

Foreword

AS JAMES B. TORRANCE used to insist, dogmatics arises out of doxology. It is not surprising therefore that there should be contemporary interest in this connection between theology and worship. Indeed, for some decades now there has been renewed interest in worship across many churches, a new interest too in the doctrine of the Trinity, and great interest in linking the two. But one key aspect of that has not always been fully appreciated or investigated. That is the role of Christ as the One who, being truly human, leads us in his priestly role in our worship of God. True Christian worship is therefore to be understood our participation by the Spirit in the Son's communion with the Father.

Kevin J. Navarro is a both a musician and a theologian. As an experienced pastor he has been deeply interested in worship that is truly God-centred. But a new and deeper understanding of worship came to him through the writings of the Scottish theologians Thomas F. and James B. Torrance. The brothers taught together at New College in the University of Edinburgh where I was privileged to be taught by both. Thomas Torrance "retired" soon afterwards to devote the next decades to writing and publishing many of his most profound works. His younger brother James went on to become Professor of Theology at the University of Aberdeen. J. B.'s Didsbury Lectures, *Worship, Community and the Triune God of Grace*, published in 1996, have been widely influential as an introduction to their shared theology of worship. T. F. was the major theologian who published numerous influential works on Christology, theology, and science, the doctrine of the Trinity and much more. Their shared theology of worship, presented so compellingly by J. B., himself a gifted teacher and theologian, was given an immense theological foundation in the published works of T. F.

If I were asked to put into a nutshell their perspective on the theology of worship, I could do so by employing the two forms of the doxology

defended by Basil of Caesarea in his treatise, *On the Holy Spirit*. Basil had been challenged to defend his use of the doxology, *Glory be to the Father with the Son together with the Holy Spirit*. His critics, who were not very sure about attributing full deity explicitly to the Holy Spirit, preferred the other form, *Glory be to the Father through the Son by the Holy Spirit*. Basil insisted on both, and it has been held that whereas in the latter, “through” and “by” express the economic Trinity, our understanding of God active in his world, in the former, “with” and “together with,” express the equality of the persons emphasized in the immanent or ontological Trinity—that God is in himself eternally a communion of the three Persons. Some theologians in recent decades have suggested that during centuries of focusing on the ontological Trinity, we lost hold of the economic Trinity—God active in salvation in his world. The doctrine of the Trinity was thus made to appear remote and irrelevant.

What Thomas and James Torrance have done in their theology of worship is to make the economic Trinity a vital part of our understanding of worship. It is of course true that in Christian worship we adore Father, Son and Holy Spirit, co-equal in the Holy Trinity world without end. T. F. Torrance’s theology of the Trinity considers that profoundly. But what the brothers have done is to illuminate the significance of the economic Trinity for our worship. We are only able to join in the worship of heaven adoring Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, because the Spirit unites us to the Son, our ascended human brother, so that we may participate in his communion with the Father.

In this book, a revised form of his doctoral thesis completed at the University of Manchester through Nazarene Theological College, Dr Navarro takes us into the theology of worship articulated by the Torrance brothers. He brings together material from across the writings of T. F. to demonstrate the deep foundations of the doctrine so winningly and creatively presented by J. B. Everyone who leads Christian congregations in worship will find this book deepens their understanding of their calling. All thoughtful Christians will find their experience of Christian worship deepened.

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