

A FIELD OF LIVING FIRE: KARL BARTH ON THE SPIRIT AND THE CHURCH

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She raised her hands from the side of the pen in a gesture hieratic and profound. A visionary light settled in her eyes. She saw the streak as a vast swinging bridge extending upward from the earth through a field of living fire. Upon it a vast horde of souls were rumbling toward heaven. There were whole companies of white-trash, clean for the first time in their lives, and bands of black niggers in white robes, and battalions of freaks and lunatics shouting and clapping and leaping like frogs. And bringing up the end of the procession was a tribe of people whom she recognized at once as those who, like herself and Claud, had always had a little of everything and the God-given wit to use it right.¹

It will take several pages before I can explain why I begin with the end—or almost the end—of a story by Flannery O'Connor. But beginning at the end is parabolic of the doctrine of the Spirit, whose outpouring is the end-time, blowing and breathing life into our human world at once ordinary and freakish. But how can we map the relations between this Spirit-filled world and the Church? That is the question on which I shall focus.

And I shall consider this question in relation to the theology of Karl Barth—because I think that studying how this most revolutionary of twentieth century theologians might map the relations between Spirit and Church is at the center of testing his dogmatics for a future Church.² I will begin by summarizing one form of the debate over Barth's pneumatology. I will propose that this debate is an argument over how important a Catholic strand there is to Barth's Evangelical theology. I will next turn from this

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argument *over* Barth's theology to an argument *within* his theology, providing evidence of some movements within Barth's theology that establish a *mutual relationship* between Catholic and Evangelical theology rather than a *rivalry* between the two. Next, lest this seem unsatisfyingly irenic, I shall also propose that the central issue at stake is how pneumatology can situate what it means to be reformer of (including polemicist against) the Church. Barth will provide some clues at this third phase of the argument. But at this point the primary argument will not be over Barth's theology or within it. Instead, I will place arguments in conversation with Barth which have thus far been, by and large, *outside* Barth's theology. Here Flannery O'Connor's story will be our guide. Finally, I will conclude by suggesting that to pursue further the topic of the Holy Spirit and the Church would require studying the Spirit's relationship to the particular goods that constitute the Christian *communio*. I will thus begin with an abstract debate between academic theologians over Barth's theology and move toward the more concrete life of the Church.

I. Is Barth's Spirit Catholic and/or Evangelical?

Part of what accounts for the massive length of the *Church Dogmatics* was that Karl Barth had "to recreate a universe of discourse, and he had to put the reader in the middle of that world, instructing him in the use of that language by showing him how—extensively, and not only by stating the rules or principles of the discourse."³ One way to distinguish profound from mediocre commentators on Barth is by how well they can guide us through Barth by moving between these differences—between *using* Christian communal discourse and stating its *rules or principles*, between *showing* the rules at work and *stating* the rules. Profound commentators not only show us how Barth made these moves but, in so doing (and perhaps without stating it) show us how to go on, how *we* can engage in the theological task. The real problems testing Barth's theology for the future Church occur when we discover disagreements on issues by readers sensitive to the dense combination of showing and stating in Barth's theology.

A. The Debates over Barth's Spirit

We find just such a disagreement when we consider Barth's doctrine of the Spirit. The criticism takes at least two forms. One form proposes that Barth's doctrine of the Spirit is tied to a doctrine of God as Absolute Subject who can have "modes" but no real "persons", for (the counter-argument to Barth goes) genuine "otherness" is always a threat to absolute subjectivity.⁴ But the form of the criticism I shall consider is not the criticism of Barth's doctrine of God as Spirit but of Barth's doctrine of the Holy Spirit, i.e., the Spirit of the Father and the Son. That is, it can be (and has been) argued that an implausible pneumatology is at the root of basic problems in Barth's theology.

Consider an argument between Robert Jenson⁵ and George Hunsinger,⁶ the first more of a critic and the second more of a supporter of Barth's pneumatology. Despite their differences, Jenson and Hunsinger are among our best readers of Barth because each takes seriously the unity and difference between what Barth "shows" and "states". For example, both agree on the importance of Barth in recovering trinitarian doctrine and the importance of the doctrine of the Spirit within that doctrine. We can (I think) have Hunsinger grant what Jenson calls the "three modes of trinitarian reflection" in the *Church Dogmatics*: i) Barth's epochal achievement was to locate the doctrine of the Trinity as our way to "identify the God" of the biblical narratives; ii) this God is identified only in God's revelation—the immanent trinity freely enacted and known in the economic, the economic trinity grounded in and an enactment of the immanent; iii) that "throughout the [*Church Dogmatics*] Barth indeed uses the Church's and his insight into God's trinity" in rich ways.⁷ The first two points (to use my previous lexicon) are how Barth "states" his doctrine of the trinity, while the third point is how Barth "shows" it.

Further, once granting the distinction between what Barth shows and states, each side could grant some of the criticisms the other makes. For example, Hunsinger might grant Jenson's contention that "long stretches of Barth's thinking seem rather binitarian than trinitarian" (i.e., center on the relationship between Father and Son).⁸ On the other hand, Jenson could grant several of the points made by Hunsinger: that the volumes of the *Dogmatics* which would have dealt most fully with the Spirit were not written, that we need to play close attention to "the particular themes which accompany Barth's writing on the Holy Spirit from one context to the next", and even that we need to pay close attention in particular to seven themes Hunsinger isolates: the Holy Spirit is trinitarian in ground, Christ-centered in focus, receptive in status, communal in content, eschatological in form, diversified in application, and universal in scope. It seems to me that critics and supporters of Barth can grant each other these points, if and only if they agree to attend both to what Barth shows and to what he states about the Spirit.

B. The Catholic or Evangelical Spirit

Only now are we in a position to summarize the real oppositions between Jenson and Hunsinger. With regard to what Jenson calls Barth's "full technical doctrine of the Trinity" (i.e., Barth's second mode of trinitarian reflection above), Jenson proposes two different criticisms. He finds Barth *internally inconsistent*, for Barth at once asserts that we ought understand the three in God "from their . . . variously specific genetic relations to each other" and yet "in practice" substitutes "analogy" for "relation" and "modes of being" for "person".⁹ Later in the paper Jenson goes beyond

this internal criticism. Jenson finds that "Barth's explicit doctrine of the Trinity is, despite all new insight, thoroughly Western-traditional in its general contour." This Western form of teaching repeatedly "shows" ("treats", Jenson says) "the three as *parties* of divine action" and yet the Western teaching "offers little or no justification for this necessary practice."¹⁰ The decisive reason for this is that the Spirit is characterized "as the *vinculum amoris* between the Father and the Son"; the Spirit is a kind of betweenness, a kind of *relatio* that (or who) is not a "party".¹¹

Jenson suggests that he is not quite sure how the Spirit has this particular "otherness", i.e., how a third party can be the love between two.¹² How, he might ask, is the Spirit other than the Father and Son without being something other than Father and Son? In this regard, we can hear supporters of Barth like Hunsinger remain agnostic about the critique of Barth until Jenson shows how this is so.¹³

On the other side, most (but not, I think, all) of Hunsinger's essay re-enforces Jenson's point: the Holy Spirit is the fellowship of the Father and the Son, and the *filioque* is irreversible Church dogma. However, although the weight of Hunsinger's paper is to show that Barth treats the Spirit as *vinculum amoris* throughout the seven themes he covers, Barth (and Hunsinger) also sometimes speaks differently. "What is between them, what unites them," Hunsinger quotes Barth, "is no mere relation," no "neutral relation nor principle between the Father and the Son" (*C.D.* I/1, pp. 487, 473); and Hunsinger also speaks of the Spirit as "the eternal act of love and unity," "the act of their *mutual* self-impartment"—the agential language in seeming tension with Hunsinger's claim that the Spirit is "receptive not constitutive in status." In these cases, Barth and Hunsinger seem to presume what Jenson thinks is lacking in their account, i.e., the Spirit as "a self-giving agent of" (and therefore other than) the love of the Father and Son.

