

God's relationship to space While the first set of reflections dealt with the relationship of the eternal God to created time, here we must particularly think of the relationship of the Logos (the eternal Christ; second Person of the Holy Trinity) to space. And all that is said of Him is ever in the context of perichoresis (the mutual indwelling and co-working of Father, Son and Holy Spirit). There are consequences of the relationship of the Logos to space for the situations of the heathen nations, and that is our main concern here at present. Significance of 'extra-Calvinisticum' The crux of the issue is found in what is meant by the 'extra-Calvinisticum' (a term coined by sixteenth-century Lutheran theologians to criticize the Calvinists for leaving something of the Logos (hence, 'Calvinist extra') outside Christ's incarnation in the body and soul of the Lord Jesus Christ. In the *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Calvin wrote: 'Although the boundless essence of the Word [Logos] was united with human nature, nevertheless we do not imagine there to be any enclosing of the Word in it. The Son of God descended miraculously from heaven, yet without abandoning heaven; was pleased to be conceived miraculously in the Virgin's womb, to live on earth, to hang on the cross, in such a way that He always filled the world as from the beginning.' The late-sixteenth-century Anglican theologian, Richard Hooker, taught essentially the same thing. Basically, Calvin and Hooker were saying that the Son of God (the Logos), while fully incarnate, is not contained by the body of Jesus. Because of His Godness, although truly within space, He remains transcendent to it. That is, Christ remained truly God when He became truly man; He did not lose His transcendence. As Archbishop William Temple wisely asked, if the Logos lost His transcendence when He became man, then what happened to the cosmic functions of Christ, who holds the universe together? (cf. Col. 1:15–17). This kind of thinking was certainly in line with the Fathers of Eastern Orthodoxy. G. V. Florovsky notes that Athanasius strongly distinguishes between the transcendence of the Logos and His creative activities: 'The Logos is present in the world, but only "dynamically", that is, by His "powers." In His own "substance" He is outside of the world.' Or as Duncan Reid comments: '... we can distinguish this [i.e. the incarnation] from the inner being of the Logos which remains within the being of the trinity even during the earthly life of Christ.' We shall see immediately below more detailed description of Athanasius' thought on this matter. God is not spatially related to space In his *Space, Time, and Incarnation*, T. F. Torrance showed that what was happening (not only with Calvin, but long before in some of the Church Fathers) was the rejection of a container (or receptacle) notion of space, in accordance with which notion God Himself would have to be contained and limited. On the contrary, the Logos was not subordinated to the flesh it assumed; its transcendent nature was not thereby altered. That is, God is not spatially related to space, but rather is related to it in terms of omnipotent power. It is difficult to express such things in our human language, but St. Athanasius pioneered the way for theologians to seek to deal accurately with the relationship of the Logos to space. Commenting on Athanasius' *Contra Arianos* (1.23f; 4.27; *De Synodis* 42; *Ad Serapionem* 1.8–9, 16–20), Torrance noted: Hence Athanasius insisted that when our ordinary terms are applied to God they must be stretched beyond their natural sense and reference and must be employed in such a way that they indicate more than the actual terms can naturally specify. Theological terms, therefore, which by function and use are deployed to refer to God in his relation to the world, in the nature of the case must have an elastic quality, terminating on God himself at one end and upon the world or man at the other end. To use modern scientific language, theological terms inevitably embody a relation of differentiability like the variational principles of physics, conformable to the precise nature and force of the realities to which they are used to refer. Indeed, in developing a theological understanding of space in respect of the dynamic relation between 'the place' (topos)

