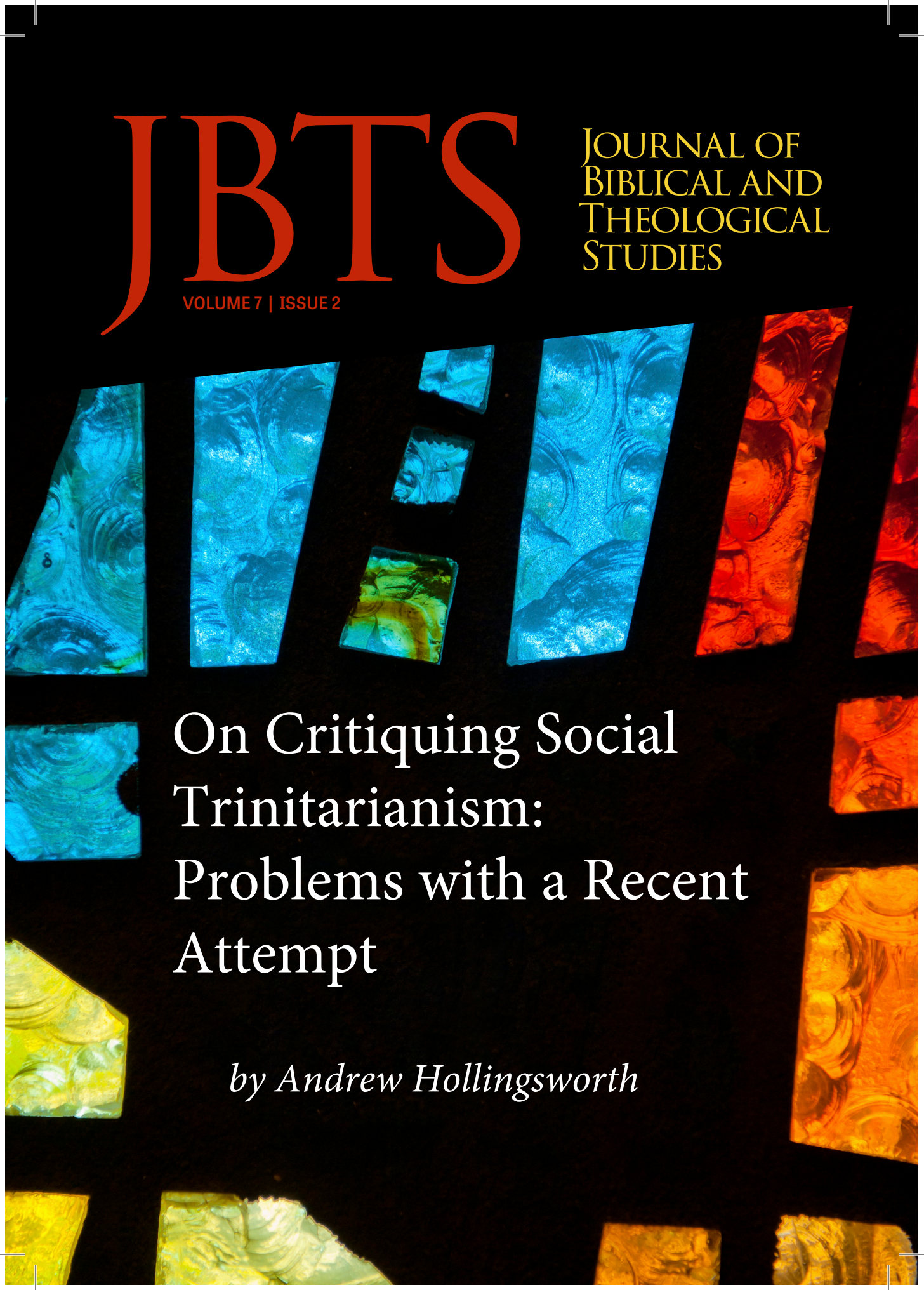


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## On Critiquing Social Trinitarianism: Problems with a Recent Attempt

*by Andrew Hollingsworth*

## On Critiquing Social Trinitarianism: Problems with a Recent Attempt

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**Abstract:** In his recent book, *Simply Trinity*, Matthew Barrett argues that Christians need to retrieve the pro-Nicene doctrine of the Trinity, as articulated by the fathers in the patristic, medieval, and reformation periods of the church's history. He also argues that social trinitarianism is beyond the boundaries of pro-Nicene orthodoxy, and that many Christians today who have accepted some version or another of social trinitarianism have accepted a false Trinity. In this paper, I object to Barrett's characterization of social trinitarianism, arguing that he misrepresents the positions and agendas of several thinkers who identify as social trinitarians. I also argue that Barrett does not develop a clear argument demonstrating that social trinitarianism is unbiblical, nor does he develop a clear argument against the social-trinitarian views of those individuals that he lists and critiques. As a result, Barrett's critiques of social trinitarianism in *Simply Trinity* ultimately fall flat. I conclude with some practical steps for moving the discussions surrounding social trinitarianism forward.

**Key Words:** Doctrine of the Trinity, Social Trinitarianism, Trinity Models, Matthew Barrett

### Introduction

The history of Christian doctrine is as much a history of theological critique as it is theological construction. At times, Christian authorities have voiced critical judgments of certain articulations of theological beliefs, such as those of the Arians—and rightly so. Sound doctrine is important to the health of the church, and critiques of doctrines such as Arianism are rightly warranted. However, it is also important in voicing theological critiques that the views being opposed receive their rightful due. Christians are called to be both critical *and* charitable—in appropriate season, and Christians can only be truly critical when they have accurately and charitably presented the view under discretion. Theological beliefs, especially those articulated and defended by others who aim to be faithful to Scripture and the Christian faith, should always be articulated accurately, critiqued rightly, and judged charitably.

Matthew Barrett recently has written a book on the doctrine of the Trinity—*Simply Trinity: The Unmanipulated Father, Son, and Spirit*.<sup>1</sup> In this book, he argues that Christians need to retrieve the pro-Nicene doctrine of the Trinity, as articulated by the fathers in the patristic, medieval, and reformation periods of the church's history. He also argues that social trinitarianism (ST) is beyond the boundaries of pro-Nicene orthodoxy, and that many Christians today who have accepted some version or another of ST have accepted a false Trinity.<sup>2</sup> However, his critiques and attacks do not always represent ST fairly. While ST might be novel in some of its theological and philosophical emphases, it has a reputation of being defended by many prominent Christian philosophers and theologians, many of whom consider themselves Evangelicals—such as William Lane Craig, J. P. Moreland, Bruce Ware, William Hasker, Stanley Grenz, Millard Erickson, Thomas McCall,<sup>3</sup> and several others. Throughout the book, Barrett is also reluctant to fairly represent his ST interlocutors, several of whom I just mentioned. In what follows, I note several problems with Barrett's characterization of ST, namely that he misrepresents the positions and agendas of several thinkers who identify as social trinitarians. I also argue that Barrett does not develop a clear argument demonstrating that social trinitarianism is unbiblical, nor does he develop any clear arguments against the social-trinitarian views of those individuals that he lists and critiques. Again, ST is not given its rightful due, and, as a result, Barrett's critiques of ST in *Simply Trinity* fall flat.