This, then, is one opposition from the debate between Jenson and Hunsinger: who is the pneumatological *hypostasis*? How can we ask or answer this question without making the Spirit something other than Father and Son?¹⁴ A "catholic" pneumatology" (let us stipulate) is one in which the Spirit is *other than* Father and Son, a Spirit who has her own particularity; an "evangelical" pneumatology is one in which the Spirit is not *something other than* Father and Son, a Spirit who teaches Christ alone.

Finally, with regard to what Jenson calls Barth's "uses" of the doctrine of the Trinity (i.e., Barth's third mode of trinitarian reflection mentioned above), I think we find a similar complexity in the relations between Barth's (supportive) critics and (critical) supporters as represented by Jenson and Hunsinger. Jenson finds an ironic consistency to Barth's axiom that the immanent and economic trinity are related yet distinct. The mistakes in Barth's pneumatology (e.g., the lack of distinctiveness of the identity of the Spirit) are re-iterated in Barth's theology of the work of the Spirit in election, creation, and ecclesiology.¹⁵ That is, Barth's doctrine *about* the Spirit is re-enforced by a *use* of that

doctrine as the theological background for a) a doctrine of election in which the future eschaton has no genuine significance, b) an anthropology more two-sided (interpersonal, I-Thou, male-female) than three-sided (social, triadic), c) a christological rather than a pneumatological description of God's identity *pro nobis*, d) and especially—and here we see the importance of the topic “The Holy Spirit and the Church”—a Christian community more body of Christ than temple of the Holy Spirit. The climax of Jenson's critique is the question: “May Karl Barth's impulsion to practiced binitarianism be in fact the last resistance of his Protestantism?”¹⁶

Hunsinger agrees with Barth's consistency but argues that this leads to a rich doctrine of the Spirit: by considering the diverse contexts in which Barth discusses the Holy Spirit, we discover a use of the doctrine of the Spirit which corresponds to who Barth thinks the Spirit is *in se* and *ad extra*. That is, we can learn how to go on in Barth's direction by studying *pneuma spermatikon* scattered throughout the *Dogmatics*. If we study Barth's pneumatology as it is scattered throughout the *Dogmatics*, Hunsinger argues, we discover the several recurring themes mentioned above: Barth's pneumatology is trinitarian not anthropological in ground, Christ-centered not Spirit-centered in focus, receptive not constitutive in status with respect to what takes place *in nobis*, communal not mystical or individualistic in content, eschatological not triumphalist in form, diversified not monotonous in application, and universal not ecclesiastical in scope. It is hard not to notice how many of Hunsinger's themes are specifically “Evangelical” not only in what they affirm but also in what they deny. This is the case especially for the claims that while the work of the Spirit is “communal not mystical”, the community's identity is characterized as “receptive not constitutive”. Here we have an apparent opposition between an ecclesiology in which the Church's identity is “receptive not constitutive” and one in which the Church is “an active *mediatrix* of faith.”¹⁷ Hunsinger's appeal (we might say) is for an Evangelical as well as Catholic (and sometimes seemingly rather than Catholic) pneumatology. If Jenson's *prima facie* problem is how he is going to have pneumatological agency *other than* the Father and Son which is not *something other than* the Father and the Son, Hunsinger's problem is how to have a Spirit of the Father and the Son whose agency is responsible for the Church as the particular representative of all humanity without evacuating that Church of its own agency.

C. Lessons from the Debate

Here we have a good example of a debate over Barth's theology which takes seriously the unity and difference between what Barth's theology 1) states and 2) shows. Jenson, attending carefully to what Barth “states” against the background of what he “shows”, concludes that mistakes in pneumatology are at the center of mistakes in a purely Evangelical theology. Hunsinger,

attending to what Barth's theology "shows" against the background of what it periodically "states" about the Spirit, concludes that Barth "shows" us how to go forward in appropriately Evangelical fashion, even when he has not "stated" how we can do this.

In still other words, critics like Jenson and supporters like Hunsinger (A) agree on common confession of the Holy Spirit in a renewed doctrine of the triune God but (B) disagree on (i) the identity of the person of the Spirit (i.e., how is the Spirit *other than* Father and Son without being *something other than* Father and Son?) as well as (ii) the identity of the work of the Spirit (i.e., can the work of the Spirit be intimate *spiritus creator* of the world in the Church while also being *other than* them?). The issue has to do with how theology can render the particular otherness of the Spirit as the reason for God's intimate relationship to the Church—and do this while maintaining Barth's axiom that "God's Word [and, we might now say, Spirit] is God Himself in His revelation" (C.D. I/1, p. 295). And this issue, I have suggested, is part of that complex debate between Catholic and Evangelical theology over the identity and mission of the Church.¹⁸

My strategy for pursuing this debate will be twofold. First, I will soften the debate, implying that there is more friction between what Barth shows and states than readers like Jenson and especially Hunsinger seem to think. I will return us to some specific texts in Barth on the Spirit and Church, arguing that these specific texts suggest a way of holding together the Spirit and the Church which Catholic *and* Evangelical theologies have torn asunder. Second, I will firm up the debate on different terms, arguing that the crucial pneumatological-ecclesiological issue is what it means to be a critic of the Church, if one is empowered by the specific *kenosis* of the Spirit.

II. *The Spirit and the Church in the Dogmatics*

The best way to catch in flight the unity-in-difference between what Barth "states" and what Barth "shows" on the Spirit and the Church would be by studying the unity-in-difference between what Barth calls his explication of (*explicatio*), reflection upon (*meditatio*), and application of (*applicatio*) the Biblical text in the context of Barth's reading of the Reformed tradition as "distinctively a theology of the third article, a theology of the Holy Spirit."¹⁹ But here I aim to do something more modest, i.e., to lay on the table some particular texts in which Barth proposes a kind of mutuality of Catholic and Evangelical theology rather than ignores or eliminates Catholic ecclesiology.

A. What Barth states: from the grammar to the ontology of the Church as Event

One of the marks of Barth's explicit treatment of the Holy Spirit and the Church in the fourth volume of the *Church Dogmatics* is that Barth does not set

up the *questio* as a question about the relationship between the Holy Spirit and the Church, *simpliciter* or "neat". Instead, Barth casts the question as one about the relationship between the Holy Spirit and the *gathering* (C.D. IV/1), *upbuilding* (C.D. IV/2), and *sending* (C.D. IV/3) of the Christian community. If we think of ecclesiology as analogous to the grammar of the Church's discourse about itself, then we might say that the central part of ecclesiological speech for Barth is verbs or verbal nouns (participles) like gathering, upbuilding, sending rather than nouns like "Church" or even "Christian community". The "and" in "the Holy Spirit and the Church" is not an innocent connective but the abstract place-taker of a set of activities.

However, on most readings, we move quickly from this insight—an insight which, it seems to me, is not nowadays exclusively or primarily Eastern or Western, Catholic or Evangelical—to an impasse. The Church, Barth says, "is a description of an *event* (*Geschehens*); the Christian *communio* "is not the being of a state or institution, but the being of an event (*Ereignisses*), in which the assembled and self-assembling community is actively at work" (C.D. IV/1, pp. 651–652 = K.D. IV/1, s. 728). Here Barth moves from making grammatical observations to (what we might call) ontological *meditatio* on "the Being of the Community" (C.D. IV/1, #62.2). But, as the Catholic counter-argument has been for some time, this seems to make the work of the Spirit (including the Church) occasion-specific (*ad hoc*) rather than occasion-comprehensive (catholic). In other words, as Catholics have long argued, we must say that the Church has the being of an institution as well as an event.²⁰ The Spirit, we might say, using perhaps Barth's favorite pneumatological passage (John 3:8), "blows where it wills" in the Church; but the Catholic wonders how we can ever "hear the sound of it" if it has (is?) the being of an event.

