2. The scriptural (LXX) passage that figures more decisively in Irenaeus's strong statement of the Holy Spirit as creator is Psalm 33/2:6. In the two passages from the later writings just compared, where a statement of the Holy Spirit as creator is lacking, so is any reference to Psalm 33/2:6; where there is a statement of the Holy Spirit as creator, there is also the testimony of Psalm 33/2:6. Alternately, where Psalm 33/2:6 appears there is a statement of the Holy Spirit as creator; where it does not, there is no statement of the Holy Spirit as creator.

Virtually every scholar who has written on the subject judges that Irenaeus believed the Holy Spirit participated in the act of creation. However, if this fact about Irenaeus's pneumatology is largely uncontested, it is nonetheless one that is somehow puzzling for many scholars, who have felt that Irenaeus's doctrine required particular attention and explanation in order to make sense of it.¹⁰¹ Irenaeus's identification of the Holy Spirit with Divine Wisdom (from, for example, Proverbs) causes the same (or more) consternation or confusion among scholars than it causes among Theophilus's commentators.¹⁰² The greater authority of

¹⁰¹ This dynamic is especially evident in treatments of Irenaeus's “two hands” account of creation, as the reader will see below.

¹⁰² Swete introduces this identification simultaneously as Irenaeus's loyalty to tradition and as his development of that tradition: “Irenaeus, however, while loyally accepting tradition, does not limit himself to it. Like earlier teachers of the second-century, he identifies the Holy Spirit with the Divine Wisdom of the book of Proverbs, and assigns to Him a place with the Divine Word in the cosmogony.” Swete, *Ancient Church*, 87.

Irenaeus, compared to Theophilus, makes his wisdom pneumatology all the more puzzling and problematic for these scholars. While this is not the place to discuss wisdom pneumatology with any substance, the fact needs to be stated clearly that one important way Irenaeus has for speaking about the Holy Spirit as creator is through the identification of the Holy Spirit with the Divine Wisdom.¹⁰³

3. I have also largely demonstrated, that the Word, namely the Son, was always with the Father; and that Wisdom also, which is the Spirit, was present with Him, anterior to all creation. . . .¹⁰⁴

Thus then there is shown forth One God, the Father, not made, invisible, creator of all things, above whom there is no other God, and after whom there is no other God. And, since God is rational, therefore by His Word He created the things that were made; and God is Spirit, and by the Spirit He adorned all things: as also the prophet says, "By the *Word* of the Lord, the heavens were spread out, and by the *Spirit* of His mouth all their *power*" [Ps. 33/2:6]. Since then the Word establishes, that is to say gives body and grants the reality of being, and the Spirit gives order and form to the diverse powers, rightly and fittingly is the Word called Son, and the Spirit the Wisdom of God.¹⁰⁵

These passages, along with *Against Heresies* IV.20.1, quoted just below, show Irenaeus's identification of the Holy Spirit with Divine Wisdom. Beyond this basic remark, the most important comment to make initially about these passages is their traditional and familiar content: in particular, the appeal to Psalm 33/2 and the articulation of a doctrine of a "two-agent creation" by Word and Spirit. At this stage of his Trinitarian theology, Irenaeus, like Athenagoras, keeps the Trinitarian origins of creation central to his account of the origins of the cosmos. Again like Athenagoras, Irenaeus now has a clear notion of how the Word and Spirit act in creating. For one particular act of creation—Adam—Irenaeus supports the parallelism between Word and Spirit with the textual motif of "God's [two] hands."

It was not angels, therefore, who made us, nor who formed us, neither had angels power to make an image of God, nor any one else, except the Word of the Lord, nor any Power remotely distant from the Father

¹⁰³ Lebreton offers that Irenaeus may have identified the Spirit with Wisdom in order to import, as it were, a kind of Trinitarian superstructure to strengthen an Old Testament theology of the Holy Spirit which is otherwise vague and without vigor. Lebreton, *La Trinité* 2:569.

¹⁰⁴ Here Irenaeus quotes Proverbs 3:19, 20; 8:22–25; and 8:27–31.