This paper is divided into three major sections. In the first section, I summarize Barrett's descriptions of and challenges to ST. The material for this section is drawn primarily from chapter three of *Simply Trinity*, which is titled "Since When Did the Trinity Get Social? The Manipulated Trinity," though I will at times reference other portions of the book as well. I develop my critique of and argument against Barrett's critiques of ST in the second section of the paper. My critique here is multi-pronged: First, Barrett misrepresents the views of several of the social trinitarians he identifies in this chapter, particularly those whom he identifies as evangelical Christian philosophers. As a result, many of the critiques he lodges against ST do not apply

1. Matthew Barrett, *Simply Trinity: The Unmanipulated Father, Son, and Spirit* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2021).

2. This seems to be a gross overstatement. Even several non-social trinitarians recognize ST as a genuine possibility within the patristic tradition. See, for example, Adonis Vidu's comment on this in his book *The Same God Who Works All Things: Inseparable Operations in Trinitarian Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2021), 116. Vidu goes on to discuss, at length, Swinburne's account of ST. Though he rejects that this account makes sufficient hermeneutical sense of the pertinent biblical texts for monotheism in the New Testament, he still acknowledges that "the possibility remains that one can give an account of ST which fulfills the fundamental conditions of monotheism."

3. McCall prefers to refer to his view as a "relational Trinity," by which he emphasizes that "the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit live within a necessary relationship of mutual holiness." Thomas H. McCall, "Relational Trinity: Creedal Perspective," *Two Views on the Doctrine of the Trinity*, ed. Jason S. Sexton (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 113.

to these thinkers or their ST models, and his arguments only further ambiguate the conversations being had over ST. I make particular use here of Thomas McCall's recent taxonomy of varieties of ST to help substantiate this critique. Second, Barrett never develops an explicit argument for why ST is unbiblical and should be avoided by contemporary theologians, and he assumes much of what should be argued for in so doing. I then conclude that important corrections need to be made to Barrett's characterizations of ST and social trinitarians, that he should develop explicit arguments for many of the premises that he assumes, and that he needs to deal with each ST model individually rather than ST generally. By dealing with each ST model individually, he could then better identify the form(s) of ST that are unorthodox and carefully develop arguments demonstrating that it (they) is (are) in fact unorthodox. I further conclude by outlining some practical steps that theologians and philosophers should take in order to move the discussions surrounding ST forward.

### Barrett on Social Trinitarianism

Barrett explicates ST in chapter three of *Simply Trinity*. He minces no words pertaining to his thoughts on ST: it is a result of *Trinity drift* and is an unbiblical and unorthodox view of the Trinity. By *Trinity drift*, Barrett means the shift of modern theologians away from pro-Nicene trinitarianism into an unorthodox doctrine of the Trinity. Not only are these modern views of the Trinity unorthodox, but Barrett also claims that this redefining of the doctrine of the Trinity by moderns has given license to theologians to straightforwardly *manipulate* the Trinity. He sees this to be especially the case with ST. Barrett asks the question, "How did we get here?"

Barrett begins his narrative of Trinity drift with the age of the Enlightenment.<sup>4</sup> During the Enlightenment, reason was elevated above revelation in its authority, even for religious and theological matters. Anything that could not be proven by reason alone was either disregarded or considered less important. We see this in the theology of Friedrich Schleiermacher, whom many refer to as the father of protestant liberal theology. He provides one of Schleiermacher's more popular quotations on the Trinity: "According to Schleiermacher, the Trinity has 'no use in Christian doctrine.'" <sup>5</sup> Not only Schleiermacher, but many others during this time considered the doctrine of the Trinity to be speculation spurned on by philosophy and metaphysics foreign to the Christian faith. As a result, the doctrine of the Trinity was beyond the real concerns of the gospel, and many theologians during this time interpreted the gospel through the lens of morality. According to Barrett, "Some gave Liberalism a moralistic agenda like no other. Christianity does not concern itself with speculative dogmas like the Trinity but with the ethics of God's kingdom and how they transform

4. Barrett, *Simply Trinity*, 71.

5. Barrett, *Simply Trinity*, 73; compare Friedrich Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), 741.

society. The Trinity is irrelevant because it has nothing to contribute to society's moral advancement in Christian values."<sup>6</sup>

Once we move into the twentieth century, we see a shift in Christian theology, a shift to make the Trinity great again. More specifically, theologians sought to make the Trinity relevant, and they did so by allowing their Trinity doctrines to be determined by their social agendas.<sup>7</sup> Prior to the shift to ST, however, there already was a push to reclaim the relevance of the Trinity by the two Karls, Barth and Rahner. Barrett focuses primarily on Rahner and his claim that the economic Trinity is the immanent Trinity and vice versa.<sup>8</sup> Though several theologians interpret Rahner differently, Barrett notes Rahner's emphasis on God's revelation in the economic Trinity and his identifying this with the immanent Trinity. As a result, claims Barrett, Rahner "gave modern theologians the opportunity to rethink everything, and most importantly, to close the gap between Creator and creature."<sup>9</sup>

According to Barrett, the Trinity becomes social after Barth and Rahner, particularly in the works of Jürgen Moltmann, Miroslav Volf, and Leonardo Boff. In Moltmann, claims Barrett, we see the Trinity doctrine reformulated for explicit social concerns. Moltmann was critical of Barth and Rahner for their emphasis on the oneness of God, which he thought led to the dangers of monotheism and potentially Sabellianism.<sup>10</sup> These views lead to monarchy and patriarchy, which are unacceptable for society. Rather, Moltmann desired an egalitarian Trinity, one in which there was no subordination or monarchy, only equality and democracy. In Moltmann's words, "I have developed a social doctrine of the Trinity, according to which God is a community of Father, Son, and Spirit, whose unity is constituted by mutual indwelling and reciprocal interpenetration."<sup>11</sup> By making the Trinity social, "Moltmann now has the solution for the evils that plague society."<sup>12</sup> Social causes such as feminism and liberation movements can now find their grounding in the being of God as an egalitarian community. Not only this, but Moltmann also emphasizes the attribute of God's love far over and above the attribute of his power. Per Barrett, "While power is the weapon of the one ruler over the oppressed in society (what he [Moltmann] calls monotheistic Monarchianism), love is the medicine that restores community, both in God and in society. What kind of community, you ask? A *socialist* community."<sup>13</sup>

6. Barrett, *Simply Trinity*, 73.

7. Barrett, *Simply Trinity*, 74.

8. Barrett, *Simply Trinity*, 75–76; compare Karl Rahner, *The Trinity* (New York: Crossroad Publishing, 1997), 22.

9. Barrett, *Simply Trinity*, 77.

10. Barrett, *Simply Trinity*, 78; also see. Jürgen Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 16, 77–79, 144–48.

