

# **CHRIST: THE ONLY BEGOTTEN COSMOS**

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## INTRODUCTION

There is a dilemma that has bothered me for over a year now. It has three parts:

1. The truth of Christian Trinitarianism.
2. The truth of Platonism's cosmology as expounded by Plotinus.
3. The mystery of the eternally incarnated Logos.

Frithjof Schuon freed me to embrace Platonism as the philosophy with which I work out my Christianity, but not a modified Platonism, as if it was deficient, but Platonism as it is\*. The usual tactic is to say that Platonism pure and simple is incomplete, that it requires Christian revelation to make it even "more true". I have since rejected that, as Schuon and Cutsinger have shown me how the Unitarian vision (which holds for Jews, Muslims, and "pure" Platonists) coheres with the Christian Trinitarian vision, without fundamentally changing both [1]. Indeed, I am convinced that Unitarianism is the more "basic" or "primordial" truth, based on Christ's own words and the force of my intuition, and that the Trinitarian vision is dependent on the Unitarian vision, not the reverse. What this means is that, based on the groundwork laid by Schuon, Cutsinger, and other Perennialists, I can work out even more the Trinitarian vision in a Unitarian framework. Some of this can be seen in several of the posts on my blog working out Schuon's cosmology, the problem of evil, and even a more general version of this essay where I lay out the justification for the unity of both Unitarian and Trinitarian viewpoints. For this essay however, the focus is the nature of the Son, specifically his "begottenness" and its relationship with creation, redemption and the Divine Essence. There are several hints in Schuon and Cutsinger – and to a lesser extent in Guenon and Coomaraswamy, and perhaps even in David Bentley Hart and Jordan Daniel Wood – that the begetting of the Son is so tied to the incarnation as to be inseparable[2–5]. Not that the general idea is new, I have written on that before, but there are specific details, possibly scandalous details (If this sort of thing scares you) that puts a common opposition to rest. Keep in mind that I do have a "heresy meter", and I do know what I am about to say walks that fine line. However, truth is truth, and the truth in our creeds puts in better words what the "heresies" could not. I don't want to go into what "heresy" means for the perennialist, but nonetheless I want you to keep an open mind.

# I

## HYPOSTASES AND MODES

*"Now this is the Catholic faith: We worship one God in the Trinity and the Trinity in unity, without either confusing the persons or dividing the substance; for the person of the Father is one, the Son's is another, the Holy Spirit's another; but the Godhead of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is one, their glory equal, their majesty coeternal" [6]*

When thinking about the “hypostases”, which are the “principles” or “persons” of the Godhead, which do not make it up, yet are of the essence, we should take care not to “psychologise” them. God is neither an individual among others nor a really big conglomerate of “individuals” [7]. Even in Unitarianism, to “psychologise” God is to demean Him. All the words we use are to a great extent analogical, as all words are when speaking of divine things. To say “the Father begets the Son” is not to mean exactly the same thing when we say a human father begets his son. It is instead to say that the image of human fatherhood is a “symbol” that displays the relationship between two principles in the Godhead, with the understanding that as a symbol and “image”, it is simply a “shadow” of the actual thing, which is indescribable. The role of words in describing God is to lead the human mind to intellection, to lead us to experience for ourselves a reality that we could never perfectly put in those words [8]. Words are in effect, a “ladder” to the divine. The Word became words to lead us to that which truly speaks the Word. But this divine reality is not itself actually divided into two or three or four or any number of hypostases. The hypostases in the Godhead are “aspects”, although I am using this word tenuously. They are “sides” or different “perspectives” and “faces”[9] of the same Godhead, yet at the same time it is still One God we speak of. This is so because the Godhead is not “absolute” simpliciter, but that it is “both” absolute and relative, as they imply one another. God is first the absolute, the absolutely real being, and all others are his shadow. On the other hand, God, because he has all things in himself as the absolute, spawns relativity, his “shadows”. The infinite is both “One” and “many” or “all”. God is one, the Essence is one, but the essence has many “modes”. This is an analogical transposition of the distinction between “substance” and “accidents”. As Schuon would say, *“the accident, whatever its quality, can never add anything to the Substance. But one could also contend that the accident is nothing other than the Substance, or that it partakes of the latter’s reality; or yet, that it possesses all the reality corresponding to its nature or possibility”*. In parallel, we could use this statement

to affirm Christian orthodoxy. The persons are “accidental” to the divine substance, that is, they add nothing to the substance, nor do they make it up. Yet, we say that the persons are nothing other than the divine substance, the persons are one God, not three Gods:

