

PREFACE

Participatio: The Journal of the Thomas F. Torrance Fellowship originated in 2009 for the constructive development of the theology of T. F. Torrance and theology inspired by him as it brings scholars and critics of Torrance, as well as pastors engaged with his theology, together into critical dialogue for the edification of the Church and its ministry in society. Professor Thomas Forsyth Torrance (1913–2007) was one of the most significant, influential, and constructive theologians of the English-speaking world. His prodigious literary output, translation work, edited volumes, international speaking engagements, and ecclesiastical and ecumenical endeavors cast a huge influence over theology and theologians working with him, against him, and after him. Now into the twenty-first century the impact of his work is still being felt as PhD dissertations are being completed on his work and monographs roll off the presses detailing and assessing aspects of his theology.

To understand one area of Torrance’s thought requires familiarity with every other area of his thought as believer and theologian, churchman and ecumenist, dogmatic and pastoral theologian. His aversion to “scholasticism” and to certain forms of systematic theology has meant that his works are often not as lucidly expressed or as analytic as otherwise could have been nor are they as concise as others writing in the field — although with Karl Barth as his PhD mentor, brevity was never going to be one of his virtues!

Torrance was more than a scholar only. When the pastoral intent of Torrance’s work is not kept in mind, his work is misunderstood as overly academic and unnecessarily dense. Within the pastoral context, however, one can keep an eye on the goal of Torrance’s dogmatic interests and see how each piece of his oeuvre contributes to pointing out a rigorously faithful path to true knowledge of God, in which we think out of a center in God and not out of ourselves. Christian theology, as Torrance rightly emphasized, begins and ends in prayer and worship by participation in Christ’s prayer and obedience to the Father through the Spirit.

Torrance devoted considerable energy to studying the Church Fathers. For him they were exemplary: combining faith and godliness, meticulous searching of the scriptures with a pastorally-oriented theology, and anticipating insights of modern physics centuries in advance. When asked who his favorite modern theologian was, he famously replied: Athanasius. It is therefore highly appropriate that *Participatio* should celebrate the centennial of the birth of Thomas Forsyth



Torrance with an issue devoted to "T. F. Torrance and Orthodoxy." Associate editor Matt Baker deserves credit for orchestrating this fitting volume as a tribute to the T. F. Torrance centenary.

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