11. Moltmann, *Trinity and the Kingdom*, viii, emphasis removed.

12. Barrett, *Simply Trinity*, 79.

13. Barrett, *Simply Trinity*, 80, emphasis original.



Moltmann is not alone in allowing a social agenda to drive his doctrinal revisions. Miroslav Volf does the same, claims Barrett. “Volf is just as convinced that the historic doctrine of the Trinity must be modified or even rejected, at least if the Trinity is to serve as a model for church and society, which it must. The Trinity, in some sense at least, is to be our social program.”<sup>14</sup> Like Moltmann, he argues for a trinitarian community grounded in equality rather than hierarchy, and such is to be the model for the church’s polity.<sup>15</sup> Leonardo Boff similarly lets his social agenda motivate him to redefine the Trinity doctrine. Whereas Volf envisions the Trinity being the social program for the church, Boff sees it as the social program for politics as well.<sup>16</sup> In order to accomplish this, Boff redefines “persons” in light of modern understandings of personhood, which, Barrett claims, are very different from how ancient Christians understood personhood.<sup>17</sup> On this view, persons are understood as individual centers of consciousness, will, and emotion, and who exist in relationships with others.<sup>18</sup> Boff applies this understanding of personhood to the Trinity and claims that the Trinity is “society and a community.”<sup>19</sup> According to Barrett, “Such community means there is ‘total reciprocity’ between the Father, Son, and Spirit, a ‘loving relationship’ one to another.”<sup>20</sup> This society of the divine persons that Boff has in mind “condemns capitalist societies,” and becomes the motivation for liberation movements, specifically socialistic liberation movements.<sup>21</sup>

Barrett then moves on to discuss ST models that focus on historicizing the Trinity. He focuses on the models of Hans Frei and Robert Jenson in particular. What we see in both figures’ work is an emphasis on narrative, particularly the biblical narrative. Specifically, the Bible focuses on the works of God in history rather than his being apart from history (and creation). While commending Frei on drawing attention to the biblical narrative, Barrett critiques Frei for focusing “*merely* on narrative.”<sup>22</sup> He further claims, “As a result, he has ignored other parts of Scripture—including other narratives!—that tell us who God is apart from humanity.”<sup>23</sup> The problem with this, claims Barrett, is that “we humanize God by *merely* focusing on history, losing

14. Barrett, *Simply Trinity*, 81; compare Miroslav Volf, “The Trinity Is Our Social Program: The Doctrine of the Trinity and the Shape of Social Engagement,” *Modern Theology* 14 (1998): 403–423.

15. Barrett, *Simply Trinity*, 81.

16. Barrett, *Simply Trinity*, 82.

17. Barrett, *Simply Trinity*, 82; compare Leonardo Boff, *Trinity and Society* (New York: Orbis, 1988), 115.

18. Barrett, *Simply Trinity*, 82.

19. Barrett, *Simply Trinity*, 83, emphasis removed.

20. Barrett, *Simply Trinity*, 83; compare Boff, *Trinity and Society*, 133.

21. Barrett, *Simply Trinity*, 84–85.

22. Barrett, *Simply Trinity*, 87, emphasis original.

23. Barrett, *Simply Trinity*, 87.

patience, as Frei does, with any and all discussions about the immanent Trinity.”<sup>24</sup> Jenson, on the other hand, seems to completely historicize God.<sup>25</sup> In Barrett’s words, “The eternal relations of origin . . . are not timeless and immutable, fixed to be what they are apart from creation. No, what the triune God does in history *constitutes* who he is in eternity. The relations *become* relations as they take place within creation. The persons of the Trinity are, in a real sense, *temporal*.”<sup>26</sup> The problem with this, claims Barrett, is that it reduces, or collapses, the immanent Trinity into the economic Trinity and reduces the Trinity “to the gospel, and its [the Trinity’s] identity collapsed into the history of salvation.”<sup>27</sup>

Finally, Barrett looks at how even evangelical philosophers and theologians and “New Calvinists” have even been willing to adopt ST. For the former, he highlights primarily the work of J. P. Moreland and William Lane Craig, and he highlights the work of Stanley Grenz for the latter. Many Christian philosophers, such as Moreland and Craig, have no problem doing away with the doctrine of divine simplicity (DDS): “With such an emphasis on distinct wills and centers of consciousness, the historic Nicene affirmation of simplicity will just not do anymore. . . . If simplicity is affirmed in any sense, it must be ‘modest,’ and it must conform to a social view of the persons.”<sup>28</sup> While Barrett correctly points out that these evangelical Christian philosophers emphasize that each person is its own distinct center of consciousness, will, and love, he does not point out that they do not connect the Trinity to any sort of social agenda, which is significant. I will say more on why this is significant below.

For Stanley Grenz, it is important to affirm a social Trinity because it is important to affirm that love is the most fundamental attribute of God, which requires distinct agents. According to Barrett, Grenz affirms that “we must define the persons as those who pursue eternal love relationships with one another.”<sup>29</sup> Barrett identifies Bruce Ware and Wayne Grudem as examples of “New Calvinists” who have accepted ST.

24. Barrett, *Simply Trinity*, 88.

25. Barrett, *Simply Trinity*, 88.

26. Barrett, *Simply Trinity*, 88, italics original; compare. Robert Jenson, *Systematic Theology*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 1.64; and Robert Jenson, *The Triune Identity: God According to the Gospel* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982), 126.

27. Barrett, *Simply Trinity*, 89.

28. Barrett, *Simply Trinity*, 90; compare J. P. Moreland and William Lane Craig, *Philosophical Foundations for a Christian Worldview*, 2nd ed. (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2017), chapter 31; William Lane Craig, “Toward a Tenable Social Trinitarianism,” in *Philosophical and Theological Essays on the Trinity*, ed. Thomas McCall and Michael C. Rae, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 89–99; and William Lane Craig, “Another Glance at Trinity Monotheism,” in *Philosophical and Theological Essays on the Trinity*, ed. Thomas McCall and Michael C. Rea (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 126–30.

29. Barrett, *Simply Trinity*, 91; cf. Stanley J. Grenz, *Theology for the Community of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), chapters 2, 3, and 13; Stanley J. Grenz, *The Named God and the Question of Being: A Trinitarian Theo-Ontology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005); and Stanley J. Grenz, *The Social God and the Relational Self: A Trinitarian Theology of the Imago Dei* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007).

