

peated three times is the definition of the First, as you recognize [it to be], then assuredly the First is triune—and for no other reason than that it defines itself. If it did not define itself, it would not be the First; yet, since it defines itself, it shows itself to be trine. Therefore, you see that out of the perfection there results a trinity which, nevertheless, (since you view it prior to other) you can neither number nor assert to be a number. For this trinity is not other than oneness, and [this] oneness is not other than trinity. For the trinity and the oneness are not other than the simple Beginning which is signified by “Not-other.”

FERDINAND: I see perfectly well that the necessity of the perfection of the First—viz., that it defines itself—demands that it be triune before other and before number. For those things which presuppose the First do not confer any perfection on it. But since you have elsewhere and often—especially in *Learned Ignorance*—attempted in some way to explicate this divine richness in other terms, it will suffice if you now add a few [points] to these others.

19 NICHOLAS: The mystery of the Trinity—a mystery which is received by faith and by the gift of God—by far exceeds and precedes all sensing. Nevertheless, by the means by which we investigate God in the present life, this mystery cannot be elucidated in any other way or any more precisely than you have just heard. Now, those who name the Trinity *Father* and *Son* and *Holy Spirit* approach [it] less precisely; nevertheless, they use these names suitably because of the conformity to Scripture. But those who call the Trinity *Oneness*, *Equality*, and *Union* would approach more closely [to it] if these terms were found to be inserted in Scripture.¹⁶ For these are [the terms] in which Not-other shines forth clearly. For in *oneness*, which indicates indistinction from itself and distinction from another, assuredly Not-other is discerned. And, likewise, in *equality* and in *union* Not-other manifests itself to one who is attentive.

Still more simply, the terms “this,” “it,” and “the same” imitate “Not-other” quite clearly and precisely, although they are less in use.¹⁷

So then, it is evident that in [the expression] “Not-other and Not-other and Not-other”—although [this expression] is not at all in use—the triune Beginning is revealed most clearly, though it is beyond all our apprehension and capability. For when the First Beginning—signified through “Not-other”—defines itself: in this movement of definition Not-other originates from Not-other; and from Not-other and the Not-other which has originated, the definition concludes in Not-other. One who contemplates these matters will behold