So much for what Barth "states" about the Church at one point. One does not have to be imaginative to see how this reading of Barth and his Catholic critics plays into the hands of critics (like Jenson) of Western trinitarianism and ecclesiology, Protestant, Anglo- or Roman Catholic. The Spirit, the counter-argument might go, needs more particularity in order to constitute the being of the Church as a more complex *communio* of goods than either "event" or "institution" permits us to say. This is not to say that Barth is subject to those Eastern critiques of Western trinitarianism which charge the West with institutionalism (Roman Catholicism) or individualism (Protestantism). Indeed, Barth is not subject to this critique, for Barth's Spirit is "event" in the life of the individual as well as the community. Ironically, the Catholic charge against Barth at this point is less analogous to the Eastern charge against the West than to the Catholic charge against the East. To use Walter Kasper's convenient formulation, "[t]he eastern view can lead to making the Spirit independent of the Son, to a mysticism which is not indeed hostile to the world and anti-institutional, but which often enough *is* indifferent to the Church as an institution and to the world."²¹ But even this will not do as

a critique of Barth, for Barth clearly refuses to make "the Spirit independent of the Son". Clearing the (mine) fields and alleys and thoroughfares that lead between the Spirit and the Church will be no simple matter.

B. What Barth shows: From Event to History

However, without denying that we must take seriously what Barth states here, let us recall what Barth "shows" in the location of his remarks about the Holy Spirit and the gathering, upbuilding, and sending of the Christian community. We need to look backwards and forwards. The sections prior to the sections on the Church and the Christian life are, it will be recalled, about the "transition" from Jesus Christ's person and work and history to our "human situation"—and this situation itself turns out to be a history from our pride to our justification (C.D. IV/1, #60–#61), from our sloth to our sanctification (C.D. IV/2, #65–#66), from our falsehood to our vocation (C.D. IV/3, #70–#71). The "our" here is all humanity (including the Church!). The transition from Jesus Christ's *extra nos* and *pro nobis* to Christ's *in nobis* is Christ's "transition" in relation to our "transition", Christ's history in relationship to our history, the story of Jesus in relationship to the story of human beings who are creatures, sinners, and on the way to salvation.

Here is one of those points at which Barth later said it might have been "possible and necessary" to deal with the issues of justification and sanctification and vocation "under the sign of the Holy Spirit."²² Why, then, did not Barth do so? The central answer, I believe, is hidden in Barth's *explicatio*, his exegesis—in the following way. The New Testament, Barth says, "does not describe the Holy Spirit as consistently as we might at first sight expect as the Spirit of Jesus Christ" (C.D. IV/2, p. 333). When Barth noted this in the first volume of the *Dogmatics*, he went so far as to say that "passages like Jn. 15:26, which speak of the procession of the Spirit from the Father" and "the many others which equally plainly call Him the Spirit of the Son" are "mutually complementary" (C.D. I/1, p. 480), even as he goes on to argue for the dogmatic necessity of the *filioque*.

In any case, when he returns to the explicative issue later in the *Dogmatics*, Barth argues that the "more narrowly christological description and derivation occur rather more frequently and with greater emphasis. It is obvious, therefore, that they constitute the basic scheme . . ." (C.D. IV/2, p. 333).

Obvious? What, so a counter-argument goes, about the story of the Spirit in creation, speaking through the prophets, the One of whom Jesus was conceived and who descended upon (Mk 1:10) and abided with (John 1:32) Jesus and who raised Jesus from the dead (Romans 4:1)? Of this story Barth most frequently offers the traditional Western response that the Son owes to the Spirit "His being as human being" (C.D. I/1, p. 486; III/2, pp. 332–333; IV/1, pp. 148, 308; IV/2, p. 43).

But (the counter-argument continues) what about those passages which seem to say that it is not merely the *human* existence of Jesus which is the work of the Spirit but those passages which characterize "His whole being as *pneuma*"? (C.D. IV/1, p. 309).²³ Barth takes up this issue in connection with the conditions for a "genuine beyond" of the crucifixion of Jesus (C.D. IV/1, p. 297). Among these conditions, Barth says, there must be an "irrevocable act of the same God who judged man in Jesus Christ" but "a new act of God which is clearly marked off from the first [act of judgment]" (C.D. IV/1, p. 297). "If we were to try to speak of a necessity of His resurrection," Barth says, "then it is along these lines [i.e., Christ's 'whole being as *pneuma*'] that we could and would have to do so. . . . But it is better not to follow this track, remembering Jn. 3:8: 'The Spirit bloweth where it listeth' . . . and also 2 Cor 3:17: 'Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty' . . ." (C.D. IV/1, p. 309). The implication seems to be that a reading of Scripture which gives priority to Jesus Christ's "whole being as *pneuma*" will emphasize the "necessity" of the resurrection (e.g., that the resurrection is a new act of the *same* God who judged us in Jesus Christ) over the "freedom" involved (e.g., that the resurrection is a *new* act of the same God).

What is at stake in this claim that we give priority to the *freedom* over the *necessity* of the resurrection? At least this: The resurrection is a distinctively new episode in the story of Jesus. Barth could certainly agree that leaving out the story of Jesus' resurrection "would mean doing irreparable violence to the literary unity and integrity" of the story.²⁴ Looking *backwards* on the story (we might say) we can see that the resurrection is a fit and (to that extent) "necessary" ending. However, looking *forward* from within the story, it is essential to the story that the resurrection comes on the other side of the genuine death of Jesus. What is needed after the resurrection is "a *new* act of the same God"—an unsurpassable novelty. This novelty will not even be surpassed in the Pentecost which establishes the acts of the apostles. The relationship between Easter and Pentecost, as Barth insists in a different context, is "irreversible" (C.D. IV/2, p. 131).²⁵

My point is this. If we locate Barth's ontological *meditatio* on the Church as event against the background of his *explicatio* of the narrative of Jesus Christ, we learn that the Church is event of the Spirit only in the context of the "transition" from Jesus Christ's death to resurrection. The reason why his treatment of the transition from pride and sloth and falsehood to justification and sanctification and vocation is not written under the sign of the Spirit is context-specific: God's being-in-act in the resurrection of Jesus is *the* novelty which includes or encloses any other. In other words, Barth's grammatical and ontological claims about the Church as "event" must be read against the background of his *narratio* of Jesus Christ as the judge judged for us and raised by the verdict of the Father. The being (as an event) which the Church is, is the being of Jesus Christ as his history in "transition" from resurrection to coming again. In still other words, the Church is "an event" which has its intelligibility and practicability in a larger narrative.

C. From History to the Spirit Sent and Sending

If we look not only at what precedes but also at what follows from Barth's discussion of the Church as event, we have a potential way of relating Spirit and Church that is neither exclusively Catholic nor exclusively Evangelical. Consider how this is described in one paragraph: the Holy Spirit and the Sending of the Christian Community (C.D. IV/3, 2, #72). The community is sent in the face of the fact that it is a people of God in world-occurrence who see the *providentia Dei et hominum confusione* in Jesus Christ, who understand their freedom and dependence in this situation, and who exist thus totally on the basis of the "two exalted names" of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit (IV/3,2, 72.1 [The People of God in World Occurrence]).