Unlike other social trinitarians, however, Ware and Grudem “believe this society of relationships in the Trinity is defined by functional hierarchy.”<sup>30</sup> This view is known as *eternal functional subordination* (EFS).<sup>31</sup> According to EFS, the Son is subordinate to the Father, and the Spirit is subordinate to the Father and Son, but these subordination relationships are functional rather than ontological.<sup>32</sup> Barrett further notes that those who affirm EFS, such as Ware and Grudem, also have a strong social agenda: “Their social agenda comes through just as strong, if not stronger, than social trinitarians before them, when they then argue that authority-submission inside the Trinity, within the eternal Godhead, is the paradigm and prototype for hierarchy in society, especially wives submitting to their husbands in the home.”<sup>33</sup> Barrett also claims that this EFS version of ST is a form of historicizing ST, much like Frei and Jenson, because it ultimately seems to collapse the immanent and economic trinities.<sup>34</sup>

Barrett concludes this chapter in *Simply Trinity* by claiming that these various forms of ST are only “the tip of the social Trinity iceberg.”<sup>35</sup> Such a view of the Trinity is now so widespread that many might even think that there has been a Trinity renaissance rather than a Trinity drift. However, ST, he argues, is not consistent either with what the Bible teaches or the pro-Nicene tradition. Modern theologians who would accept some version of ST, he even argues, are ultimately not concerned with the appropriate contemplation of God in himself: “With the arrival of the twenty-first century, it’s now conspicuous that there are as many Trinities as modern theologians. With each new Trinity arrives a new social program. Quests for the Trinity are in the end not about God but about *me* and *my* social agenda.”<sup>36</sup> He concludes the chapter

30. Barrett, *Simply Trinity*, 91.

31. Some prefer to refer to EFS as the *eternal relations of authority and subordination* (ERAS).

32. Barrett, *Simply Trinity*, 91; cf. Barrett does not provide any citations to Ware’s or Grudem’s respective works in this chapter, though he provides many citations to their work, particularly Ware’s, in chapter 8, where he engages their EFS projects at length. For Ware’s and Grudem’s positions on EFS, the reader may reference the following sources: Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*, revised ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 248–52, and Appendix 6; Wayne Grudem, “Biblical Evidence for the Eternal Submission of the Son to the Father,” in *The New Evangelical Subordinationism? Perspectives on the Equality of God the Father and God the Son*, ed. Dennis W. Jowers and H. Wayne House (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2012), 223–61; Bruce A. Ware, *Father, Son, and Spirit: Relationships, Roles, and Relevance* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2005); Bruce A. Ware, “Does Affirming an Eternal Authority-Submission Relationship in the Trinity Entail a Denial of *Homousios*? A Response to Millard Erickson and Tom McCall,” in *One God in Three Persons: Unity of Essence, Distinction of Persons, Implications for Life*, ed. Bruce Ware and John Starke (Wheaton: Crossway, 2015), 237–48; Bruce A. Ware, “Equal in Essence, Distinct in Roles: Eternal Functional Authority and Submission among the Essentially Equal Divine Persons of the Godhead,” in *The New Evangelical Subordinationism? Perspectives on the Equality of God the Father and God the Son*, ed. Dennis W. Jowers and H. Wayne House (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2012), 13–37.

33. Barrett, *Simply Trinity*, 91.

34. Barrett, *Simply Trinity*, 91.

35. Barrett, *Simply Trinity*, 91.

36. Barrett, *Simply Trinity*, 92. Barrett cites Matthew Levering to support this claim, and



with the following statement: “*Trinity drift is real*. We have not only drifted away from the biblical, orthodox Trinity, but we have manipulated the Trinity to meet our social agendas.”<sup>37</sup>

### **Problems for Barrett’s Critiques of Social Trinitarianism**

Throughout chapter three in his book, Barrett identifies various scholars who are well known as social trinitarians, and he even attempts to provide some nuance to their views. For example, while both Moltmann and Ware understand the divine persons as distinct centers of consciousness and will, their respective ST projects are very different. As a matter of fact, one will notice several notable differences between the distinct ST projects that Barrett has identified in his book. This raises an important question about what constitutes ST. In other words, what are the necessary conditions that a doctrine of the Trinity must meet in order to be considered ST? Barrett provides the following definition of ST in the glossary of his book:

Social trinitarianism is a diverse movement, which makes it difficult to define. But in its fully developed form, its starting point (or at least emphasis) is not simplicity—some reject simplicity—but the three persons. The Trinity is not defined primarily by *eternal relations of origin*. ST redefines the Trinity as a society and community analogous to a human society, redefines the persons as three centers of consciousness/will, redefines persons according to their *relationships* (focus on mutuality, societal interaction), and redefines unity as interpersonal relationships of love between persons (redefinition of perichoresis). ST collapses [the] immanent and economic Trinity, sets East against West, and treats [the] social Trinity as a paradigm for social theory (ecclesiology, politics, gender). ST has been adopted by modern theologians but is an abandonment/revision of Nicene orthodoxy.<sup>38</sup>

Since this definition comes from his Glossary in the book, I presume that it is what Barrett has in mind at any point in the book where he discusses ST. However, many readers may wonder, after reading this definition, if this is an accurate representation of the necessary conditions for a view to be considered ST. In fact, many of the thinkers that Barrett identifies as social trinitarians do not represent all the criteria that he lists. For example, both Richard Swinburne and William Hasker are social

Levering draws his claim from the work of Karen Kilby. See Matthew Levering, *Scripture and Metaphysics: Aquinas and the Renewal of Trinitarian Theology* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 236; and Karen Kilby, “Perichoresis and Projection: Problems with Social Doctrines of the Trinity,” *New Blackfriars* 81 (2000): 442. One should note that this claim is demonstrably false, and I point to this in this next section of the paper.

37. Barrett, *Simply Trinity*, 93.

38. Barrett, *Simply Trinity*, 324.

trinitarians, and they both affirm the eternal relations of origin.<sup>39</sup> Typically, a *definition* aims to describe the minimal locutionary units necessary to describe the essential properties of a term or concept, i.e. what are the necessary conditions for something to be properly identified with that particular term or concept. Barrett's provided definition of ST, especially in light of his chapter dedicated to the subject, does not seem to really represent what ST is.

In his recent book, *Analytic Christology and the Theological Interpretation of the New Testament*, Thomas McCall gives ample discussion to what exactly ST might be.<sup>40</sup> He draws specific attention to the fact that the term ST is used in such a unique number of ways that the term has lost most, if not all, of its definitional import. He notes seven various ways that ST often is used in the contemporary theological literature.<sup>41</sup> Due to the vast usages of the term, McCall actually recommends that the term either be dropped from usage altogether or used only to refer to what he calls "real social trinitarianism."<sup>42</sup> Barrett's usage of ST combines six of the seven uses listed by McCall, namely "socio-political advocacy,"<sup>43</sup> "Eastern vs Western theology,"<sup>44</sup> "theology that employs the social analogy,"<sup>45</sup> "theology that makes use

39. As a result, the reader should note that ST does not hinge on one accepting or rejecting the eternal relations of origin. Social trinitarians are split on this issue.