¹⁰⁵ Robinson, trans., *Demonstration*, ch. 5, pp. 73f.

of all things. For God did not stand in need of these [beings], in order to the accomplishing of what He had Himself determined with Himself beforehand should be done, as if He did not possess *His own hands*. For with Him were always present the Word and Wisdom, the Son and the Spirit, by whom and in whom, freely and spontaneously, He made all things. . . .¹⁰⁶

“Two Hands of God”

This notion of the Word/Son and Wisdom/Spirit as God's hands has been commented upon often, and is a regular feature of scholarship on Irenaeus.¹⁰⁷ I have a few small observations to make, but I think it would be useful first to share with the reader the passages in Irenaeus that have fascinated scholars for at least the last hundred years. To the passage quoted just above may be added the following:¹⁰⁸

Now man is a mixed organization of soul and flesh, who was formed after the likeness of God, and *molded by His hands, that is, by the Son and Holy Spirit*, to whom also He said, “Let Us make man.” This, then, is the aim of him who envies our life, to render men disbelievers in their own salvation, and blasphemous against God the Creator.¹⁰⁹

[S]o also, in [the times of] the end, the Word of the Father and *the Spirit* of God, having become united with the ancient substance of Adam's formation, rendered man living and perfect, receptive of the perfect Father, in order that as in the natural [Adam] we all were dead, so in the spiritual we may all be made alive. For never at any time did Adam escape the *hands of God*, to whom the Father speaking, said, “Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness.”¹¹⁰

Now God shall be glorified in His handiwork, fitting it so as to be conformable to, and modelled after, His own Son. *For by the hands of the Father, that is, by the Son and the Holy Spirit*, man, and not [merely] a part of man, was made in the likeness of God.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁶ AH IV.20.1, ANF I.487.

¹⁰⁷ I do not know of any scholar who describes Irenaeus's Trinitarian theology and declines to bring the “two hands” language into that description.

¹⁰⁸ Lebreton, *La Trinité* 2:579–83, provides a list of all the occurrences of “creation by two hands” in Irenaeus's writings: AH IV, pref. 4; IV, 20, 1; V, 1, 3; V, 5, 1; V, 6, 1; V, 15, 3–4; V, 16, 1; V, 28, 3; and *Demo* 11. Lebreton credits J. A. Robinson for identifying and commenting upon these passages in his translation of *The Demonstration*, pp. 51–53, and then adds that the Armenian for IV.7.4 speaks of “two hands.” Lebreton further remarks upon the fact that the expression does not appear in the first three books of the *Against Heresies*, unlike its frequent appearance in books four and five of *Against Heresies*.

¹⁰⁹ AH IV, pref. 4, ANF I.463.

¹¹⁰ AH V.1.3, ANF I.527.

¹¹¹ AH V.6.1, ANF I.531.

And therefore throughout all time, man, *having been molded at the beginning by the hands of God, that is, of the Son and of the Spirit*, is made after the image and likeness of God. . . .¹¹²

First we note that in all cases the occasion for Irenaeus speaking of *creation by the hands of God* is Genesis 1:25–26, the creation of man in the image and likeness of God. As several scholars have pointed out, Irenaeus understands God to be speaking to the Son¹¹³ and to the Spirit—the “two hands”—when he says, “Let *us* make. . . .” The use of “God’s hands” language in referring to Genesis 1:25–26 is found earlier in *First Clement* 33:4, “Above all, as the most excellent and exceeding great work of His intelligence, with His sacred and faultless hands He formed man in the impress of His own image.”¹¹⁴

A similar midrash of Genesis 1:25–26 (with Genesis 2:7) is offered in *Fourth Esdras* 3:4–5:

O sovereign Lord, did you not speak at the beginning when you formed the earth—and that without help—and commanded the dust and it gave you Adam, a lifeless body? *Yet he was the workmanship of your hands*, and you did breathe into him the breath of life, and he was made alive in your presence.¹¹⁵

We first note that there is a tradition antedating Irenaeus (indeed, antedating Christianity) that associates “made by God’s hands” with Genesis 1:25–26. In these writings, as in Irenaeus’s, the language of “made by God’s two hands” is used to describe the creation or formation of Adam and only that specific act of creation. “Made by God’s two hands” is not used to describe any other creative act from the six days. The association between “two hands” and the making of Adam probably owes to an exegetical emphasis on the description of Adam being shaped out of clay, with the supplied notion that God is like a potter. Now a potter uses his two hands to shape what he is making; God similarly used his two hands when he worked the clay and shaped Adam. One finds a strong exegetical interest in God as potter and man as taken from a lump of clay in the

¹¹² AH.V.28.4, ANF I.557.

¹¹³ The “two hands” motif strengthens Irenaeus’s use of “Son” for the Second Person, since in almost every case the two hands are identified as “Son and [Holy] Spirit” instead of “*Word* and. . . .”