Why these "two exalted names" as the "basis and secret" of the congregation's existence in world-occurrence? Why is "each necessary to elucidate the other"? (C.D. IV/3,2, p. 752) First, christologically, "the Christian community exists as called into existence and maintained in existence by Jesus Christ" (C.D. IV/3,2, p. 752). This means, to put the point again grammatically, that the community has its being as a "predicate" of Jesus Christ's being, the Jesus Christ who is "the true and primary acting Subject" (C.D. IV/3,2, pp. 756–57). However, Barth says, this "christologico-ecclesiological statement is to be understood as an elucidation of the second more familiar pneumatologico-ecclesiological statement"—as the second is "an explanation of" the first. The claim that the Holy Spirit calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies all Christians "tells us that the relationship of the being of Jesus Christ to that of His community is not static nor immobile but mobile and dynamic, and therefore historical" (C.D. IV/3,2, pp. 758–759). The Holy Spirit, we might say, is the prophetic power which enables us to "go on with" the story, to move from the Torah to the Prophets, from the Gospels to the acts of the apostles and their successors. In Barth's terms, the Holy Spirit is the power and action "of the coordination of the being of Jesus Christ and that of His community as distinct from and yet enclosed within it" (C.D. IV/3,2, p. 760). (*Enclosed within!*)²⁶ Here there is a kind of mutuality between a "christologico-ecclesiological statement" and a "pneumatologico-ecclesiological statement", the one an Evangelical axiom of the *otherness* of Christ and the Church and the other a Catholic axiom of the *intimacy* of the two.

I do not wish to overplay such texts. In fact, although Robert Jenson is not entirely right about these pages,²⁷ we can see the impact of what Jenson calls Barth's "Western trinitarianism" not primarily in Barth's descriptions of the "two exalted names" but when Barth *relates the two* by saying that "as the Spirit of the Father and the Son (*qui ex Patre Filioque procedit*), is the bond of peace between the two, so in the historical work of reconciliation He is the One who constitutes and guarantees the unity of the *totus Christus*" (C.D. IV/3,2, p. 760). I do not think this claim is wrong. However, it does risk making the Spirit the agent of unity rather than *also* the agent of the Church's "mobility

and dynamism, and therefore history." In other words, *here* what Barth states about the Trinity puts a premium on what the Church *is* at the expense of what the Church is pneumatologically called to *become*—and this despite the fact that the *point* of this section of the *Dogmatics* is to show the Church as mobile and dynamic, and therefore historical. The mistake, needless to say, is not a peculiarly Protestant (or, we now see, Catholic) one.²⁸

I previously argued that the Jenson-Hunsinger debate could stand surety for the debate over how broad and deep a Catholic strand there is to Barth's Evangelical theology. Jenson and Hunsinger imply that this strand is neither broad nor deep, although they assess this result differently. My argument now is that there is a deep Catholic movement in Barth's theology, often revealed more by what Barth "shows" than what he "states". What Barth "shows" with regard to the Spirit and the Church is quite simply that the Spirit is in the Church for the world only insofar as the Church is in history, a people of God in world-occurrence whose hope is the new coming again of the same One who has come before. And I find this narrative *explicatio* of the Church to be an ecclesiology envisaged by neither Catholic nor Evangelical reformers, neither exclusively by Catholic nor Evangelical theologies today.

I realize that both advocates and critics of Barth's ways of relating Spirit and Church could agree or disagree with what I have contended in this section without substantively changing their positions. Jenson and Hunsinger could grant that there are many felicitous fault-lines in Barth's *meditatio* on the Spirit and the Church which can produce major and minor earthquakes in all attempts to provide a final, true reading of Barth. However, rather than pretend to marshal the massive textual evidence it would take to generalize the case I have made on the basis of a few sections of the *Dogmatics*, I will now shift gears and suggest another range of problems with Barth on the Spirit and the Church—a range of problems we can still call Catholic-Evangelical but which are quite distinct from the problems raised by Jenson or Hunsinger.

III. The Spirit Who Gives Life to the Dead (Romans 8:11)

Can we move beyond an uneasy irenicism on this issue? I hope so, in the following way. Let me put how Barth relates Spirit and Church in my own terms. The power of the Holy Spirit, we might say, is to universalize the particularity of Jesus Christ in Christ's body, the earthly-historical form of Christ's existence—and to particularize the universality of Jesus Christ in a community of differences ("different gifts but the same Spirit" [I Cor 12:4]) as the provisional representative of all humanity before God and neighbor.²⁹ It is some such reading of the *Dogmatics* that explains what we might call Barth's efforts to include a "Catholic" moment in his larger "Evangelical" theology of Spirit and Church. If this is so, we might say that the choice is between those who mutually relate the Church's catholic and the Church's evangelical moment and those who subordinate her evangelical to her catholic moment

(or vice versa). But, if so, we are at a softer (and therefore possibly less helpful) impasse between Evangelical and Catholic theologies. How can the argument proceed further? Is there a way to say more? Let's turn to a characterization of the person and work of the Spirit that might move us beyond this impasse.

A. The Spirit of Consolation and Criticism

Instead of focusing on what Barth explicitly says about the Spirit and the Church (as I did in the preceding section), let us look to what Barth says about the Spirit and test its implications for the Church. One recurring sub-thesis of Barth's pneumatology is a theology of the Spirit as the one who combines "admonition and comfort" (*C.D.* I/1, p. 454). For example, in considering what it means for human beings to live in time, Barth says that a first error is "a failure to recognize the consolation of the Spirit in whose work the community may find full satisfaction at every moment in its time of waiting" (*C.D.* III/2, p. 509). A second error fails to recognize "the criticism of the Holy Spirit, whose work keeps the community moving toward its Lord in dissatisfaction with its present condition, preventing it from regarding its condition as absolute" (*C.D.* III/2, p. 510). "The Church of Rome," Barth wrote in 1948, "is the typical form of this deeschatological Christianity. But there are also Protestant, Anglican, and other versions" (*C.D.* III/2, p. 511). Or, as Barth put this point still elsewhere in the *Dogmatics*, the Holy Spirit is the direction (*Weisung*) of the Son not only in the indication (*Einweisung*) and instruction (*Unterweisung*) the Spirit gives but also in the warning or correction (*Zurechtsweisung*) the Spirit provides (*C.D.* IV/2, pp. 362–373). The Spirit not only comforts but warns, not only consoles but criticizes, not only instructs but also corrects.

However, despite Barth's claim that Rome typified deeschatological Christianity, it would be wrong to identify his distinction between the Spirit's consolation and criticism with a simple distinction between (say) Catholic substance and Protestant principle. Throughout the *Dogmatics*, the origin and goal of the Spirit's critical activity is comfort and consolation. The Spirit's criticism of the Church is genuine and radical, but it has its origin and goal in the Father's eternal intent on our salvation in Christ.

What I find unclear in Barth is *how* this is the case (i.e., how is the Spirit's *critical* activity also a *comfort*)? How can the Spirit help the Church "find full satisfaction at every moment" and yet also critically move the Church "in dissatisfaction with its present condition?" That is, let us grant what in other contexts would have to be argued: that the Spirit both comforts and corrects the Church in a teleology that moves from and toward the Father's eternal intent on our salvation in Christ. *How* does the Spirit sustain this movement, without downplaying comfort or correction, or suspending the Church in a dialectic between the two? An "event"? Surely. But of what sort? Gathering, and upbuilding, and sending? Surely. But how are these consolation and criticism?

B. The Spirit of the Crucified One

I suggested earlier that the "power" of the Spirit is to universalize the particularity of Jesus Christ in Christ's body—or, as we might also say, to particularize the universality of Jesus Christ in a community of differences ("different gifts but the same Spirit" [I Cor 12:4]) as the provisional representative of all humanity before God and neighbor. But this, we now need to say, is not the only work of the Spirit *pro nobis*, *in nobis*, and *pro me*. If the Spirit bears witness to Jesus Christ (e.g., John 15:26), we need a way to speak not only of the power of the Spirit to be particular and universal but also of the powerlessness of the Spirit. How so?