40. Thomas H. McCall, *Analytic Christology and the Theological Interpretation of the New Testament*, Oxford Studies in Analytic Theology (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021), 137–76.

41. McCall, *Analytic Christology*, 141–50.

42. McCall, *Analytic Christology*, 149–50. McCall claims that "real social trinitarianism" is a conjunction of the following claims:

(R-ST1) The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are 'of one essence,' but are not numerically the same substance. Rather, the divine persons are consubstantial only in the sense that they share the divine nature in common. Furthermore, this sharing of a common nature can be understood in a fairly straightforward sense via the 'social analogy' in which Peter, James, and John share human nature;

(R-ST2) Properly understood, the central claim of monotheism that there is but one God is to [be] understood as the claim that there is one divine nature—not as the claim that there is exactly one divine substance;

and (R-ST3) The divine persons must each be in full possession of the divine nature and in some particular relation R to one another for Trinitarianism to count as monotheism (where the usual candidates for R are being members of the same kind, the only members of the divine family, the only members of a necessarily existent community, enjoying perfect love and harmony of will, and being necessarily interdependent).

43. "Christian theology that seeks to draw socio-political and ethical implications from the doctrine of the Trinity." McCall, *Analytic Christology*, 141; italics original.

44. "Social Trinitarianism = df. the doctrine of the Trinity that was held by the major pro-Nicene Greek-speaking theologians of the fourth century (especially Gregory of Nyssa, Gregory of Nazianzus, and Basil of Caesarea), particularly where that doctrine is distinct from the 'Latin' or 'Western' theology (especially exemplified by Augustine, Anselm, and Aquinas)." McCall, *Analytic Christology*, 142; italics original.

45. "Trinitarian theology that makes positive use of the social analogy; God is relevantly and

of the ‘modern notion’ of person,”<sup>46</sup> “intra-Trinitarian love,”<sup>47</sup> and “distinct agency.”<sup>48</sup> One can see something very unique here. The seven uses of ST that McCall lists each represents a particular version of ST, or some doctrine of the Trinity that is called ST by the one who holds the view. In other words, we see seven *distinct* usages of the term according to McCall. Barrett’s definition, on the other hand, describes ST as a *conjunction* of the six uses from McCall listed above.<sup>49</sup> Indeed, his definition results in a lengthy list of necessary conditions for a view of the Trinity to be considered ST.

So, what is my reason for pointing out this distinction in ways of approaching the meaning of ST as exemplified by Barrett and McCall? My reason is this: Barrett’s definition of ST does not neatly map on, or at all in some cases, to those whom he lists and describes as social trinitarians. According to Barrett, for example, a necessary condition for a doctrine of the Trinity to be considered ST is that it claims that the Trinity is “a paradigm for social theory.”<sup>50</sup> However, several of the social trinitarians that he lists do not affirm this or even mention it in their respective works on the subject. The most obvious example of this is the work of J. P. Moreland and William Lane Craig, which Barrett identifies as ST. While Moreland and Craig do refer to the triune persons as distinct centers of consciousness and will—McCall’s “modern notion of person”—they make no mention of any idea of the Trinity being a paradigm for social theory, nor do they mention the Father, Son, and Spirit loving one another (though I doubt that they would deny that the persons do love one another in the intra-trinitarian life), and they do not use any social analogies to describe the Trinity.<sup>51</sup> While Moreland and Craig openly affirm that their view of the Trinity is ST, what they call ST is distinct from what Barrett calls ST. But as far as Barrett is concerned, Moltmann, Jenson, Boff, and Moreland and Craig all belong together. However, it is decidedly not the case that Moreland and Craig affirm a view of the Trinity shared by these others. Does Moreland and Craig’s view affirm *some* particular claims

*importantly like three human persons.*” McCall, *Analytic Christology*, 144; italics original.

46. “Trinitarian theology that makes positive use of modern (as opposed to traditional) concepts of personhood.” McCall, *Analytic Christology*, 145; italics original.

47. “Any doctrine of the Trinity according to which the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit love one another within the intra-trinitarian divine life (the ‘immanent Trinity’).” McCall, *Analytic Christology*, 148; italics original.

48. “Any doctrine of the Trinity according to which the divine persons are distinct in agency.” McCall, *Analytic Christology*, 148; italics original.

49. I by no means intend to claim that Barrett has intentionally drawn from McCall’s book, nor do I intend to claim that Barrett should have engaged or drawn from McCall’s book. This would be near impossible since only two months separate the public release of each book, McCall’s being the latter of the two. I make recourse here to McCall’s recent book since his list of uses of the term ST serves a useful heuristic tool for not only discussing ST but for evaluating other definitions/uses of ST as well, such as Barrett’s.

50. Barrett, *Simply Trinity*, 324.

51. Moreland and Craig, *Philosophical Foundations*, 582: “The central commitment of social trinitarianism is that in God there are three distinct centers of self-consciousness, each with its proper intellect and will.”

that are also affirmed by Moltmann, Jenson, Boff, and others? Sure; all of these thinkers would affirm that the persons are distinct centers of consciousness and will, for example. But this would be just about all that they would agree on, along with perhaps the claim that the divine persons love one another.

By placing all the components that he does in his definition of ST, Barrett in essence claims that each of these components is a necessary condition for a view of the Trinity to be ST. However, as just shown, several theologians and philosophers who identify as social trinitarians hold notably different beliefs about the Trinity. So, there are a couple of possible implications that follow from this phenomenon: 1) Barrett's definition for ST is false, or 2) it is false that all of the thinkers identified as social trinitarians by Barrett are actually social trinitarians; perhaps some have even misidentified themselves. It cannot be the case that Barrett's definition of ST is true and that all of the philosophers and theologians that he identifies as social trinitarians are actually social trinitarians, since his definition would exclude several of these. It seems to me that 1 is likely the case.

The reason that I think Barrett's definition for ST is false is this: It requires too many necessary conditions to be met for a particular Trinity doctrine to be considered ST. However, I need to clarify a particular point of agreement that I have with Barrett: Barrett *is correct* to identify all of the theologians and philosophers he labels as social trinitarians that he does. Moreland and Craig are obviously social trinitarians; they claim this to be the case. However, as I already stated, they are not of the same social-trinitarian variety as Boff, Moltmann, et al. If it is the case that Barrett is correct in identifying these thinkers as social trinitarians, but these thinkers' Trinity views have such notable differences as they do, then ST must be less or something other than what Barrett claims it is.