¹¹⁴ *First Clement* 33:4, *The Apostolic Fathers*, vol. 1, trans. Kirsopp Lake, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1912/1985), 65.

¹¹⁵ RSV (emphasis added).

Jewish writings *The Wisdom of Sirach* and *Fourth Esdras* 3:4–5, not to mention Paul, Romans 9:21ff.¹¹⁶

Secondly, we note that although the language of “the hands of God” seems scriptural in origin, and indeed could be supported from Scripture, Irenaeus never quotes any Scripture (LXX) to support the phrasing. For example, a number of psalms refer to the “work(s) of God’s hands”: for example, Psalm 8:3–8; Psalm 103. 28–30; Psalm 110:6–7; Psalm 137:8; and Psalm 138:7–10.¹¹⁷ These psalms are not used by Irenaeus. That neither Psalm 104 nor 139 is used by Irenaeus is especially striking given the reference to the Spirit of God in both these texts. In my judgment, Irenaeus intentionally avoids recourse to the psalms because he uses the phrase “*the work of God’s hands*” for the creation of man exclusively. Although no part of the phrase “the work of God’s hands” appears at Genesis 1:25ff., Irenaeus uses this *theologoumenon* only for the creation of man in the image and likeness of God. The psalms, by contrast, use this expression—τά ἔργα τῶν χειρῶν σου—for a wider variety of created things. Psalm 8, for example, says:

- [3] When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers,
the moon and the stars which you hast established;
- [4] what is man that you are mindful of him,
and the son of man that you attend to him?
- [5] Yet you have made him little less than God,
and with glory and honor crowned him.
- [6] You have given him dominion over *the works of your hands*;
you have put all things under his feet,
- [7] sheep and oxen, all together,
and also the beasts of the field,
- [8] the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea,
whatever passes along the paths of the sea.

Similarly, Psalm 91:4 says, “You, O LORD, made me glad by Your work, and at *the works of Your hands* I will rejoice” and Psalm 110:7, “*The works of his hands* are truth and justice. . . .” In all these cases, the works of the Lord’s hands refer not to humanity but to something else. By contrast,

¹¹⁶ See John R. Levison, *Portraits of Adam in Early Judaism: From Sirach to 2 Baruch* (Sheffield: JSOT, 1988).

¹¹⁷ Psalm 103:29–30, with its invocation of God’s “face,” the spirit in us, and God’s spirit being sent forth—all these points together would seem to make the psalm one Irenaeus would find cogent. But he does not cite it. See also Isaiah 45:12a, “I made the earth, and created man upon it; it was my hands that stretched out the heavens . . .” (*A New English Translation of the Septuagint*, corrected).

Irenaeus restricts the phrase “*the work of God’s hands*” to the creation of man; the psalms will not help him.

For Swete, Irenaeus’s understanding of the Word and Spirit as the “hands of God” constitutes his Trinitarian theology. Swete says: “As the Hands of God, they are Divine and coequal. . . .”¹¹⁸ He goes on to say: “He [Irenaeus] does not speak of an eternal procession of the Son or the spirit from the Father; his strong antagonism to the Gnostic doctrine of emanations leads him to think of the Son and the Spirit as inherent in the life of God rather than as proceeding from Him; as the ‘Hands’ of God rather than His probolai. His controversy with Gnosticism leads him to dwell especially on the work of the Son and the spirit in the creation and in man.”¹¹⁹ However, Lebreton’s judgment is more typical of modern scholars: he understands Irenaeus’s “two hands” language to express the Spirit’s role in certain sanctifying functions, and he quotes approvingly from Theodore de Régnon to make this very point:¹²⁰ “with one [hand] He makes, He models; with the other he polishes, perfects, brings to completion. . . .” The theology of Irenaeus’s “two hands” language is thus understood to distinguish the *creative* activity of the Word from the *sanctifying* activity of the Holy Spirit.¹²¹ Even if this were a satisfactory and tenable reading of the way Irenaeus uses the “hands of God”—and I do not think it is—it ignores those statements by Irenaeus in which the Holy Spirit is creative at a cosmological level. The judgment that Irenaeus’s “two hands” theology means that in his pneumatology the principal and characteristic activity of the Holy Spirit is sanctification (“polishing, perfecting, bringing to completion”) follows from the presupposition that Paul’s pneumatology is the standard by which early Christian theologies of the Holy Spirit are to be interpreted. While it is indeed true that Irenaeus is influenced by Pauline pneumatology¹²²—in fact, that Irenaeus is the *first* patristic author who shows any clear signs of Paul’s pneumatology—this does not mean that Irenaeus’s pneumatology follows the “logic” of Paul’s pneumatology.