John Paul II's 1986 encyclical on the Holy Spirit, "Dominum et Vivificantem", speaks suggestively to this point. John Paul proposes an exegesis of the Johannine description of the Spirit as "the Spirit who convinces the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment" (John 16:8).³⁰ The Spirit, says the bishop of Rome, shows "sin against the background of Christ's cross" so that convincing about sin and righteousness "has as its purpose the salvation of the world. . . ."³¹ On what ground does the Holy Spirit do this?

Part of John Paul II's answer is a reading of Hebrews 9:13: "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" On one reading, "in the sacrifice of the Son of Man the Holy Spirit is present and active just as he acted in Jesus' conception, in his coming into the world, in his hidden life and in his public ministry."³² Expanded to the covenant with Israel, just as the fire from heaven burns the sacrifices of Leviticus, so the Holy Spirit "directs towards the Father the sacrifice of the Son, bringing it into the divine reality of Trinitarian communion." The Spirit "consumes this sacrifice with the fire of the love which unites the Son with the Father in the Trinitarian communion."³³

This is why—and here I leap from a late modern Catholic bishop of Rome to Blaise Pascal, an early modern lay Catholic—the Holy Spirit "reposes invisibly in the relics of those who have died in the grace of God, until they shall appear visibly in the resurrection. . . . For God never abandons his own, even in the sepulchre in which their bodies, though dead to the eyes of men, are more than ever living in the sight of God, since sin is no more in them. . . ." (cf. Ez 37:1–14; Romans 8:11).³⁴ The Spirit does not offer a critique of the Church different than Jesus Christ's. The Spirit, says John's Jesus, "takes from what is mine" (John 16:14). The Holy Spirit must be consoler and critic, but critic by showing the Church in the light of the cross of Christ, not primarily over and against that Christ (or over and against Christ crucified on our behalf).³⁵

I do not find Barth denying these moves. But it is striking that I do not find this burning (purgatorial, one might say) work of the Spirit in some of the places in the *Dogmatics* one might expect (for example, in Barth's treatment of

“The Determination of the Rejected”).³⁶ What I am suggesting is that the central issue for relating Spirit and Church ought be not only the *otherness* and intimacy of Spirit and Church—the otherness of Spirit from Father and Son (as Jenson rightly insists) or the otherness of Spirit from Church (as Hunsinger rightly insists). This is clearly an important issue. However, the central issue is how the Spirit is consoler and critic of a sinful Church of sinners.

C. The Field of Fire

I now aim to “show” rather than “state” this point by returning to the beginning of this paper. Flannery O’Connor’s short story “Revelation” is, I think, a delightful parable of the critically consoling fire of God. The central character is Ruby Turpin—a “very large” woman, with a self-deprecating sense of humor, “a respectable, hard-working, Church-going woman.”³⁷ She finds herself in a doctor’s very small waiting room, where gospel music plays in the background and she waits with her husband, Claud, who has come to receive medical treatment for an ailment. There are a number of patients waiting in the small room, and Ruby Turpin spends some time engaging in her frequent daydream of “naming the classes of people. On the bottom of the heap were most colored people, not the kind she would have been if she had been one, but most of them; then next to them—not above, just away from—were the white-trash; then above them were the home-owners, and above them the home-and-land owners, to which she and Claud belonged” (p. 195). Amidst a number of patients in the room is a certain Mary Grace, “a fat girl of eighteen or nineteen, scowling into a thick blue book which Mrs. Turpin saw was entitled *Human Development*. The girl raised her head and directed her scowl at Mrs. Turpin as if she did not like her looks” (pp. 193–94).

The conversation takes a number of turns, including periodic talk about the hogs which so many people in Ruby’s area of the country raise (p. 198). But gradually and inexplicably Mary Grace’s enmity toward Ruby Turpin and Ruby’s preoccupation with the stares of this ugly, fat teenager increase. At one point, the girl’s mother characterizes her daughter: “I think the worst thing in the world,” she said, “is an ungrateful person. To have everything and not appreciate it. I know a girl,” she said, “who has parents who would give her anything, a little brother who loves her dearly, who is getting a good education, who wears the best clothes, but who can never say a kind word to anyone, who never smiles, who just criticizes and complains all day long”. Ruby clearly thinks she is not like this: she knows how to smile and is grateful for what she’s got. ““Thank you, Jesus, for making everything the way it is”,’ she exclaims in a moment of evangelical enthusiasm (p. 205).

Precisely then it happens: Mary Grace throws the book (on *Human Development*, it will be recalled!), striking and dazing Ruby Turpin. Ruby and Mary Grace stare each other in the eyes. ““What you got to say to me?” [Ruby] asked hoarsely and held her breath, waiting, as for a revelation. The girl raised

her head. Her gaze locked with Mrs. Turpin's. "Go back to hell where you came from, you old wart hog," she whispered.' (p. 207) The words strike Ruby with the force of divine judgment, and Mary Grace is taken off in an ambulance, destined (the other patients think) to be a lunatic.

Thus far we have, as Ralph Wood has suggested, one kind of comedy of redemption: the comedy of satire.³⁸ Ruby's false consolations are brought under divine judgment. The hypocracies of Church-going, radio-listening Christians are subjected to radical criticism. Here we have a kind of evangelical critique of the Church catholic, empowered by the Spirit of judgment.

And yet the story does not end here. It is only when Ruby returns home that the full force of what had happened struck her. "She had been singled out for the message, though there was trash in the room to whom it might justly have been applied" (p. 210). Ruby goes to her farm's pig pen to hose down the pigs as a way to take her anger out on them.

And then, suddenly, her story turns into a prayer. "What do you send me a message like that for?" she said in a low fierce voice, barely above a whisper but with the force of a shout in its concentrated fury. "How am I a hog and me both? How am I saved and from hell too?" (p. 215). The argument with God about the preferences given white-trash over hard-working, Church-going people goes on until a 'final surge of fury shock her and she roared, "Who do you think you are?"' (p. 216).

As she is speechless for the first time in the story (perhaps in her life), the "question carried over the pasture and across the highway and the cotton field and returned to her clearly like an answer from beyond the wood" (pp. 216–217). She bends down slowly and looks down into the pig parlour, where the old sow is feeding the piglets. And in this image of grace as the nourishment of others, she has the vision with which I began this essay. The vision, of course, is critical: white-trash are "clean for the first time"; "black niggers" are in "white robes"; "freaks and lunatics" like Mary Grace are shouting and clapping; people like Ruby and Claud are at the end, not the beginning. The criticism is a reversal of Ruby's image of the Church as hard-working, respectable people. But it is not a reversal from without. Ruby leans "forward to observe them [the people like herself] closer. They were marching behind the others with great dignity, accountable as they had always been for good order and common sense and respectable behavior. They alone were on key. Yet she could see by their shocked and altered faces that even their virtues were being burned away" (p. 218).

Lest we think that O'Connor has too "realized" an eschatology, seeing the shape of things to come too clearly, we ought to note the conclusion. Ruby makes "her slow way on the darkening path to the house." In the darkness, Ruby is no longer sustained by an enlightening and blinding *vision* but by sounds, what she *hears*: "In the woods around her the invisible cricket choruses had struck up, but what she heard were the voices of the souls climbing upward into the starry field and shouting hallelujah" (p. 218). It is

not what she sees but what she hears, as the wind blows where it wills and we hear the sound of it without knowing its origin or goal. The field of living fire is not the post-modern burning bush, *sans* intelligible speech.³⁹ But it has the intelligibility of One crucified. We live by faith and not by sight.