Some might quibble that I am making much to do over semantics. I do not take this to be the case. When Barrett critiques ST, he applies his criticisms to everyone that he pulls together under the umbrella of his definition for ST. But as I have demonstrated, not everyone he pulls under this umbrella fits under it. This entails that some, if not most, of Barrett's criticisms of ST do not land for these outside the umbrella. As a result, Barrett's criticisms are not aimed at ST per se, only particular versions of ST. Since this is the case, then his cumulative argument against ST is severely weakened.

Barrett's most-often repeated criticism of ST is that those affirming the view do so for the sake of advancing their social agendas: "With each new Trinity arrives a new social program. Quests for the Trinity are in the end not about God but about *me* and *my* social agenda."<sup>52</sup> He asserts this again: "*Trinity drift is real*. We have not only drifted away from the biblical, orthodox Trinity, but we have manipulated the Trinity to meet our social agendas."<sup>53</sup> This is not to say that this is Barrett's only criticism of

52. Barrett, *Simply Trinity*, 92. Italics original.

53. Barrett, *Simply Trinity*, 93. Italics original.

ST—he also notes that the pro-Nicene patristic theologians did not conceive of the persons as distinct centers of consciousness and will, and this is arguably the case—though it is highly contested by various philosophers and theologians.<sup>54</sup> But it is his primary criticism of ST throughout *Simply Trinity*. Since not all professed social trinitarians attempt to modify the doctrine of the Trinity to advance a social agenda, this particular critique of Barrett’s has zero implications for their trinitarian models. Perhaps the criticism that their models lack any patristic or medieval support hits the bullseye, but the significance of this critique will vary depending on a number of items, such as how one interprets the patristic and medieval sources.<sup>55</sup> The weight of any critique against ST, however, will hinge on which version of ST one is talking about. Again, definitions matter.

One may wonder what, if any, argument is a sound argument against ST. This, again, depends on how one defines their terms. Is there a common core, or essence, of ST? Are there any necessary conditions that are met by all who claim ST? Perhaps, but I think McCall’s observations about the vast variety of usages of the term and the problems created therein are correct. Even if one adopts his definition of “real ST”<sup>56</sup> as their definition of ST in general, this still will exclude many who claim the social trinitarian moniker, such as those who ascribe distinct agency to the divine persons but do not describe them as a society or describe any sort of intra-Trinitarian love. Perhaps McCall is correct that ST has lost any sort of consensus concerning its definitional import, though, as he highlights, the term is unlikely to drop out of usage. Regardless, this sheds ample light on the problems with Barrett’s description and subsequent criticisms of ST. Because of the particular way that he defines ST, he further muddies the waters surrounding the conversations and debates over it. This point is not only a weakness in Barrett’s argument, but an actual problem. Good arguments should disambiguate philosophical and theological problems; ideally, they transform these problems into pseudo-problems. If some arguments further ambiguate a problem, then those are bad arguments, and Barrett’s arguments and the premises they are based on do just that. If Barrett desires to continue his project of critiquing ST, then he needs to provide a more accurate and precise definition of what ST is, and he needs to avoid equivocation. Otherwise, his arguments will continue to fall short, and he will continue to ambiguate the important conversations being had over models of the Trinity.

54. See Ayres, *Nicaea and its Legacy*; and Holmes, *Quest for the Trinity*, 56–146. Not everyone is agreed on this, however. See Hasker, *Metaphysics and the Tri-Personal God*, 7–49; and Moreland and Craig, *Philosophical Foundations*, 582–85.

55. For example, Hasker makes positive arguments that some form of proto-ST by both Gregory of Nysa and Augustine of Hippo. While many theologians have argued that the Cappadocians might represent something like a proto-ST (though this also is highly contested), very few have argued that Augustine qualifies as one. See Hasker, *Metaphysics and the Tri-Personal God*, 26–49, esp. 44–49.

56. See footnote 42 above.

The last problem that I want to discuss with Barrett's critique of ST is that much of what he presumes is precisely that for which he needs to argue. More specifically, he presumes 1) that the church's tradition has adopted the correct hermeneutical approach for the theological interpretation of Scripture, 2) that the tradition holds a particular authority in theological method and doctrinal development, and 3) that the tradition has articulated not only a doctrine of the Trinity that enjoys biblical warrant but one that is internally coherent. I will briefly address each of these presumptions individually.

Barrett does not question the hermeneutic approach of the early church or its validity. Though he discusses this approach at length in chapter 2, "Can We Trust the God of Our Fathers? Retrieving Biblical Orthodoxy," he never really engages the concerns of many who would disagree with it. The majority of this chapter is dedicated to re-telling the Arian and Eunomian controversies and how the orthodox doctrine of God was defended, reaffirmed, and triumphant over the heresies of Arius and other dissenters.<sup>57</sup> However, Barrett never really discusses or argues for *why* the tradition, its hermeneutic, and its trinitarian conclusions are on solid ground; he merely asserts and assumes that this just is the case. Focusing on the final line of the Nicene Creed, he writes, "It is universal *because* it is holy and apostolic. The fathers are claiming, in other words, that this Trinity they confess is none other than the Trinity of the Scriptures, the same Scriptures penned by the apostles. For that reason, the creed carries authority in the church, not just the church of the fourth century but the church *universal*, across all lands and spanning all eras, East and West."<sup>58</sup> He further writes, "That said, the Nicene Creed is not a dead letter; rather, it carries authority to this day. No, it is not on par with Scripture; it is not a source of divine revelation. But since it conforms to Scripture, it is to be adhered to, confessed, and celebrated in the church to this day. *To part from the creed is to depart from scriptural teaching itself.*"<sup>59</sup> This is a very bold claim!

First, one should notice that Barrett's statements here do not constitute an argument; they are just assertions. Simply saying something boldly and repeating it several times is not an argument. Also, these statements are not some conclusion to an argument that he has been making throughout the chapter; they are his summary thoughts on his telling of the story of Nicaea. He merely asserts these claims and then concludes his chapter, after which he begins his critique of ST in the next chapter. If anything, these statements serve as presuppositions from which he develops this

57. It is worth noting, however, as does Paul Gavriluk, that many of the ancient heretics, namely the Arians and the Nestorians, were beholden to many of the tenets of classical theism, such as divine simplicity and impassability, which seem to have contributed to their trinitarian and Christological heresies. See Paul L. Gavriluk, "God's Impassible Suffering in the Flesh: The Promise of Paradoxical Christology," in *Divine Impassibility and the Mystery of Human Suffering*, ed. James Keating and Thomas Joseph White (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 142–43.