*In God, though, given the simplicity of his essence, there is an absolute coincidence of relation and unity. For God, the “inwardness” of the other is each person’s own inwardness, the “outwardness” of the other is each person’s outwardness and manifestation... We must say, at once, that the divine simplicity is the “result” of the self-giving transparency and openness of infinite persons, but also that the distinction of the persons within the one God is the “result” of the infinite simplicity of the divine essence... God is one because each divine person, in the circle of God’s knowledge and love of his own goodness (which is both wisdom and charity), is a “face,” a “capture,” of the divine essence that is—as must be, given the infinite simplicity of God—always wholly God, in the full depth of his “personality.” For any “mode of subsistence” of the infinite being of God must be an infinite mode, a way whereby God is entirely, “personally” God. God is never less than wholly God.*

*David Bentley Hart [9]*

The difference between this and Sabellianism (also called Modalism) is that although the persons are one essence, the persons, qua persons, are distinct. This where I will find the most difficulty with my orthodox brethren. Schuon maintains that the error of Sabellius was not intrinsic, that his represents a valid point of view [10]. The issue arises when a point of view is taken to be the *only* point of view. It is not possible to affirm orthodoxy without modalist language. The statement “Three persons, One God” is itself a kind of “reverse modalist”, or really another kind of “modalism” when understood correctly. But, it is not *only* modalist. The Godhead is both One Hypostasis for the Unitarian, and Three Hypostases for the Trinitarian. The distinction is in what is emphasised. The Unitarian is concerned with the essence as such, and will obviously not come to a Trinitarian formulation. But Christianity requires the essence be understood “relationally”. A great emphasis is placed on the essence as it *explains* the primacy of Christ. For Christianity, it is not enough that God is one essence, we need to explain Christ’s identification with the Father. Since the Father is obviously not the Son in terms of hypostasis, the only way to maintain the unity of the Godhead is to assert that they are of one essence. In this, the Father *is* the Son, and *is* the Spirit, but hypostatically, they are not the same. In the absolute, God is one. In relativity, God is many. The Christian point of view is meant to explain the incarnation. If the party line is anything to go by, Sabellius is said to have denied

that the Father, Son, and Spirit were “hypostases”. I say here that he is right, while being wrong. From a certain point of view, there is only one hypostasis, but for the Christian, a different point of view needs to be normative, that which preserves the gospel, the perspective of three hypostases. This doesn’t rule out other perspectives – a “Quaternity” is possible for example [11] – but it is not needed for and cannot explain the Christian story as satisfactorily as the Trinitarian perspective. This is probably one of my more controversial positions, but right now, I’m not sure I care. I do accept the creeds, they are in many ways the bare minimum, but I accept more than the bare minimum. I can now arrange my earlier statement like this:

The persons are “accidental” to the divine substance, that is, they add nothing to the substance, nor do they make it up. Here, there is one hypostasis and three modes. Yet, we can say – and a Christian should affirm – that the persons are nothing other than the divine substance, the persons are one God, not three Gods. Here, there are three hypostases, one  
God.

An exclusivist Christian affirms the latter, a perennialist Christian can affirm the former and the latter, without being dishonest, as the contradiction is only apparent, and “horizontal”. It is from here that we can confront something hidden in the language of scripture when it talks about Christ being the “image of God”.

## II

### RADIANCE AND REVERBERATION

*“God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; who being the **brightness of His glory** and the **express image of His person**, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high...”*

*Hebrews 1: 1-3*

*“Absolute Substance extends Itself, through relativization, under the aspects of **Radiance and Reverberation**; that is to say, It is accompanied—at a lesser degree of reality—by two forms of emanation, one that is dynamic, continuous, and radiating, and the other static, discontinuous, and formative... **Radiance and Reverberation: the ‘Holy Spirit’ and the ‘Son’**”*

*Frithjof Schuon [10]*

The difference between the Spirit and Son is their mode of emanation from the Father. The Spirit “proceeds”, while the Son is “begotten”. The former is symbolically “continuous”, and the latter is symbolically “static”, or better yet, “accomplished”. The Son is like the Father in that they can be symbolically represented as “positions” – keeping in mind that this is only a symbol and not the actual thing – while the spirit can be represented by the line between two positions. The Spirit, from the historical incarnation itself, could be said to be the “medium” by which the “Son” Himself is eternally begotten. In this, the Spirit is that which both separates, and most importantly, *unites* the other two persons:

