

The background of the book cover features a close-up, high-angle view of water ripples. The ripples are concentric and spread out from a point, creating a sense of movement and depth. The colors range from light, almost white, to a soft, pale blue, with some darker blue tones in the shadows of the ripples. The overall effect is serene and contemplative.

OXFORD

**BARTH, ORIGEN,
AND UNIVERSAL SALVATION**

Restoring Particularity

TOM GREGGS

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SALVATION

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OXFORD
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Great Clarendon Street, Oxford ox2 6DP

Oxford University Press is a department of the University of Oxford.
It furthers the University's objective of excellence in research, scholarship,
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Kuala Lumpur Madrid Melbourne Mexico City Nairobi

New Delhi Shanghai Taipei Toronto

With offices in

Argentina Austria Brazil Chile Czech Republic France Greece

Guatemala Hungary Italy Japan Poland Portugal Singapore

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Published in the United States

by Oxford University Press Inc., New York

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First published 2009

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

Data available

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

Data available

Typeset by SPI Publisher Services, Pondicherry, India

Printed in Great Britain

on acid-free paper by

MPG Books Group

ISBN 978-0-19-956048-6

1 3 5 7 9 10 8 6 4 2

*This book is dedicated to my parents,
Jackie and Paul Greggs,
with much love and as a tiny token of my gratitude to them.*

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Preface. Universalism, Separationism, and the World Today

In an age in which terror is carried out reputedly in the name of God, and in which political rhetoric can conjure apocalyptic imagery and echo separationist views of eschatology, applying them all too easily to present groups within society,¹ the need for the Christian theologian to confront the question of the scope of salvation is pressing. As a servant discipline, Christian theology must be alert to the reality that the separationism that underscores unhelpful theo-political thought and speech comes from within faith communities,² and that articulations of Christian particularity in certain ecclesiastical rhetoric can be responsible for prejudice, superiority, and enmity with regard to the other, who can come to be seen as a damnable being destined for all eternity to be alienated from God. It is to this age, in which Christianity finds itself confronted by secularity and religious plurality, that the present book wishes to speak.

Positing an alternative to these versions of separationist accounts of salvation is no easy task. Separationism has been and remains the dominant and majority version of traditional, mainstream Christianity's view of eschatology. Separationists claim that their position is consistent with the whole tenor of the Bible; for them, to suggest otherwise involves a denial of the revelation of Jesus Christ and Holy Scripture.³ They ground their position on literal readings of apocalyptic imagery from the synoptic gospels (such as that present in the

¹ The effect of separationist eschatology on governmental policy (especially for eign policy in the USA) is recorded in Jimmy Carter, *Faith and Freedom: The Christian Challenge for the World* (London: Duckworth, 2006), 113–15.

² For the implications of fundamentalist theology for governmental, educational, social, and ethical issues, see Martyn Percy, *Words, Wonders and Power: Understanding Contemporary Fundamentalism and Revivalism* (London: SPCK, 1996).

³ See Nigel M. de S. Cameron, 'Universalism and the Logic of Revelation', in *The Best in Theology* Vol. 3, ed. J. I. Packer (Carol Stream, IL: Christianity Today, 1989), esp. 153 and 166; and David Fergusson, 'Eschatology', in *The Cambridge Companion to Christian Doctrine*, ed. Colin E. Gunton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 241.

Sermon on the Mount) and from the book of Revelation.⁴ Throughout the medieval period such imagery was embellished and became part of the psyche of the Christian believer,⁵ and forms of this imagery continued to be utilized to persuade people to convert to Christianity or to maintain a morally upright life.⁶ However, even the strongest versions of separationism are clear that one should not simply equate the empirical church with the entirety of those who are saved. In theory at least, separationism can extend salvation beyond the Christian church (and may indeed not include certain members

⁴ These are clearly not the only, nor necessarily the best, readings of scripture around these themes. See also, Gerald O'Collins, *Salvation for All: God's Other Peoples* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008); Gregory MacDonald, *The Evangelical Universalist: The Biblical Hope That God's Love Will Save Us All* (London: SPCK, 2008), chs 2–5; and Thomas Johnson, 'A Wideness in God's Mercy: Universalism in the Bible', in *Universal Salvation? The Current Debate*, ed. Robin A. Parry and Christopher H. Partridge (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2003).