58. Barrett, *Simply Trinity*, 65.

59. Barrett, *Simply Trinity*, 65–66. Italics original.



critique of ST. Presuppositions are beliefs from which one argues rather than ones to which one argues. Sure, everyone has presuppositions when they articulate or defend any particular view; however, Barrett's use of these particular presuppositions seems to be a case of cheating of some sorts. By presupposing the truth of these statements, he has stacked the deck, so to say, in his favor; he is baking the conclusions for which he is arguing into his metaphorical cake. One of his major critiques of ST, for example, is that it departs from the historic doctrine of the Trinity, but in so making this critique he presumes the truthfulness of the historic doctrine of the Trinity without considering whether it is possible that the patristic fathers might have erred in how they interpreted Scripture. Since Scripture is the highest theological authority for the Christian, according to Barrett, is it not reasonable then to submit the patristic interpretations of Scripture on the Trinity to Scripture itself and see if these interpretations actually conform to what Scripture teaches? I believe so, and I think Barrett himself would agree, but he nowhere does this. If one is going to argue for a particular view of the Trinity as the correct view, as well as the patristic hermeneutics used to derive this view, then they cannot begin by presuming the truth of the position they aim to defend, nor can they begin by presuming the falsity of the views they aim to critique. These truth values are items that need to be argued for rather than from.

Connected to this is my second point mentioned, that Barrett presumes that the tradition holds a particular authority in theological method and doctrinal development. As mentioned, Barrett affirms *sola Scriptura*, which claims that Scripture is the supreme authority in all matters of Christian doctrine; it does not claim that Scripture is the only authority or that no other source can deliver true theological or doctrinal beliefs. However, Barrett presumes, as noted in the prior critique, that Scripture should be interpreted through the lens, or hermeneutical framework, of the tradition; this is the way in which one will properly interpret Scripture and arrive at the correct doctrine of the Trinity. Not only does this presuppose—without defense—that the tradition is a hermeneutical authority when it comes to reading Scripture, but it also is not obvious that Barrett's views here do not undermine some of the pragmatics of *sola Scriptura*. For example, John Peckham has pointed out, by elevating the tradition to the needed lens for rightly interpreting Scripture, one has functionally placed the tradition on an equal level of authority as Scripture itself. How can Scripture hold doctrinal authority over the tradition and potentially critique and correct the tradition if Scripture must always be interpreted through the tradition? It cannot, according to Peckham.<sup>60</sup> Again, this qualifies as stacking the deck by presupposing exactly that for which Barrett should argue. The authority of the tradition in matters hermeneutical and theological is an item that needs to be argued for and defended, which Barrett has not done. At minimum, he should at least consider the logic of views such as Peckham's in order to alleviate concerns such as this concerning *sola Scriptura*. Not

60. Peckham, *Canonical Theology*, 132–36; Peckham, *Divine Attributes*, 29–37, and 209–48.

only this, but suppose that the historical doctrine of the Trinity was determined to be incoherent; should Christians still believe it or read Scripture in the same way? It does not matter how impressive of a pedigree that a particular idea or doctrine has; if it entails logical incoherence then Christians should abandon that doctrine. I want to emphasize, however, that *I am not claiming that the traditional doctrine of the Trinity is false, nor am I claiming that the tradition got all of its hermeneutics wrong*. Rather, I am claiming that, following the way Barrett has set up his project, he has implicitly precluded the possibility of the traditional Trinity doctrine being false. My critique is a methodological one.

Lastly, by presuming the hermeneutical approach of the early church and that the tradition has authority over theological and doctrinal development, Barrett consequently presumes that this particular view of the Trinity both enjoys biblical warrant and logical coherence. However, this is not a consensus view in contemporary Christian theology or Christian philosophy. As Barrett himself notes, many Christians do not adhere to the traditional doctrine of the Trinity. However, Barrett never explains why this is problematic except for his repeated claims that these trinitarianisms fall outside of what the tradition has affirmed. As a result, he presumes that they are necessarily false. But surely it is not the case that they are *necessarily* false. I already mentioned that Barrett never argues for or defends the view he insists upon in his treatment; rather, he presumes its truth value. As a result, he never investigates the exegetical or logical arguments that his opponents develop for their respective social-trinitarian views. Nowhere does he show where these thinkers went wrong in their exegesis or in their reasoning. The closest he comes is to making a claim similar to this: These thinkers approach the Bible with a naïve biblicism that does not consider the robust hermeneutics and deep reasoning of the tradition.<sup>61</sup> But again, this presumes precisely what he should argue for. If the tradition's approach to biblical hermeneutics and doctrinal development is superior to those practiced by contemporary theologians and philosophers, then should not Barrett demonstrate why? Again, he never does so. Is it not possible that the critics of this classical trinitarianism have made exegetical and coherent arguments for their view, ones that enjoy more biblical warrant than does Barrett's? If this is possible, then why not engage in a close analysis to see if they have done so? If these opponents have erred in their interpretation of Scripture, then surely it would be beneficial to point out where they went wrong.

Not only does Barrett never explore the exegetical and logical arguments many use for ST, he also never explores the exegetical and logical arguments against his preferred Trinity doctrine. Nowhere does he engage with the numerous critiques of classical trinitarianism that appear in the contemporary philosophical or theological literature, such as those offered by William Lane Craig, Richard Swinburne, William Hasker, or others. Simply put, this is unacceptable on scholarly standards. Though

61. Barrett, *Simply Trinity*, 36.

Barrett intends *Simply Trinity* to be a book for popular and lay audiences, he does his readers no favors by not introducing them to the critiques of the view on which he so strongly insists. Rather, the readers of *Simply Trinity* are left to assume that ST is necessarily an unbiblical view of God that does not enjoy any robust exegetical or logical arguments, and such is not a charitable presentation of an opposing view. If ST is a genuine problem for the Christian faith, then more work needs to be done at the exegetical and logical-analysis levels, showing how and why this is the case. Simply repeating that such a view is contrary to what the tradition has affirmed will not suffice.

### **Conclusion and Going Forward**

I have argued that there are several problems with Matthew Barrett's recent critiques of ST in his recent book, *Simply Trinity*. First, Barrett furthers ambiguity of what ST is due to his problematic definition of the term, which results in him misrepresenting the views of several of the theologians and philosophers he discusses. Second, Barrett presumes much of what he should argue for in his arguments against ST. Specifically, he presumes the validity of the tradition's hermeneutic approach to Scripture and the truthfulness of its trinitarian conclusions; he presumes that the tradition holds a particular authority in theological method and doctrinal development, a presumption that is not shared by many other philosophers and theologians; and he presumes that his particular view of the Trinity both enjoys biblical warrant and logical coherence. Barrett's arguments all hinge on his definition of ST and all of the presumptions from which he develops these arguments. Since these items do all of his heavy lifting for him, Barrett instead should argue for and defend these premises before arguing from them. Otherwise, a vicious circularity will continue to result in his case falling flat on its face. Because of the vicious circularity that arises from Barrett's presumptions in his case against ST, I conclude that his case makes no real contribution to the discussions surrounding models of the Trinity or to the wider trinitarian discussions at large. This is not to say that there are not good arguments against ST on offer. As a matter of fact, there are several arguments against ST that have helped move trinitarian discussions forward, such as those provided by Brian Leftow, Carl Mosser, and Dale Tuggy, though I will not comment on how effective these arguments may or may not be. My purpose in this paper has not been to argue for or against ST or classical trinitarianism—I do not take a position on any particular Trinity model in this paper; rather, my purpose has been to identify the notable problems that plague Barrett's case against ST, problems that should not be ignored since Barrett considers ST to be a form of heterodoxy.