of God which is to be understood strictly in accordance with the nature of man as man, Athanasius projected something rather like what we now call topological language. The Logos remained Transcendent during the Incarnation For instance, Athanasius wrote of what would later be called ‘the extra-Calvinisticum’ in *De Incarnatione*: For he was not shut up in the body. And he was not in the body in such a way as not to be elsewhere, nor did he move the body in such a way that the universe was left void of his activity and providence. But the most unexpected thing is that Word [Logos] though he is, he was not contained by anything but he himself rather contains all things. And just as while he is present in the whole of creation, he is ‘outside’ everything in respect of his essential being but is ‘in’ all things in respect of his own powers, giving order to the universe, extending his providence to all and in all things without being contained, but being wholly and in every respect in his Father alone—so also while being present in a human body and giving life to it himself, he was quite consistently giving life to the universe as well: He was ‘in’ every event and yet ‘outside’ the universe. Moreover while he made himself known from the body through his works he was not unmanifest through his activity in the universe (17). The Holy Scriptures maintain a holy reserve as to what the being and activities of the Logos may mean for humankind outside Israel and the Church. At least we could conclude that the divine Logos (in consubstantial fellowship with Father and Spirit) is no more limited by space than He is by time, in overseeing the providential affairs of the lives of every descendant of Adam and Eve. But that does not take us very far in speculating on what these spatially transcendent relations of the Logos to all humankind might imply for those outside the covenant people of God. Presumably if the Holy Spirit speaking in Scripture had wanted us to know more, then He would have told us more. The Logos is able temporally and spatially to do whatever He deems to be in accordance with the divine character of holiness, love and power, and in accordance with the eternal Triune purposes for each member of creation. The eternal Spirit is able to apply all the benefits of the incarnation, atonement and resurrection whenever and wherever the Father and Son so ordain (without being hindered by location in time or space). The constant emphasis of Scripture is that that application is in the context of the preaching of the Word by the Spirit-endowed community in their mission to all the world. It is best for piety to leave it at that. Universalism is against the Holy Scriptures One concluding remark is called for here. Theories of universal salvation cannot be justly traced to the biblical teaching on the *logos asarkos* [Word apart from the flesh] and *logos ensarkos* [enfleshed Word]. These are not two different Words. They are the same Word, looked at in two different, but complementary perspectives. Thus, they are never contradictory. That is important to keep in mind when responding to universalism. The incarnate Word clearly and solemnly warned against the horrendous consequences of the refusal of sinners to repent and believe the gospel (e.g. Matthew chapters 24 and 25). What He says on this matter (as Word incarnate) could not be contradicted by what He is considered in His transcendent relations to time and space (as *Logos Asarkos*). Karl Rahner’s ‘anonymous Christian’ theory That, in my view, raises serious problems with the theory of Karl Rahner on ‘the anonymous Christian’. Rahner wrote: ‘Christianity does not simply confront the member of an extra-Christian religion as a mere non-Christian but as someone who can and must already be regarded in this or that respect as an anonymous Christian. It would be wrong to regard the pagan as someone who has not yet been touched in any way by God’s grace and truth.’ But to accuse Rahner’s ‘anonymous Christian’ theory of not being biblical, would not—I assume—have worried unduly this prolific Roman Catholic theologian. For elsewhere he wrote critically concerning the teaching of St. Paul on human religions as being ‘pessimist’. Miikka Ruokanen showed that Rahner’s theory not only was not

based on the Scriptures, it was also out of accord with Church tradition, including the Second Vatican Council. The Council addressed this issue in section 16 of 'Dogmatic Constitution on the Church' ('Lumen Gentium'). The development within Roman Catholicism on the salvation of the lost outside the Church has been addressed by Hendrik Nys and more recently by Jorge Ruiz Ortiz. John Donne, the great Anglican preacher of the seventeenth century, addressed this question of the salvation of those outside the known Church in one of his sermons: To me, to whom God hath revealed his Son, in a Gospel, by a Church, there can be no way of salvation, but by applying that Son of God, by that Gospel, in that Church. Nor is there any other foundation for any, nor any other name by which any can be saved, but the name of Jesus. But how this foundation is presented, and how this name of Jesus is notified to them, amongst whom there is no Gospel preached, no Church established, I am not curious in inquiring. I know God can be as merciful as those tender [Church] Fathers present him to be; and I would be as charitable as they are. And therefore humbly embracing that manifestation of the Son, which he hath afforded me, I leave God, to his unsearchable ways of working upon others, without further inquisition.

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