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978-0-521-09292-0 - The Trinity in German Thought

Samuel M. Powell

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THE TRINITY IN GERMAN THOUGHT

The Trinity in German Thought describes the three ideas that govern modern German Trinitarian thought: the ideas of reflective selfhood, of revelation, and of history. “Reflective selfhood” designates the attempt at finding an analogy between the Trinity and the structure of the human self. Such attempts, following the lead of Augustine, typically see the structure of self-consciousness as an especially apt analogy of the Trinity. “Revelation” points to two questions: what is the Word of God? and can the idea of the Trinity be derived from the Word? From Martin Luther to the present, Trinitarian thought has depended on the way in which theologians conceived of the Word. “History” designates the way in which historical modes of thinking have affected Trinitarian thought. For some, “history” has meant a critical approach to Scripture and creeds; for others, it has meant God’s own participation in history.

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CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore, São Paulo, Delhi

Cambridge University Press
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 8RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521781961

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First published 2001
This digitally printed version 2008

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data

Powell, Samuel M.
The Trinity in German thought / Samuel M. Powell.
p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0-521-78196-5 (hb)

1. Trinity. 2. Theology – Germany – History. I. Title.

BT109.P69 2000
231'.044'0943–dc21
00-025316

ISBN 978-0-521-78196-1 hardback
ISBN 978-0-521-09292-0 paperback

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Acknowledgments

I would like to thank those who helped me with this book along the way: the Wesleyan Center for Twenty-First Century Studies, for summer grants that made the writing possible; the faculty and staff of Nazarene Theological College (Manchester, UK) whose support while I was on sabbatical there was invaluable; Jack Verheyden, who reminded me of the importance of theology; Craig Keen, whose willingness to discuss ideas saved me many an hour of futile searching; my colleagues and staff at Point Loma Nazarene University, for their support and encouragement; and most of all to my wife, Terrie, and family, to whom I dedicate this book.