To further conclude this paper, I would like to outline some steps that I think useful for further engaging critiques of Trinity models in general, and ST models in particular. First, clear and accurate definitions are of first importance. If accurate

definitions are not provided, then straw man fallacies are likely to abound. This, however, is particularly difficult pertaining to ST since, as McCall demonstrates, ST is difficult to define and pin down. As McCall notes, critics and supporters of ST need to provide clear definitions for what they mean by ST. However, I think a more foundational step is needed, and this step perhaps needs to be taken by social trinitarians themselves. McCall's taxonomy is particularly useful for identifying different uses of the ST term. However, what is needed is a *mere* ST. Currently, there does not seem to be any agreement on what the requirements are for a minimalistic ST. Is there anything that all of the STs discussed by McCall have in common? Though this is likely controversial, I recommend that what McCall terms *modern-person* ST (M-ST) would work well for a *mere* ST.<sup>62</sup> However, following McCall's lead, I would suggest that the term "modern" be replaced with another adjective—perhaps "robust."<sup>63</sup> As he notes, how exactly "modern" this view of personhood is is a topic of debate. But if there is anything that the various ST models provided in McCall's taxonomy *seem* to have in common, it is that the divine persons are distinct centers of consciousness and will. It seems to me, however, that none of the other varieties of ST make much sense if the divine persons are not understood as such distinct centers of operation. For example, the "distinct agency" view of ST (D-ST per McCall), would seem to make little sense if the agents were not also centers of consciousness and will, and I would add intentionality. Could a living agent be an agent without a distinct center of consciousness, will, and intentionality?<sup>64</sup> It is not clear to me that this is the case, though some might be prone to argue that it is. One very well could argue that, though the divine persons are not distinct centers of consciousness, will, and intentionality, they are distinct agents. However, it is not clear, on this definition, what would set ST apart from classical models of the Trinity. Augustine, Anselm, and Thomas, for example, all seem prone to affirm that the divine persons are distinct agents who act, though they are not distinct centers of operations. If this were the case, then it would not be clear what distinguishes ST as a different Trinity model. As a result, I think M-ST is the best candidate for a mere ST.

In so adopting M-ST as a mere ST, one would also do well to heed McCall's suggestion about the labels of so-called "modern" theories of personhood and "traditional" theories of personhood. He writes, "This won't work all that well

62. I depart from McCall here as he notes that some trinitarian theologians attempt to use their doctrine of the Trinity to correct modern notions of personhood, and that not all claiming ST would claim such a view of persons. He cites Colin Gunton as an example on this. In other words, M-ST, according to McCall, does not work descriptively. Nonetheless, M-ST still seems to be what all other ST models hold in common in so far that ST is a distinguishable model of the Trinity. See McCall, *Analytic Christology*, 145.

63. Moreland and Craig use this adjective for personhood in *Philosophical Foundations* (586).

64. Broadly defined, "An agent is a being with the capacity to act, and 'agency' denotes the exercise or manifestation of this capacity." See Schlosser, Markus, "Agency," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2019 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2019/entries/agency/>>.

*prescriptively*, for it isn't an entirely simple matter to so easily oppose 'modern' notions to 'the traditional' concept. Just as there isn't a single thing called 'the modern view,' neither is there a single thing called 'the traditional perspective.'"<sup>65</sup> He notes that not even all of the medieval scholastics agreed on the definition of "person." "Thomas Aquinas," he notes, "opts for what is basically a Boethian notion of person as 'individual substance of a rational nature' (*persona est individua substantia rationalis naturae*). Meanwhile, Richard of St. Victor is well aware of Boethius's definition but is not at all hesitant to disagree with it. Famously, he holds that a divine person is an 'incommunicable existence of a divine nature' (*persona divina est divinae naturae incommunicabilis existentialis*)."<sup>66</sup> Not only this, but the differences between so-called modern and traditional theories of personhood are often exaggerated. Just because there seem to be differences between these views does not mean that there has been any sort of significant departure in the modern from the traditional. Rather, the differences could be explained simply as developments.<sup>67</sup>

Presuming that M-ST would qualify as a mere ST, critics and defenders of ST could then begin to make further progress in the discussion surrounding it. Many of the critiques that Barrett levels against ST, for example, would not hold any weight against this mere ST. However, his—and others'—argument that this sort of view was absent from the patristic and medieval theologians' Trinity doctrines could still hold weight, and defenders of this mere ST would still need to work out a good defense against this charge, especially if the charge should obtain.

When critics of ST bring up this charge of ST being inconsistent with what the tradition has taught, however, they need to demonstrate *why* the tradition should be considered authoritative in theological method and doctrinal development. Specifically, traditionalists need to demonstrate why, for example, the tradition should be considered as more authoritative than reason and argumentation. Not only this, but—and this critique is more specific to protestant critics of ST—critiques of ST need also to demonstrate why ST is not consistent with what Scripture teaches about God. Many have demonstrated how the tradition's interpretations of Scripture are plausible, but arguments demonstrating that ST readings of Scripture fail have been either 1) non-existent or 2) severely underdeveloped. For example, some might argue that ST is not consistent with biblical monotheism. But as McCall has shown, a biblical monotheism, such as articulated by Richard Bauckham, is not necessarily at odds with ST.<sup>68</sup> More work needs to be done on this sort of argument against ST.

65. McCall, *Analytic Christology*, 145. Italics original.

66. McCall, *Analytic Christology*, 145–46.

67. McCall, *Analytic Christology*, 146–47. See also Khaled Anatolios, *Retrieving Nicaea: The Development and Meaning of Trinitarian Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), 153; and Gilles Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of St. Thomas Aquinas* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 106.

68. Thomas H. McCall, *Which Trinity? Whose Monotheism?: Philosophical and Systematic Theologians on the Metaphysics of Trinitarian Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 59–64,

Arguments for why ST is inconsistent with what Scripture itself teaches would be a great place for ST critics to begin, especially ST's evangelical critics.<sup>69</sup>

234–35; Richard Bauckham, *God Crucified*, in *Jesus and the God of Israel: God Crucified and Other Studies on the New Testament's Christology of Divine Identity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 1–59.

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