¹¹⁸ Swete, *Ancient Church*, 88. Whether the “two hands” language supports a positive judgment that Irenaeus has a theology of the co-eternity of the Three is a debated issue in recent scholarship. The position in older scholarship was that Irenaeus had a theology of the eternal, separate existence of the Word and Holy Spirit, that is, he was not a modalist. I agree.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 93.

¹²⁰ Lebreton, *La Trinité* 2:583.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

¹²² See Andrew Gregory, *The Reception of Luke and Acts in the Period before Irenaeus* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), who argues that Irenaeus is the earliest source of clear quotations from Luke-Acts.

Conclusion

Irenaeus's description of the Father builds from the Father's existence as Spirit. Most importantly, the Father is rational, possessing a *Nous* and *Logos*; is not bound by place, distance, or borders; and any "generation" cannot accurately be conceived as a generation "from" that means "out of." The *Logos* of the Father is himself Spirit: his reality as God follows from his existence as Spirit; his reality as individual follows from his being a knowing subject. The same may be said for the Holy Spirit (the "Third Person" of the Trinity.) The Word has his beginning "in" the Father, and he remains in the Father whatever distinct existence he may have. In particular, the Son remains in the Father during the Incarnation. Because the Word is always in the Father he is the living Image of God, and manifests God through his union with the visible and material flesh. Through their reciprocal immanence the Father is in the Son even as the Son is in the Father, and, again, this interpenetration of Spirit(s) remains true in the Incarnation.

What Irenaeus bequeaths to his readers—for example, Tertullian and Athanasius—is a robust theology of the Word. The appearance of the title "Word" ("Logos") in the prologue of John provides the point-of-departure for a Word Christology that encompasses every aspect of Irenaeus's theology of the Second Person, including both before and in the Incarnation. Irenaeus's emphasis on Word develops the spiritual language for God-Mind, Word, etc.—that he uses of the Father in *Against Heresies* I and II. In the tradition within which Irenaeus speaks, Word has a definite role as an actor-agent at the cosmological level. Most importantly—and this goes to Irenaeus's interest in developing John's theology of the Word—Irenaeus can relate the life of the Word in the union of the Incarnation with the cosmological life of the Word and show the unity between the world God and his Word created and the world God through his Word saves. Jesus' healing of the blind man is not a confrontation between the emissary of Spirit and the literal and figurative forces of darkness, but instead the Word doing in the world what he has always and everywhere done in the cosmos—creating, nurturing, and governing. The God and Father of the Word who saves us is the same God and Father of the Word who gives us life in the womb: Jesus' God and Father is the Creator, for Jesus himself is the Word, the instrument and agent of that Creator.

Irenaeus is not prepared to use aetiological language to provide a dense account of the identities (and origins) of the Son and Holy Spirit. The net result of Irenaeus's by-passing of a causal account of the Holy Spirit's origin (as opposed to the minimalist causal account of the Son's origin)

is to leave the next generation with a pneumatology lacking a key support. Athenagoras's pneumatology was more robust than Irenaeus's insofar as it contained a fully articulated account of the origin of the Holy Spirit, but Athenagoras had almost no readers among Christians in the two centuries that followed him, while Irenaeus did, especially among the Christian communities of Alexandria and Asia minor. By the end of the second century we find that a noticeably subordinationist pneumatology takes hold in both Greek and Latin (that is, in Origen and in Tertullian, respectively) accounts of the Holy Spirit. It is not that Irenaeus's pneumatology is single-handedly the cause of this "low" pneumatology, but that the limitations of his account of the Holy Spirit's origins make way for a one-sided interest in the origins of the Word: there is no analogous articulation of the origins of the Holy Spirit.¹²³ Certainly the "causes" of the weak pneumatology of the third and fourth centuries include the problematic use of "pneuma" to name divinity itself (as revealed in the Monarchian controversies), as well as the increasing separation and theological discontinuity between Christianity and Judaism (where continuity had produced a mixed quality of theology in any case). Irenaeus's strong emphasis in *Against Heresies* IV–V and the *Demonstration* on the Holy Spirit as co-creator is lost, although we must acknowledge that the doctrine never had a widespread articulation in early Christianity. N·V

¹²³ To see this difference of interest one need only compare the number of pages devoted by Origen in *On First Principles* to describing the aetiology of the Son's origin to the number of pages devoted to describing the aetiology of the Holy Spirit's origin.