*There is, though, a very particular sense in which the light of the Spirit, for Gregory, is that “perfecting” radiance, that fullness of glory, that “completes” the unity of the Godhead: when Christ prays, in John 17, according to Gregory, that his followers might be one even as he and his Father are one and indwell one another, and says that the glory that the Father has given him he has given them, he is speaking of the gift of the Holy Spirit; indeed, that glory is the Spirit, the glory that the Son had with the Father before the world was made, the “bond of peace” or “bond of unity” (so like the Augustinian vinculum caritatis) by which*

*Father and Son dwell in one another, and by which we dwell in God when the Son breathes the Spirit forth upon us. The Spirit, who forever searches the depths of God, and who forever receives from and is sent by the Son, has also always himself possessed his glory, and so has the power to glorify, from everlasting and in infinite superabundance—and “how can any grant the grace of light unless he be himself light?” [9]*

It is here we examine Schuon’s words at the beginning of this section. If the “Son” is the “reverberation” or “image”, from which “point” does it “reverberate” from? Where is the “mirror” this image comes from? Using the symbol of the circle, where the centre, radius and circumference represent Father, Spirit, and Son respectively, “where” on the hierarchy of being is that first circle that represents the Son’s procession that undergirds his incarnation? The answer to this is the key to putting to rest the notion that the Plotinian hierarchy of being cannot be Trinitarian, or needs to be “corrected” by Trinitarian thinking. Although Cutsinger has more or less addressed this generally [1], I want to go into more detail, at least, as I understand what he is saying.

The Plotinian “Trinity” consists of “The One”, “Nous” (Intellect), and “Soul”. These three are arranged hierarchically. The One is basically God. It is simple, immutable, unknowable. The Nous is the cosmic intellect, equivalent to Plato’s “realm of forms”. “Soul” is the intermediary between the Nous and the “sensible”, that is, our realm, of physicality. As expected, the lower on the hierarchy the less “perfect” the reality. The Nous is the highest of “caused” (or created) reality, and is therefore the most perfect creation, even to the point of being considered “eternal”, at least according to how Gerson interprets Plotinus [12]. A better description would be “aeviternal”, but nonetheless the word “eternal” still works, in that the Nous can be described as “*co-eternal with the first, but subordinate*” [12]. This description works even if what is “caused” cannot be called “eternal” in the fullest sense [13]. We begin to see the connection to our problem when Gerson says “*Intellect is generated from the One roughly as a plane figure is generated from a point*”. Furthermore, Gerson also says:

*For Plotinus, the One and Intellect are governing principles. And just as two points determine a line in a plane, so the One and Intellect determine a hierarchy. Intellect is the first product of the One. Therefore, the closer something is to Intellect, the closer it is to the One, and the farther away from Intellect, the farther away from the One. Hierarchy does not by itself imply continuity. Continuity is implied only if we add the proposition that the One is fecund without reserve. The One does not fail to produce anything it can produce, which is to*

*say that it does not fail at all. If it failed to produce something which it could produce, then this would introduce potency illicitly into it. **Hierarchy and continuity do not therefore imply infinite gradation, if this is taken to mean that between any two “levels” of the hierarchy there is possibly another.** Continuity without infinite gradability implies “gaps” which may be considerable both for the understanding and in reality. [12]*

The question now is, if there is no “level” between the One – who, because it is uncaused in any way, and following the Athanasian creed, should be equivalent to the Christian “Father” – and the Intellect, where should we locate the Son? This question has often led to the conclusion that the Plotinian hierarchy cannot be the basis of Christian theology, because it seems to deny the Trinity, as the Nous is not just “caused”, but, as Gerson explains later in that book, also “composite”. The Nous is the highest creation, not the uncreated. The Son is “caused”, but the “Son” is not a “composite” in his divine nature, and is therefore “uncreated” in his divinity. The dividing mark between creation and God in Christian philosophical theology seems to be the simplicity or “incompositeness” of God, which preserves the Godhood of the Persons while distinguishing them from creation’s composition [9]. One could say that there are “Trinitarian hints”, but many conclude there is no Trinity as understood by the creeds or theology expounding on them in Plotinian metaphysics.