⁵ The reader is referred to such famous portrayals of hell as Dante's *Inferno*. See Dante's 'Inferno': *The First Part Of 'The Divine Comedy' Of Dante Alighieri*, ed. Tom Phillips (London: Thames & Hudson, 1985).

⁶ We see this particularly in elements of traditional evangelical preaching. John Wesley proclaimed: 'What a guard may these considerations be against any temptation from pleasure... What is the pain of the body which you do or may endure, to that of lying in a lake of fire burning with brimstone?' (John Wesley, 'Of Hell', in *A Heritage of Great Evangelical Preaching*, ed. Stephen Rost (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1996), 185). Even more emotively, Spurgeon preached: '... in hell, there is no hope... They are for ever for ever for ever lost! On every chain in hell, there is written "for ever". In the fires, there, blazes out the words, "for ever"... Who wants to say any more about it? I have warned you solemnly. I have told you of the wrath to come! The evening darkens, and the sun is setting. Ah! and the evenings darken with some of you. I can see grey headed men here' (Charles H. Spurgeon, 'Heaven and Hell', in *A Heritage of Great Evangelical Preaching*, 832–3). While the imagery may no longer be so vivid, much of the sentiment from such pre eminent evangelical preachers as Wesley and Spurgeon is echoed in contemporary evangelical preaching and missiology with its impetus to save the lost. Certainly, the Lausanne Covenant of 1974 strongly opposed universalism, and defended two human destinies (Veli Matti Kärkkäinen, 'Evangelical Theology and the Religions', in *The Cambridge Companion to Evangelical Theology*, ed. Timothy Larsen and Daniel J. Treier (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 201). Indeed, Sanders asserts that the view that 'unless people hear and accept the proclamation of the person and work of Jesus Christ, in this life (before death), they cannot be saved... has been widespread throughout the history of the church and appears to be the dominant view in contemporary evangelical thought' (John E. Sanders, 'Is Belief in Christ Necessary for Salvation?', *The Evangelical Quarterly* 60, no. 3 (1988), 242–3). He sees this view as being synonymous with the traditional pre Vatican II Catholic teaching of *extra ecclesiam nulla salus*. Cf. MacDonald, *The Evangelical Universalist*, 168–72.

of the Christian church): the Christian church and those who are ultimately saved are not necessarily synonymous. Certain forms of separationism can even be philosophically consistent with the view that the majority of humanity, many of whom may never have heard the name of Christ, may be saved. The minimal requirement of separationism is not that the majority or even a good portion of humanity may not be saved, but simply this: 'that *some* men . . . will finally not be saved.'⁷ The extent of the numbers involved on the two sides of the separation to salvation or damnation is advocated to be a secondary issue; but the reality of that ultimate separation is not to be denied. Furthermore, while separationism is derived from apocalyptic scenes of judgment in the Bible, it need not necessarily require a commitment to a belief in a physical place known as hell,⁸ since notions of annihilationism or conditional immortality still allow for the ultimate separation of the saved from the rest.⁹ Even if hell may have gone off the scene in certain quarters of the church (though by no means all), the idea of an ultimate separation is still firmly and deeply entrenched in many quarters.¹⁰

For the present writer, however, it remains insufficient to suggest that separationism may involve more than simply the visible, empirical church, or that the separation might involve not hell but an annihilation or a non-universal immortality. Although these re-articulations of separationism arise out of a desire not to adjudicate on the matter of which individuals belong to the saved and which to the damned, in both cases there remains a willingness and a desire to speak in terms of

⁷ De S. Cameron, 'Universalism and the Logic of Revelation', 154, emphasis original; cf. 166.

⁸ Albeit, clearly many separationists do hold to this. See, for example, Louis Berkof, *Systematic Theology* (London: Banner of Truth, 1958), 735-6. In fact, all too often concerns about universal salvation are dominated by concerns about hell that are not necessary for a separationist account of eschatology.