Such, I suggest, is what Barth might call a "secular parable" of the relationship between the Holy Spirit and the Church. The grammar of the story judges us all. Here, as Ralph Wood puts it, "divine wrath is couched wholly within the terms of divine mercy. It is a mercy that is like a refiner's fire—cleansing rather than consuming."⁴⁰ Mary Grace's radical condemnation of Ruby Turpin has been transformed. The transformation is not from condemnation to cheap consolation. But neither is the change from condemnation to the dialectical interplay of consolation and criticism, a satisfaction with being people and pigs at the same time (which, of course, would satisfy neither people nor pigs). The transformation is of the sort in which condemnation becomes purifying, cleansing, life giving, embodying anger but mostly joy (and its earthly parable, humor). The Spirit is not only "giver of life" as *Spiritus creator* but also maker of life out of death, *Spiritus sanctus*.

The message of the Spirit's criticism of the Church is, I hope, at once consoling and alarming. Consoling because it means that true and good theological criticisms of the failure of our worship and sacraments, our offices and ministries, our institutions and communities are not primarily common folk's gripes or the product of elaborate critical theory, important as these are; theological criticism of the Church is the criticism of the Spirit, in anger and humor, usually (as Barth came to say) "indirect" (*C.D.* IV/3,2, p. 881). But I also hope it strikes us as "alarming" because it leaves Christians who have been hurt, condemned by the Church—I think of women in Churches excluded from ordination but also more profound evils, like men whose later lives are devastated because they were molested by priests as youths—in the seemingly impossible situation of having nowhere else to turn. God is prevenient to the Church in matters of dissent as in other matters—but prevenient in God's own way.⁴¹

D. A Qualification

I need to make it clear that, despite my references to O'Connor and Pascal and John Paul II, I am also not claiming that (Roman) Catholic theology has successfully developed this strand of the relationship between the Spirit and the Church. For example, I think a case could be made that the tensions between Pascal's *Provincial Letters* and his *Pensees* are partly caused by inadequately relating the work of the Spirit and the hidden God of the cross. John Paul's profound exegesis applies to the work of the Spirit in the world, and one is left wondering whether it might apply at all to the Church. O'Connor's story is not a secular parable for all purposes. She did not always write with this hope. And, even when she did, her characters sometimes seem to display less of a hope for the Church than for individuals.

My point is that unpacking the relations between Word and Spirit is not only telling the story of the giver and gift of Christian *communio* (Church) but also the story of the gift of prophetic critique the giver gives. The central issues, then, are not only the relationship between the Word and Spirit in general, but the relationship between the Word as *not* known by the world (i.e., crucified) and the person and work of the Spirit in the face of ignorance, torture, and death. The Spirit not only universalizes the particularity of Jesus Christ in the Church for the world but also empowers the powerless, showing us and teaching us to be a field of living fire that criticizes and consoles itself from and with and toward the risen Christ.

IV. Conclusion

In sum (and to add a final point), arguments over the adequacy of the ways Barth relates Spirit and Church are representative (I have argued) of arguments over how broad and deep a Catholic strand there is to Barth's Evangelical theology. However, when we place what Barth's *meditatio* on the Church "states" against the background of what his *explicatio* "shows", Barth can be said to have a way of relating Spirit and Church in which the Spirit transcends the Church and is poured out in the Church as this Church is the people of God in world-occurrence for the world. In what Barth shows about the Church at this level of generality (if not always in what Barth states), Barth's ecclesiology aims to be Catholic as well as Evangelical. On the other hand, when we place what Barth's *meditatio* on the Spirit "states" about consolation and criticism against the background of his ecclesiology, we do not find that Barth has "shown" much about the issue of how the Spirit is consoler and critic of the Church. Here what Barth "states" about the work of the Spirit on the Church is more catholically evangelical or evangelically catholic than what he "shows".

My argument has been that we relate the Holy Spirit and the Church by taking the latter as the field of the living fire of the former. The image "field of living fire" condenses a narrative intimated in Ruby Turpin's vision, confessed and taught in the creeds, fully extended in the biblical stories of the prophets and apostles, performed daily by faithful men and women. But at the center is the Spirit gathering and upbuilding and sending the Church as the provisional representative of all humanity, the truly reformed and reforming community because of its confession of the Spirit who raises Christ from the dead.

I should also say that, once we have placed the Spirit as consoler and critic in this relationship to the Church *as a whole*, the discussion of the Holy Spirit and the Church must then return to the *particular goods and practices* that constitute the life of the Christian community in world-history: baptism and eucharist, ordination and marriage, God's inspiration and our use of Scripture, the relationship between gifts and virtues, practices of remission of

sin, the diverse and conflicting histories that constitute our movement from near to distant neighbors. This suggestion presumes, of course that the Church is both a whole (a consoled and criticized gathering, an upbuilding, a sending) and parts (more particular practices and activities). And it presumes that the Spirit works not simply on and in the Church as a whole—and not simply on individuals in that Church—but also on the particular activities that constitute the Christian community, from our liturgy to our service to the world. Still further, among these particular practices there would be some more crucial than others for testing the image of the Church as “the field of living fire”. Most specifically, we would need to test the relationship between confessing the Spirit in relation not only to the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church but also in relation to what the creeds call the *communio sanctorum* and the remission of sins. It is in our sacramental and other practices of forgiveness that we will find embedded our theology of criticism and consolation. But it is in our theology of the Spirit and the Church that we have the context for criticizing those practices when they go awry.⁴²

NOTES

- 1 Flannery O'Connor, “Revelation”, *Everything that Rises Must Converge* (New York Farrar, Straus and Giroux, The Noonday Press, 1956), pp 217–218
- 2 *K D* = Karl Barth, *Die Kirchlliche Dogmatik* (Christian Kaiser Verlag, 1932–1968), *C D* = Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, eds G W Bromley and T F Torrance & trans G W Bromley, T F Torrance, et al (Edinburgh T & T Clark, 1936–1975), four volumes with various parts referred to here by volume/part, then (if needed) paragraph number (#), and finally page I refer to the revised translation of *C D* I/1 (1975)
- 3 Hans Frei, *Types of Christian Theology*, eds George Hunsinger and William C Placher (New Haven and London Yale University Press, 1992), p 159 I aim to use Frei’s distinction without importing (or smuggling in) many general claims about the relationship between showing and saying
- 4 See G S Hendry, *The Holy Spirit in Christian Theology*, Revised and Enlarged Edition (Philadelphia The Westminster Press, 1965), pp 42–52, 108–115, Jurgen Moltmann, *Theology of Hope On the Ground and the Implications of a Christian Eschatology*, trans James W Leitch (New York and Evanston Harper & Row, 1967), pp 50–58 The main reason I do not focus on this first criticism is that even those persuaded by criticisms of God as Absolute Subject could argue that Barth increasingly came to complement (if not replace) this notion with descriptions of God’s trinitarian agency, but for one account of why theology might need *both* descriptions of the “self-manifestation” of the subject *and* descriptions of “intention-action” patterns of a true agent, see Hans Frei, *The Identity of Jesus Christ The Hermeneutical Bases of Dogmatic Theology* (Philadelphia Fortress Press, 1975)
- 5 I will use here the form the criticism takes in “You Wonder Where the Spirit Went”, *Pro Ecclesia A Journal of Catholic and Evangelical Theology* II/3 (Summer, 1993), pp 296–304 (a paper presented at a meeting of the Karl Barth Society in Kansas City in November 1991) However, the strands of the criticism are also in Jenson’s other publications, from *God after God The God of the Past and the God of the Future*, *Seen in the Work of Karl Barth* (Indianapolis and New York Bobbs-Merrill, 1969) to his most recent critique of Western (Catholic and Protestant) trinitarianism in *Unbaptized God The Basic Flaw in Ecumenical Theology* (Philadelphia Fortress Press, 1992) At the risk of down playing the differences between Jenson and other critics of Barth on these issues, I shall consider Jenson’s criticisms “typical” because I have never read the criticisms put with attention to what Barth both “shows” and