But, I say we look closer at the hierarchy, especially the doctrine of “emanation”. I believe that we will find what we are looking for there, especially that Son of the Father who gave Plotinus his light.



### III POSSIBILITY AND INFINITY

*“...with God all things are possible.”*

*Matt. 19:26*

*“...a limitation of total Possibility is properly speaking an impossibility, since to limit it one would have to conceive it, and what is outside of the possible can be nothing but the impossible; but since an impossibility is a negation pure and simple, a true nothingness, it can obviously not limit anything whatsoever, from which it immediately follows that universal Possibility is necessarily unlimited.”*

*Rene Guenon [14]*

One of the principles the doctrine of emanation depends on is that of the “self-diffusiveness of the Good”. That is, The One (or God) tends to “communicate” or “give” itself. But is this a given? If the Good, also known as “The One” or “God”, needs nothing, why must it “give itself”? What is the “principle behind the principle” of the Good’s “Self-diffusiveness”. Remember that “emanation” does not mean God is diminished in any way. The divine doesn’t change when it gives itself. The Sun is a great analogy but all analogies eventually fail. The Solar analogy fails because it does diminish, ever so slightly, with every erg of energy it gives out. What makes it a good analogy is the fact that this diminishment is sufficiently negligible as to be unnoticeable. But, if the science is to be believed, the Sun will die in billions of years. To find an explanation that accounts for the impassible divinity, I will turn to Rene Guenon’s “language of possibility and infinity”, my term for his explanation of metaphysics using “possibility” and “infinity” as its key words. Here is his explanation of God as “Possibility” and “Infinity”:

*The Infinite on the contrary, to be truly such, cannot admit of any restriction, which presupposes that it be absolutely unconditioned and undetermined, for every determination, of whatever sort, is necessarily a limitation by the very fact that it must leave something outside of itself, namely all other equally possible determinations. Besides, limitation presents the character of a veritable negation; to set a limit is to deny to that which is limited everything that this limit excludes, and consequently the negation of a limit is properly the negation of a negation, that is to say, logically, and even mathematically, an affirmation, so*

*that in reality the negation of all limit is equivalent to total and absolute affirmation. That which has no limits is that of which nothing can be denied, and is therefore what contains everything, that outside of which there is nothing; and this idea of the Infinite, which is thus the most affirmative of all because it comprehends or embraces all particular affirmations whatsoever, can only be expressed in negative terms by reason of its absolute indetermination. In language, any direct affirmation is in fact necessarily a particular and determined affirmation-the affirmation of something particular – whereas total and absolute affirmation is no particular affirmation to the exclusion of others since it implies them all equally; and from this it should be easy to grasp the very close relation this presents with universal Possibility, which in the same way comprehends all particular possibilities. [14]*

For Guenon, the infinite contains everything possible, hence the other name for the infinite is “total possibility”. This is not in the sense of a “container”, but precisely the same way we say The One contains all essences indistinctly, because the perspective of separation is the perspective of relativity, and limitation, and is therefore not on the level of God’s fullness, which is absolute and infinite. In true Neoplatonic and perhaps Vedantic fashion, Guenon then argues that the “hierarchy of being” is simply so by what I can only describe as a “falling of intellect into ever more relativity”, remembering that this “intellect” is not “human consciousness”, which is simply one mode of intellect among many, including manifestation itself (as we will see later).

This is where we find the “principle of the principle” we are looking for. The understanding of God as “total possibility” must include “possibility of relativity”, which can also be called the “possibility of manifestation” and the “possibility of Being”. Indeed, Guenon defines “Being” as the “possibility of manifestation”, and David Bentley Hart, when referring to God as “Being” does indeed say that God’s being *is* manifestation. Manifestation is relativity, in that it is from there we can in principle distinguish between subject and object. It is in this “Principle of Manifestation”, which is “Being”, that we find the “self-diffusiveness of the Good”, and it is precisely the “veiling of the absolute”, whereby God “hides” in order to “acknowledge” the possibility of difference. It is because of this Schuon can say that the principle of relativity starts in God, and that the Divine is both absolute and relative [8], although the latter is “derived” from the former. In other words, “*the very absoluteness of the Absolute necessitates relativity; Mâyâ is “without origin”, say the Vedantists*” [2]. He sees in the Trinity a doctrinally unique articulation of this principle, although acknowledges it is “esoteric knowledge” that most will not understand [10].