⁹ On annihilationism, see, George Hunsinger, *Disruptive Grace. Studies in the Theology of Karl Barth* (Grand Rapids and Cambridge: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2000), 239-42; on conditional immortality, see John W. Wenham, 'The Case for Conditional Immortality', in *Universalism and the Doctrine of Hell. Papers Presented at the Fourth Edinburgh Conference on Christian Dogmatics 1991*, ed. Nigel M. de S. Cameron (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1992).

¹⁰ Hence, while in 1995 the Church of England's Doctrine Commission seemed to reject the idea of hell, it nevertheless replaced hell with the equally separationist view of 'total non being'.

two eschatological categories of people. The blurring of the categories around the edges both fails to overcome the central problems of separationism and (by their own reckoning) fails simultaneously to do justice to the biblical account: these attempts break down on both sides—insufficiently ‘biblical’ for hard separationists and insufficiently all-encompassing and loving for universalists.

There is a need, therefore, on a number of levels to reject even these forms of separationism. Firstly, while provisos may be set up to soften the extent of the numbers involved in each category, there remains nevertheless a clear division (which is itself the foundation of the belief).¹¹ The tendency within this division (regardless of articulated caveats) is often to understand salvation as not involving the majority of created humanity. This is not only the case in large and growing conservative churches, but it is also the case among theologians who hold to a separationist view:¹² there is an inevitable tendency to reflect on the salvation of individuals or groups, and to see them as outside of the normal plan of salvation, a plan which is directed in the first and primary case at the church.¹³ One is left wondering why—if the majority of humanity is destined to eternal separation from God—God has created the world in the first instance. The idea by this account that creation is connected to the graciousness of God seems illogical: surely

¹¹ There are many attempts to soften hard forms of separationism as the result of the issue of the number lost greatly outnumbering the number saved in heaven. This has led to conservative theologians questioning the fate of the unevangelized. See Sanders, ‘Is Belief in Christ Necessary for Salvation?’, esp. 245–9. However, this has not tended to lead to the removal of the notion of a separation in terms of the final destination of people as either saved or lost.

¹² De S. Cameron, ‘Universalism and the Logic of Revelation’, for example, places such conditions onto his articulation of the separation, and offers a wider hope of salvation than simply to those within the church. He justifies this wider hope by considering the fate of those who die in infancy (firstly those who are children of believers, and secondly—but demarcated—infant mortality more generally) and the fate of the ‘seriously mentally retarded’ (155). He also speaks (with almost some surprise) of an evangelical academic who admitted ‘he often wondered at the fate of the pious Muslim’ (167 n.4). However, this is hardly a much wider hope of salvation than strict separationist divisions.

¹³ There is, therefore, among such theologians a tendency to reflect on such questions as “When does a person become a believer?” “How much does one have to believe in order to be a believer?” and so on (Sanders, ‘Is Belief in Christ Necessary for Salvation?’, 249), i.e. seeking to understand the rest of humanity in terms of their relationship to the empirical church.

the whole of humanity being saved by grace is no less gracious than only a section of humanity being saved.¹⁴ Secondly, to consider annihilation or conditional immortality a non-violent image in comparison to hell is utterly absurd. To annihilate someone or some group is a grossly violent act, to which a post-Holocaust age should be sensitive. Moreover, all of these images (annihilation, hell, and conditional immortality) still all rest at some level on the motivating factor of fear.¹⁵ In response to the idea that such concepts are the only way to retain the necessary possibility of freedom for a human, one can hardly imagine that, faced with the choice of hell or some form of annihilation, in the light of the knowledge of these realities in comparison to an eternity with God, anyone would genuinely choose annihilation or hell freely.¹⁶ Thirdly, in an age which is marked by advancements in communications, the old arguments about the salvation of those who have not heard of Christ simply cannot apply, or else can only apply in a modified version.¹⁷ The reality of this generation is not of an unevangelized world, but, instead, of a society in which people know the broad outlines of the message of the gospel, but simply do not act upon it, or else practise other religions.¹⁸ While most versions of traditional separationism were constructed within an immediate society which was largely Christian (or clearly part of Christendom),¹⁹ in traditional Christian areas such as Western Europe, and perhaps even North America, it is simply no longer the case that the majority of the population are practising Christians.²⁰

¹⁴ See MacDonald, *The Evangelical Universalist*, 20.