- “states” in such thorough, clear, and succinct form as in his essay ‘Who proceedeth from the Father and the Son’ the Problem of the Filioque’, *Scottish Journal of Theology* 24 (1971), pp 149–166, *The Holy Spirit* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1982), pp 162–170, R D Williams, ‘Barth on the Truene God’ in *Karl Barth Studies of his Theological Method*, ed Stephen Sykes (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), pp 147–193. On the Roman Catholic side, see Philip J Rosato, S J *The Spirit as Lord: The Pneumatology of Karl Barth* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1981) and Thomas Freyer, *Pneumatologie als Strukturprinzip der Dogmatik Ueberlegungen im Anschluss an die Lehre von der ‘Geisttaufe’ bei Karl Barth*, Paderborner Theologische Studien, hrsg Remigius Baeumer, Josef Ernst, Heribert Muehlen, Band 12 (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schoeningh, 1982)
- 6 George Hunsinger, ‘The Lord and Giver of Life: Karl Barth’s Doctrine of the Holy Spirit’, *Scottish Journal of Theology*, forthcoming (quoted from a paper originally presented at a meeting of the Karl Barth Society in Kansas City in November 1991). For other summaries of Barth’s pneumatology, see the sources in the previous note, Hunsinger’s reading is particularly rich because it is done against the background of a wide-ranging strategy for reading Barth summarized in *How to Read Karl Barth: The Shape of His Theology* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991)
 - 7 ‘You Wonder Where the Spirit Went’, pp 296–297
 - 8 ‘You Wonder Where the Spirit Went’, p 296
 - 9 ‘You Wonder Where the Spirit Went’, p 297
 - 10 ‘You Wonder Where the Spirit Went’, pp 298–299
 - 11 ‘You Wonder Where the Spirit Went’, p 300. Jenson elsewhere says that the *filioque* is “the clearest symptom” of a problem, even though it may not be “its direct expression” (*Unbaptized God*, pp 132, 137)
 - 12 See ‘You wonder Where the Spirit Went’, p 303 [note 13]. Part of what is at stake is the way Jenson wishes to distinguish his position from the customary position of Eastern Orthodox pneumatology. Elsewhere Jenson mentions the East’s temptation to interpret “Jesus’ story by the antecedent Hellenic interpretation of deity” and thus freezing “the story about Jesus and indeed history generally into a timelessly established image of the atemporal”, see Jenson’s “Basics and Christology” in *Search of Christian Unity: Basic Consensus/Basic Differences*, ed Joseph A Burgess (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), pp 45–58 (especially p 51) as well as *Unbaptized God*, pp 142–143
 - 13 This is the place where we ought locate Hunsinger’s criticism of what he calls Jenson’s “strong misreading” of Barth more generally, see *How to read Karl Barth*, pp 15–19. Hunsinger seems most worried that Jenson risks “the danger of seeing God more nearly as a ‘happening’ than as a personal agent” and confusing “the mystery of the particular” with “a mere metaphysics of the particular” (p 19). But clearly (Jenson might counter) the mystery of this personal agent has a particularity not incompatible with also being a “happening”. However, for purposes of this essay, I am less interested in the adequacy of Jenson’s alternative to Barth than the accuracy of his criticism of Barth. For further remarks on Jenson’s *Unbaptized God*, see my review in *The Thomist*, forthcoming
 - 14 Hunsinger, ‘Lord and Giver of Life’, pp 2, 5, 9
 - 15 The mistake is ironic because Jenson also thinks that “Western trinitarianism”, unlike Barth, was *felicitously* inconsistent on this issue, in “practice” treating “the three as *parties* of divine action” but without a theology to justify the practice (p 299)
 - 16 ‘You Wonder Where the Spirit Went’, p 303. The key phrase here is “*practiced* binitarianism”, for (as we shall soon see) Jenson thinks that what Barth says *about* the trinity is frequently right on target
 - 17 ‘You Wonder Where the Spirit Went’, p 303. See also Jenson’s treatment of this issue in *Unbaptized God*, Chapter 7 (The Church’s Mediation)
 - 18 The label “Catholic”, then, refers not only to Anglo- or Roman Catholics but to all those like Jenson sympathetic to the discussion of the Spirit in the ecumenical documents such as (1) “The Filioque Clause in Ecumenical Perspective” in *Spirit of God, Spirit of Christ: Ecumenical Reflections on the Filioque Controversy*, Faith and Order Paper No 103, ed Lukas Vischer (London: SPCK and Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1981), pp 3–18, (2) the first document of the theological dialogue between the Roman Catholic church and the Orthodox Church, “The Mystery of the Church and of the Eucharist in the Light of the Mystery of the Holy Trinity”, translated into English under the title “The Church, the Eucharist, and the

- Trinity" in *Origins* 12 (#10, August 12, 1982) pp 157–160 (see Jenson's use of this document in *Unbaptized God*, p 140), or (3) *Theological Dialogue between Orthodox and Reformed Churches*, ed Thomas F Torrance (Edinburgh Scottish Academic Press, 1985)
- 19 For Barth's distinction between these three "practical moments" of scriptural interpretation, see *K D I/2*, s 810 ("praktischen momenten") = *C D I/2*, pp 722–740 (p 722 translates "praktischen momenten" as "phases") On Reformed theology as a theology of the third article, see *Learning Jesus Christ through the Heidelberg Catechism*, trans Shirley C Guthrie, Jr (William B Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1981 [John Knox, 1964, Evangelischer Verlag A G Zollikon, 1948 and 1960]), p 25 This included not only criticism but also applause for Schleiermacher on this topic, see *C D I/2*, pp 208–209, 252, *Protestant Theology in the Nineteenth Century Its Background and History*, nt (Valley Forge Judson Press, 1972), pp 458–460, "Concluding Unscientific Postscript on Schleiermacher" in Karl Barth, *The Theology of Schleiermacher*, ed Dietrich Ritschl, trans Geoffrey W Bromiley and George Hunsinger (Grand Rapids, Michigan William B Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1982), especially pp 278–279 I am sure that those who know the scholarly discussion of Calvin's pneumatology better than I do could add considerably to our knowledge of Barth's pneumatology, for Barth self-consciously carrying on the tradition of Calvin's pneumatology, see *C D III/1*, p 58 and *C D IV/3,2*, p 756
- 20 For a sorting out of the strengths and weaknesses of "the Church as event", see Avery Dulles, *Models of the Church* (Garden City, New York Image Books, 1978), chapter 5 (pp 81–93) The most massive critique of this reading of Barth by a Roman Catholic remains Colm O'Grady, *The Church in the Theology of Karl Barth* (Washington Corpus Books, 1968), two volumes, summarized in O'Grady's *The Church The Church in Catholic Theology Dialogue with Karl Barth* (London Geoffrey Chapman, 1969) See, again, Jenson's succinct discussions of this issue in *Unbaptized God*, especially Part III (and especially pp 133–136)
- 21 Walter Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, trans V Green (London Burns & Oates and New York Paulist Press, 1976), p 258
- 22 "Concluding Unscientific Postscript", p 278
- 23 Barth mentions I Cor 15 45 ("the second Adam was made a *pneuma zoopoion*"), Jn 3 6 ("That which is born of the Spirit, is spirit"), and "especially the accounts of His baptism in Jordan" (IV/1, pp 308–309) Elsewhere Barth mentions that the power of the Spirit operative in the resurrection is "a third possibility" for speaking of the resurrection, beyond speaking of it as the Father raising the Son or Jesus Christ's own resurrection (IV/3,2, p 503 [on Romans 1 4])
- 24 Hans Frei, *The Identity of Jesus Christ*, p 123, see also Jenson, *Unbaptized God*, pp 141, 145
- 25 Admittedly, Barth elsewhere also insists that Luke's Acts of the Apostles tells us that "the Spirit is the great and only possibility in virtue of which men can speak of Christ in such a way that what they say is witness (*IHR REDEN ZEUGNIS*) and that God's revelation in Christ thus achieves new actuality through it (*durch ihr Reden aufs neue aktuell Wird*)" precisely as a gift to the Church on Pentecost (*C D I/1*, pp 453–456 = *K D I/1*, s 475–477 [The capital letters (*IHR REDEN ZEUGNIS*) are my way of writing Barth's emphasis in the German, the bold (*aufs neue aktuell*) is my own emphasis])
- 26 It is no accident that Barth speaks about Word and Spirit in sections of the *Dogmatics* interrelating Church and World, see also III/3, pp 142–143 But lest these seem like isolated cases, consider also two passages in *C D IV/2* Again, the central movement of Barth's descriptions of the Christian community focused on the Spirit as "the authentic and effective self-attestation of the risen and living Lord Jesus" (*C D IV/2*, p 654 Barth's emphases) However, in a next breath Barth can also insist that "the Holy Spirit is more than a mere indication of Jesus or record concerning Him Where the man Jesus attests Himself in the power of the Spirit of God, He makes himself present More than that, where He makes Himself present in this power, He imparts Himself and also grants them the knowledge that He is theirs" (*C D IV/2*, p 654 Barth's emphases in the German) "He is theirs"! Hence, as Barth said earlier in the same volume, "It is impossible to say whether the first consequence of this outpouring [of the love of God into our hearts by the Holy Spirit] [Romans 5 5] is their free acceptance of Jesus as the Lord or their free acceptance of themselves as those who belong to Him and share His prerogatives For how can the second be lacking if they accept the first? Or how can the first not be included in the second?" (*C D IV/2*, p 329) "Included in the second"! One wonders if some such formula is not more acceptable than