However, Schuon also says that the acknowledgement of this principle is present in a different way in philosophers like Plotinus, and that the hierarchy of being as acknowledged by the Greek pagan philosophers is the simplest and most essential articulation of this in understanding in the west.

Along with the principle of manifestation – or rather the principle of the manifestable, which is Being, as Being itself is not manifest in fullness except to itself, and not to the manifestation called creation, which feeds into the nothing that “manifestation” is always relative (with the question of “manifested to who/what”?) – is the “principle of non-manifestation”:

*Outside of Being, therefore, are all the rest, that is, all the possibilities of non-manifestation, as well as the possibilities of manifestation themselves insofar as they are in the unmanifested state; and included among these is Being itself, which cannot belong to manifestation since it is the principle thereof, and in consequence is itself unmanifested. For want of any other term, we are obliged to designate all that is thus outside and beyond Being as 'Non-Being', but for us this negative term is in no way a synonym for 'nothingness', as seems to be the case in the language of certain philosophers [14]*

This, considered as “containing Being” – in other words, containing the possibility of manifestation – is itself equivalent to “The One” of Plotinus, as well as the “infinite” as described earlier, because the infinite (or the One) is also said to be “beyond being” [12], also equivalent to the “void” of eastern philosophy [13], having in itself all that pertains to manifestation yet itself beyond manifestation. This is where our excursus finally takes a turn to synthesis, because we now have all the pieces in place.

## IV

### UNCREATED-CREATED LOGOS

Guenon speaks of how we relate “Being” and “Beyond Being” (or has he calls it, “Non-being”) in ways that will be important to my synthesis later on, he says:

*One can also say that Non-Being, in the sense we have just indicated, is more than Being-or, if one likes, is superior to Being, if one understands thereby that what it comprehends exceeds the extension of Being and that in principle it contains Being itself. However, when we oppose Non-Being to Being, or even simply differentiate them, it is because neither the one nor the other is infinite, for from this point of view they limit each other in a way: infinity appertains only to the totality of Being and Non-Being, because this totality is identical with universal Possibility... Ultimately, the distinction between Being and Non-Being is purely contingent, for it can only be drawn from the point of view of manifestation, which is itself essentially contingent. [14]*

This is important because if, from the “point of view of manifestation” – “kenosis” if you like – “Being” can be distinguished from “Beyond Being”, it can be done in the exact same way that leads to how Schuon distinguishes within “Being” itself between the “radiative” and the “reverberative” aspect, or “Spirit” and “Son”, thereby equating “Beyond Being” as distinct from “Being” to “Father”. Schuon notes that Plotinus did not distinguish, although without denying, these two aspects of “The One”. I agree only in part, because Gerson brought out this passage from the Enneads in order to help explain emanation:

*In each and every thing there is **an activity of the essence** and there is **an activity from the essence** and that which is of the essence is each thing itself, while the activity from the essence derives from the first one, and must in everything be a consequence of it, different from the thing itself: as in fire there is a heat which is the content of its essence and another which comes into being from that primary heat when fire exercises the activity which is native to its essence in abiding unchanged as fire. So it is also in the higher world; and much more so there, **while it [the One] abides in its own proper way of life, the activity generated from the perfection in it and its coexistent activity acquires existence since it comes from a***

*great power, the greatest indeed of all, and arrives at being and essence, for that [the One] is beyond being. That is the productive power of all, and its product is already all things*

(V.4.2.28–39.)

That distinction, I believe, is exactly what corresponds to “Beyond Being” (Activity of the essence) and “Being” (Activity from the essence) in Guenon and Schuon. It is not a “real” distinction except in relativity, that is, in relation to us. In Trinitarian terms, the procession of the Spirit (Radiation) and the begetting of the Son (Reverberation) *implies* the creation of the cosmos, because they are the “First determinations” of the Father in that direction. As Jordan Daniel Wood has brilliantly explained [5], Creation *is* incarnation:

*“...the God-world relation is at once **eternally inevitable and metaphysically unnecessary**. Since the first Procession of Word into and as the world is precisely a hypostatic, kenotic, and ecstatic one, it implies no inner-necessity in God’s nature, as if the creation and completion of the world were that of the Word’s very nature. Yet it is still the creation and completion of God as the world in the hypostasis of his Word, for the world only is because of the self-evacuation of the Word. Creation does not complete the divine nature, but the most profound logos of the divine nature – utterly dark to our gaze – is to exceed itself in becoming identical in person to what God is not by nature. **It is of the very nature of God to become creaturely precisely because he is no creature.**”*