¹⁵ Jürgen Moltmann, *In the End the Beginning. The Life of Hope*, trans. Margaret Kohl (London: SCM, 2004), even advocates: 'General concepts of this kind and similar vividly embroidered images of the negative can be found in all religions. They are not Christian, even if Christian churches have taken them over' (147).

¹⁶ See below, Ch.7, §7(c). For more on free will, see MacDonald, *The Evangelical Universalist*, 23–4; this theme is also adequately dealt with in terms of philosophy in Parry and Partridge, *Universal Salvation?*

¹⁷ Rahner, for example, points to the difference between having heard the Gospel physically and having heard the Gospel existentially: Karl Rahner, S.J., 'Anonymous Christians', in *Theological Investigations Vol. 6: Concerning Vatican Council 2* (London: Darton, Longman, & Todd, 1974).

¹⁸ Part of the concern of separationism is to add impetus to the evangelization of the non-Christian nations (Sanders, 'Is Belief in Christ Necessary for Salvation?', 244–5).

¹⁹ As in the case of the likes of Augustine and Calvin.

²⁰ On average, only 20.5% of Western Europeans attended church once a week in 1999–2000. Clearly in certain countries these figures are much lower. Even in the USA, less than half the population (about 40%) attend church weekly. See Grace

Christians in almost all societies must now be alert to the reality of neighbours of other faiths and none as they seek to articulate doctrines of salvation. Fourthly, and most importantly, separationism involves considerable implications for the Christian doctrine of God.²¹ This point was perhaps most clearly noted above all by Schleiermacher who considered the capriciousness of certain separationist presentations of God, and instead advocated that all humanity is elected to salvation in Jesus Christ and that, in this, divine omnipotence cannot fail.²² Thus, even more gentle versions of separationism involve considerable problems for theology and for society at large.²³

Nevertheless, there remains in separationism's hand one trump card—particularity. Indeed, no doubt to give a more positive spin on their beliefs, separationists use 'particularist' as a favoured self-descriptor of their position.²⁴ Separationists consider an ultimate separation between saved and lost to be the only means to allow for

Davie, *Europe: The Exceptional Case. Parameters of Faith and the Modern World*. (London: Darton, Longmann, & Todd, 2000), 6 7 and 28. Also notable is the fact of the movement of Muslim communities into Western Europe, which has seen the numbers of Muslims in this continent increase from nine million in 1900 to 32 million in 2000, with the projection that 5.1% of the population of Europe will be Muslim by 2025 (David B. Barrett, George T. Kurian, and Todd M. Johnson, *World Christian Encyclopaedia*, 2nd edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 14). Given these statistics, one can see why the question of universal salvation has been of increasing importance in the post Enlightenment era.

²¹ See Moltmann, *In the End the Beginning*, who considers how un Christian certain separationist views are (140ff.). While separationists argue universal salvation might lead to a weakening of the doctrine of God's freedom, universalists are surely justified in advocating that separationism may bring into question God's love, omnipotence, justice, and holiness (if He is understood to will and allow the destruction of a significant proportion of the humanity He created).

²² See Freidrich Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith*, ed. H. R. Mackintosh and J. S. Stewart, trans. H. R. Mackintosh and J. S. Stewart, English translation of the second German edition (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1968), §§117 20 and 163. Moltmann, *In the End the Beginning*, helpfully observes: 'we still don't know *what* awaits us, but we do know, surely, *who* awaits us' (139). The importance of the doctrine of God to questions of eschatology can hardly be overemphasized.

²³ A number of benefits of universal salvation are listed in MacDonald, *The Evangelical Universalist*, ch. 7.