- Tillich's "Protestant principle and Catholic substance" But note how Barth keeps his firsts and seconds in line here, even while he says that it is "impossible to say" which is first
- 27 Jenson says that this paragraph of IV/3 "is a marvel," despite the fact that it is "entirely without mention of the Spirit" ("You Wonder Where the Spirit Went", p 298) Of course, I have dwelt on only a few pages, Jenson could rightly ask whether (and, if so, how) the "two exalted names" are at work in subsequent sections of this paragraph I may be nit-picking at an essentially correct point
- 28 Note that Barth's critique of the "older ecumenism" was that "the *ut omnes unum* of Jn 17 21 was always understood much too formally and the unity of the Church was in large measure conceived as an end in itself" Since the nineteenth century "the union of the Churches has begun to be conceived in teleological and dynamic terms", even though Barth continues to doubt that there has been a "clear apprehension of the concrete things" which need to be proclaimed to the world in matters of politics and economics (C D IV/3, 1, pp 35–37)
- 29 On the Spirit as universalizer of "the individual existence of Christ" so Christ becomes "the immediate norm of every individual existence", see Hans Urs von Balthasar, *A Theology of History*, n t (New York Sheed and Ward, 1963), c 3 (especially pp 79–90) On the Holy Spirit as founder of a community of differences, see John Milbank, "The Second Difference For a Trinitarianism without Reserve", *Modern Theology* 2 (1986), pp 213–34
- 30 John Paul II, *Lord and Giver of Life* Encyclical Letter *Domnum et Vivificantem* of the Supreme Pontiff John Paul II On the Holy Spirit in the Life of the Church and the World May 30, 1986 (Washington, D C Office of Publishing and Promotion Services, United States Catholic Conference, 1986), Part II Here I merely use segments of a complex and not always clear argument
- 31 "Lord and Giver of Life", #27–#28 = pp 48–49
- 32 "Lord and Giver of Life", #40, p 72 Although this theme does not play as large an explicit role in Hans Urs von Balthasar's pneumatology as one might have expected, John Saward has noted the theme in his *The Mysteries of March* *Hans Urs von Balthasar on the Incarnation and Easter* (Washington, D C The Catholic University of America Press, 1990), pp 31, 45, 53
- 33 #41, p 74 This exegesis has precedents (e g , Chrysostom), but it seems to be more common in the Latin Church during and after the sixteenth century Reformations than the Greek Church to interpret the spirit here as the divinity of Christ See John J McGrath, S J , *Through the Eternal Spirit An Historical Study of the Exegesis of Hebrews 9 #13–14* (Rome Pontificia Universitas Gregoriana, 1961), Harold W Attridge, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (Philadelphia Fortress Press, 1989), pp 250–251 Compare Barth's remark that "The holy fire is the sign of the divine acceptance of man's sacrifice (I K 18 38, Lev 9 24) but also the consuming and destroying fire of God's judgment (Gen 19 24, Rev 13 13, etc)" (III/1 141) How both?
- 34 Blaise Pascal, *Thoughts, Letters, Minor Works*, trans W F Trotter, M L Booth, and O W Wight, *The Harvard Classics*, ed Charles W Eliot (New York P F Collier & Son Company 1910), Volume 48, p 365
- 35 I thank Michael Root for pointing out to me that Walter Kasper makes a very similar point to the one I am making when he says that the Word of God and tradition are 'both "in and over against" ' each other, see Kasper's "Grundkonsens und Kirchengemeinschaft", *Theologisches Quartalschrift* 167 (1987), pp 162–181 and the translation "Basic Consensus and Church Fellowship" in *In Search of Christian Unity Basic Consensus/Basic Differences*, John A Burgess, ed (Minneapolis Fortress Press, 1991), pp 21–44 (especially p 33)
- 36 Barth does once say that it is "only where there is no hope—and the Rejected on Golgotha and the rejected in ourselves and in all others, has no hope—that there is real hope, for it is only there that the work of the Holy Spirit can intervene and proclamation can become really comprehensible and faith really alive" (II/2 458) But the point is not elaborated
- 37 "Revelation" (note 1), p 210 Subsequent numbers in parentheses in the text are page references to this story
- 38 Ralph C Wood, *The Comedy of Redemption Christian Faith and Comic Vision in Four American Novelists* (Notre Dame, Indiana University of Notre Dame Press, 1988), especially pp 126–132
- 39 On the post-modern bush that burns without speaking, see George Steiner, *Real Presences* (Chicago University of Chicago Press, 1989), pp 112, 114, 127
- 40 Ralph C Wood, *The Comedy of Redemption*, p 131

- 41 We might also compare Ruby Turpin to Catholic sacraments and orders and other “routinizations” of the Spirit. They are essential to the Church (the Catholic ought argue) but as part of a field of living fire, with even their virtues purged. Unfortunately, I cannot consider here exactly how and why our institutions and virtues need purging without destruction.
- 42 One way to turn to explicate this point would be to analyze those traditional and contemporary theologians who find a special link between the Spirit and transforming criticism. For example, consider John Chrysostom’s exegesis of Pentecost: “then [in the Gospels, the Holy Spirit appears] in the likeness of a dove, now [in Acts] in the likeness of fire. And wherefore? Showing [in the Gospels] the gentleness of the Lord, but [in Acts] His taking vengeance also, He now puts them in mind of the judgment likewise. For, when need was to forgive, need was there of much gentleness, but now we have obtained the gift, it is henceforth a time for judgment and examination” (Saint [John] Chrysostom, “Homilies on the Acts of the Apostles,” *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, ed. Philip Schaff, trans. Rev. J. Walker, et al. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1956), First Homily, p. 7). Judgment, we might say, now becomes a moment of forgiveness—or, if not (as apparently happened in Chrysostom’s church), people will avoid baptism for fear of sinning after baptism. Even more profoundly, see Serge Boulgakov’s discussion of the kenosis of the Spirit in the death of Jesus Christ in *Le Paraclet*, trans. Constantin Andronikof, *La Sagesse Divine et La Theanthropie* 3 (Paris: Aubier, Editions Montaigne, 1946), especially pp. 242–244.

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