This is exactly what Guenon means by “from the perspective of relativity” in what I may describe as “Christianese”. But, as the Christian perspective is more often than not restricted by the incarnation – though not by anything inherent in the incarnation itself, but by the so called “exoteric” perspective that seeks to confine it in the Christian religion – some important implications of the metaphysics involved here, including the ultimate unreality of all relativity, including the Trinitarian hypostases, on the highest level of “Beyond Being”, is not explored, and frequently rejected (this is why I really appreciate Dr Wood for following the thread to the weaver in his paper, rather than hiding behind “tradition”). An analogue to the Christological explanation of the cosmic incarnation in J. D. Wood’s paper can be found in Plotinus, although not where he thinks (not in the Nous), but rather in that distinction mentioned earlier, because that “activity from the essence”, or “Being”, is exactly, “Logos” and “Spirit” in one “emanation”. That “Being” is precisely the “productive power of all”, and directly coincides with the “Logos of hypostasis” he describes in this way:

*The logoi are not related to the Logos as exempla to Exemplar, nor are they themselves simply exemplars for lower, more qualified participants (though they are that too). The Word's protological procession as many logoi is the very condition for the possibility of participation itself, the very condition for exemplarity to get underway. [5]*

In other words, the One in its role as the efficient cause of existence *is* the Divine Logos. That “aspect” of the One is the reason participation is possible in the first place. But, simultaneously and from the perspective of the absolute essence, there is no distinction in the One. All distinctions are a “descent”, a “lower” reality, which although contained in the absolute, can still be considered “separate” for those who are still “ascending” to “Enlightenment” or “Theosis”. The “Logos” that is “Nous” for Plotinus is then that “Divine Logos” at the point where “exemplification” and “complexity” is begun. As Gerson notes, there is a logical priority of intelligibles to the Unified Nous, even if this priority is not to be considered temporally. But, how does the Nous “receive” intelligibles if not from The One as Logos? Indeed, it is in the “turning back” to the One that “Being” – In the Plotinian sense, which signifies limitation and “multiplicity”, represented by the forms – “becomes” unified and “minimally complex” Nous, and this is only so if the source of the intelligibles (or forms) is itself “unified” – although perfectly and not the “minimal complexity” of its creation – and can itself be called “Intellect” or “Logos”, if only analogically, as this source is the intelligibility itself; and owing to the simplicity of the divine nature, intelligibility is “Being”, and “Being” is “manifestation” and “existence”.

This doesn't violate Gerson's statement that that there is no “intermediate level” between The One and the intellect because the Divine Logos *is* the One, although considered from the perspective of relativity, which spawns the Nous, and is itself the “Divine Nature” that makes the Nous the analogue to the “created nature” with which it is unified with it in what can only be described as a “Hypostatic union”. In other words, the Plotinic chain of being is an image of the Incarnation, fully in keeping with Christian dogma.

This helps answer the question raised earlier in the essay, “from where is the divine radiation reverberated?”

It is reverberated from the created Nous itself, which is not to be considered in just its discontinuity from the One, but also its continuity with it, for the Nous *exists*, and in as much

as it exists it has the One as its ultimate “animating principle” [15], or again, “principle of hypostasis”, and is therefore an “incarnation” of the One precisely in a sense that is profoundly Christian while being profoundly universal. Even if the Nous is not the One simpliciter, and is not the Uncreated Logos, it is still an extension of the One’s eternal gift of existence as Logos, in that it contains the formal exemplaries, that dictate the “form” existence takes in the sensible, while being subordinate to the “logos of hypostasis”, the One as Logos, which is not a formal principle. These exemplaries are not self-generated, their existence depends on the One, and are from it. They are the “first incarnations” of the first incarnation named creation, the gods of the God. As Schuon said, explaining how the arguments between the Hellenists and the Christians were for the most part due to unreal disagreements, “*If God gives us life, warmth, and light, He does so by way of Helios or inasmuch as **He is Helios**; the sun is like the hand of God, and is thus divine; and since it is so in principle, why should it not be so in its sensible manifestation?*”. The principle that Christians have more or less codified in the hypostatic union is the principle behind the gods and angels, most of whom are incarnations of “aspects” of the Logos, rather than the all the aspects at once, something rare and understandably uncommon, and which explains why Christ is “above the angels” while at the same time being of a resurrection where we, his body will be “like the angels”.