²⁴ De S. Cameron, 'Universalism and the Logic of Revelation', sees this term as the antonym of 'Universalist'. Indeed, Bauckham suggests the growth of universalism as being partly in response to 'the particularism of high Calvinism' (Richard Bauckham, 'Universalism: A Historic Survey', *Themelios* 4, no. 2 (1978), 50). See also here Kärkkäinen, 'Evangelical Theology and the Religions', 201 4.

the exercise of human free will that makes sense of human ethical decision and faith commitment.²⁵ They argue that without a final separation between those saved and those damned, there can be little real sense made of the seriousness of the decision of faith, the Christian church, or the call to holy living.²⁶ In this, separationists surely recognize an important problem: all too easily Christianity can find itself being replaced by some notion of generalized religiosity or spirituality.²⁷ One can see this in certain presentations of pluralism,²⁸ which either leave one logically wondering why one is a Christian rather than a Sikh, Hindu, Muslim, or a member of any other faith tradition, or else which work on the basis of a lowest common denominator between faiths, ignoring the exclusivist elements faiths contain. The danger exists that a lack of particularity, which a doctrine of universal salvation could bring about, could lead to the unhelpful descriptive inadequacy of sameness between peoples who understand themselves to be particular or even unique. While it may not seem so overt, this form of pluralism can also have political implications (especially when it is combined with certain attitudes to secularization), with societies failing to recognize the religious insider's self-perceived and self-identified particularity: religions are relativized and demoted to a secondary position determined for them by an aggressive secularist agenda.²⁹ While this book might wish to reject separationism, it nevertheless advocates strongly that the particularity of the Christian faith must be retained in the Christian tradition.

²⁵ Fergusson, 'Eschatology', 241.

²⁶ On this, see Trevor Hart, 'Universalism: Two Distinct Types', in *Universalism and the Doctrine of Hell*, 22–9. Hart lists off various charges that can be cited against universalism. These are that universalism: trivializes of sin; emasculates the doctrine of atonement; denies the reality of hell and judgment; denigrates justification by faith; impugns the righteousness of God; undermines Christian mortality; and lacks foundation in the Bible.

²⁷ It is to avoid this, no doubt, that certain forms of Christian universalism proceed on the basis of post mortem conversion, as in MacDonald, *The Evangelical Universalist*.

²⁸ For example, Hick prefers to speak of 'the Real' as opposed to 'God' so as to include non theistic religions (John Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion: Human Responses to the Transcendent* (London: MacMillan, 1989), 10–11; cf. John Hick, *Problems of Religious Pluralism* (London: MacMillan, 1985), 39–44).

²⁹ One can see this, for example, in the French controversy over Muslim women wearing headscarves: it seems that people are allowed to be religious – just not too religious.

This book proceeds, therefore, on basis that the only meaningful way one can speak of Christian universalism is from a particularist stance. It advocates that there is a need in contemporary theology to reassess the case for Christian universalism, and that this must be done on the basis of a particularist agenda. Not only does separationism involve problems in terms of the doctrine of God and in terms of the world in which we live, but it need not necessarily be the only articulation of soteriology within the Christian tradition. The tradition itself (albeit in a minority strand and as a quieter voice) holds out a wider hope.³⁰ It is the purpose of this book to demonstrate, therefore, that particularism and exclusivism should not be confused with separationism, and that particularism and exclusivism do not logically stand as contrary to universalism. Christian universalism *must itself be grounded on* Christian particularity and *must itself create room for* Christian particularity. This will have political and inter-faith implications:³¹ through examining and rethinking the doctrinal articulation of salvation, dangerous theo-political rhetoric is destroyed at its root and undermined on terms internal to the faith community. Moreover, other unhelpful forms of political rhetoric which fail to recognize the particularity of (and inevitable exclusivity involved in) faith commitment must also be awakened to the complex dynamics of inter-faith relations within a pluralist society.³² This book seeks to offer a doctrine of salvation for the present century, because, as one must observe with Ford: ‘the world is not simply religious and not simply secular but is complexly both

³⁰ See Morwenna Ludlow, ‘Universalism in the History of Christianity’, and David Hilborn and Don Horrocks, ‘Universalistic Trends in the Evangelical Tradition: An Historical Perspective’, in Parry and Partridge, *Universal Salvation?* MacDonald, *The Evangelical Universalist*, 174–5, lists off many proponents of universalism throughout the centuries.

³¹ Jenson recognizes the centrality of questions concerning eschatology to Christian political discourse: ‘Eschatology is . . . the initial form and should be a principal guide for Christian reflection on politics’ (Robert Jenson, ‘Eschatology’, in *The Blackwell Companion to Political Theology*, ed. Peter Scott and William T. Cavanaugh (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007), 408).

³² Even Prime Minister Gordon Brown at the June 2007 consultation, ‘Muslims and Islam in the world today’ betrayed this type of thought process, pointing primarily to ethical and monotheistic unity between Muslims and Christians, almost as different expressions of the same religious or theistic essence. Difficult questions about particularity and difference were glossed over by the then Chancellor.

religious and secular, with all sorts of constantly shifting interactions and balances.³³ Christian theologians seeking to speak about salvation in this century must be sensitive to these complexities and to the political implications of theological speech in a world in which the terrors of hell and annihilation are all too visibly seen in the politics of fear. This book wishes to offer a constructive contribution to these issues, and wishes to do so principally by bringing into conversation two theologians who wrestled with such themes in their own times. This conversation will be one conducted between their theologies, between their theologies and theology and scripture more broadly, and between theology and the situation of our world today. While this book is therefore written by a theologian for other theologians, it is also written from the perspective of a Christian, a churchman, a preacher, and a citizen concerned for the politics of the world in the twenty-first century. Most importantly, however, this book is written in the belief that the first and primary service of the theologian seeking to be a responsible preacher and citizen is the performance of theology: this work, therefore, is a work of systematic theology that seeks to lay foundations onto which the ecclesial, ethical, inter-faith, and political may be built.³⁴ To the extent that it achieves this and outlines an alternative particularist version of Christian soteriology that can provoke thinking in other areas, it will have fulfilled its purpose as theology which is responsible to the world that God has created, providentially guided, and will redeem.

³³ David F. Ford, 'Gospel in Context: Among Many Faiths' (paper presented at the Fulcrum Conference, Islington, Friday 28 April 2006). See also David F. Ford, 'Abrahamic Dialogue: Towards Respect and Understanding in Our Life Together' (Cambridge: Inauguration of the Society for Dialogue and Action, 2006); and David F. Ford, 'God and Our Public Life: A Scriptural Wisdom', *International Journal of Public Theology* 1 (2007), in which he argues that extremes of secularity reinforce extremes of religion and vice versa (76).

³⁴ In this way, the book reflects Barth's belief that serious theological reflection and formation was the theologian's chief (albeit indirect) contribution to politics. See Haddon Willmer, 'Karl Barth', in *The Blackwell Companion to Political Theology*, 124–5.

Acknowledgements

A number of people and institutions must be thanked and acknowledged for their support throughout the writing of this book.

This work began as a Ph.D. thesis. Funding for the project came initially from a University of Cambridge Millennium Scholarship and subsequently from the Arts and Humanities Research Council. Without either of these institutions, the book would have been impossible. The Faculty of Divinity at the University of Cambridge also provided funds for me to study in Tübingen and to attend conferences. My former colleagues from the Common Room of the Manchester Grammar School must be thanked for providing me with a complete edition of *Church Dogmatics*, and the Religion and Philosophy Department (and most especially Dennis Brown) should be thanked for the many kind gifts of books on Barth and Origen that they gave me when I left them.

Thanks beyond expression must be given to my principal doctoral supervisor, Professor David Ford. His support, guidance, critical eye, conversation, and steering throughout the three years I spent in Cambridge were invaluable. I have been richly blessed by his wisdom. I must also thank Dr Thomas Graumann for supervising my work on Origen during the Ph.D., the basis of which form the chapters on Origen in this book. His advice has greatly benefited the project. The late Canon Professor Daniel Hardy acted not only as my doctoral supervisor when Professor Ford was on sabbatical, but also as a counsellor, teacher, and friend throughout my time at the University of Cambridge: he was something of a *Doktoropa* and he is sorely missed.