This understanding of the “One-Nous” or “One-Creation/Cosmos” dynamic as the Plotinic articulation of the cosmic hypostatic union then explains the concept of “image of God” as applying to Christ as such, who is both God and man, and in whose unity of person the image of God consists. Confusing the natures or absolutely separating them would mean Christ is not the image of God, as He is the *image* and the *mirror* (which is man) in which the image subsists, and which is implied, by the very name “image”, to exist. He is the “uncreated-created Intellect” [16] through whom we are united to God. The “Son”, in the Trinity, is man “universalised” [17], that is, “deified” [18]. The “Begottenness” of the Son is therefore intimately tied to Creation’s redemption as His body, and indeed this redemption is the begetting of the Son given temporal meaning. To be redeemed is to be thrust into the Divine life, and to become infinitely what we already are limitedly, as the old saying goes, to “become God”.

## V

### CONCLUSION

It is therefore right to say that the Trinitarian perspective whereby the Son is begotten through the Spirit's procession is the stating in esoteric and metaphysical terms, the eternal reality that is represented temporally as the "resurrection of the dead" and the advent of the "New Creation", whose beginning is also its "end", the "end" in question being what Gregory of Nyssa calls "epekstasis", which is an "***endless intentional and dynamic "stretching out" into an ever deeper participation in the divine nature***" [4]. This same phenomenon is described by Schuon:

*At the summit of universal Existence this 'migratory vibration' comes to a stop, because it turns inwards in the direction of the Immutable; **there remains only a single movement, a single cycle, that of Paradise, which opens onto the Essence.** In God Himself, who is beyond Existence, there is an element which pre-figures Existence, and this is the Divine Life, which the Christian doctrine attributes to the Holy Spirit and which it calls Love; towards this Life converge those existences that are plunged in the light of Glory and sustained by it; and it is this Light, this 'Divine Halo', which keeps the Paradises outside the 'migratory vibrations' of existences that are still corruptible. The sage does not strictly speaking emerge from his existential movement- although from the standpoint of the cosmic wheel he does so- but turns it inwards: **the movement becomes lost in the Infinite or expands in the 'changeless movement' of the 'Void'.** [8]*

Here, creation is considered "integrally", that is, "full" and "redeemed". This is where we locate the Begotten Son, who is redeemed creation and creator God at once. This is also where we locate the "Logos Asarkos", in the sense that we can shuffle between two sub-perspectives here. From the perspective of the "fullness" of creation, there is no Logos Asarkos, yet as Creation is "plunged into divinity" so as to fully be in divinity what it partially was as creation, there is Logos Asarkos. The former perspective is contained in the latter. The trick here is that an "ascension" is also a "resurrection", and that all that was essential to the lower is contained in the higher [14]; meaning, "Heaven" already contains "earth", "Father" already contains "Son", and "God" already contains "world". As one "rises" to heaven, he becomes "all". What was "one among many" becomes the "many as One". From the perspective of God in his fullness, there is no separate world, it is all Him. From the perspective of the man who reaches Theosis, He is all men. He is Christ. For it is "yet not I, but Christ". He alone did not ascend, we all did,



and the relativity that is time will be shown to be an illusion on the ultimate level where there is the “fullness of time” that is another name for eternity[13,19], that “Eternal Now” or “Now that stands”, the “place” mythically described as the land where the “Sun” that is God never sets, where in the book of revelation there is no need for carnal Sun and Moon. This is where we all “meet God” *at once*, in the “twinkling of an eye” where and when “we shall be changed”, despite the sometimes ridiculous magnitudes of time we think it takes to get there.

Plotinian metaphysics is then a description of a Cosmos where Christ is operative, hidden yet revealed, in a different form than the events in Palestine yet true to the principles that undergird the manifestation that give those events divine meaning; because of this, we can say with the Platonists that “*the return to God is inherent in the fact of existence: our being itself offers the way of return, for that being is divine in its nature, otherwise it would be nothing; that is why we must return, passing through the strata of our ontological reality, all the way to pure Substance, which is one; it is thus that we become perfectly “ourselves”*”. Once again, and finally for this essay, I can conclude by saying, following Schuon, concerning the metaphysics of Plotinus and Christian theology, that “*there is no irreducible antagonism between Greeks and Christians*” [2].

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*Vincit Omnia Veritas*