Thanks must be expressed to those who assisted with the proof-reading and editing of the manuscript of this book. Dr Paul Nimmo of Edinburgh University read and annotated the final draft, at considerable cost to his own time. Nicholas Munday checked the accuracy of all of the Latin and Greek citations and words, despite the enormous pressures on his time. Oxford University Press provided invaluable editorial support and advice, and my thanks go particularly

to Tom Perridge, Charlotte Green and Jenny Wagstaffe. The book would have been much the poorer without the assistance of each of these people, and any remaining errors are entirely my responsibility.

Throughout the time in which I was preparing this book, I have been immensely grateful to a host of senior colleagues whom I must thank for their conversation, wisdom, and support. Professor David Fergusson, Professor Garrett Green, Dr Douglas Hedley, Dr Tim Jenkins, Professor Dr Winrich Löhr, Dr Morwenna Ludlow, Dr Philip Luscombe, Dr John McDowell, Professor Peter Ochs, Dr Stephen Plant, Dr Ben Quash, Dr David Wilkinson, Professor Dr Ralf Wüstenburg, and most especially Professor George Newlands and Dr Janet Martin Soskice have all graciously given of their time and intellects. Janet Soskice and David Fergusson should also be further thanked for the very helpful way in which they examined my Ph.D., and for the excellent suggestions they made concerning revisions that could be made to the thesis in order to turn it into a book.

Reaching further back, my thanks must go to those who inspired me to read Origen and Barth, and who encouraged my early study of them. Dr Mark Edwards has not only been a searching and inspiring teacher, but a constant source of friendship, of theological conversation, and of knowledge. Professor John Webster was also a significant factor in my studying Barth, and I have been grateful to him for ongoing conversations and support. It was Dr John Yocum who first suggested I might bring my two interests together into one study, and for his suggestion I am most glad and thankful.

I have no doubt that my experience of writing this book would have been much the poorer without the support of many friends. From the University of Cambridge my thanks go especially to George and Fran (and Adam, Jemima, and Esther) Bailey, Vix Finan, Jason Fout, Jack Hodd, Donna Lazenby, Paul Nimmo, Greg Seach, Meriel Tolhurst-Clever, and Simeon Zahl. Old friends have also remained true, and I am grateful for the distraction they have brought me from my work: thanks especially are given to Tan Ahmed, Chris and Nancy Allen, Caroline Bick, Dennis Brown, Andrea Chan, Mark Coffey, Eddie Crighton, Dan and Becks (and Joel) Farr, Neil Flynn, Ed and Kirsty (and Stephen) Gayton, Rick and Mel Gayton, the Gibsons, Narada Haralambous, Andy and Fleur Heyworth, Sue and Andy James, Stephen Jamieson, Nikki and Andrew Loughlin, Catherine

McMuldroch, Anthony Partington, Mark Perkins, Alex Skinner, Andy and Tabitha Smith, and Karen and Alison Williamson. I am also grateful to my new colleagues at the University of Chester for their support, especially to Dr David Clough, who read an earlier draft of this book, and Professor Anthony Thiselton, with whom I discussed many of the ideas. I look forward with excitement to working with all of my colleagues at Chester in the years ahead.

My worshipping communities have upheld me in prayer, and the circuits in which I have been 'on plan' have borne my preaching with considerable grace. I have been strengthened by them, especially by Elm Hall Drive Methodist Church (Liverpool), Cowley Road Methodist Church (Oxford), and Castle Street and Histon Methodist Churches (Cambridge). Some individuals must be acknowledged for their support and care: Robert Craft, Jonathan and Sarah (and Isaac and Grace) Davidson, Robert Dolman, David and Roz Hollingsworth, Don and Viv Redman, Alastair and Helen (and Emma) Shepherd, Steve and Judy Sutcliffe, Rosemary and John Watson, Sue and Michael (and Joseph and Charlie) Watson, and Ray and Judy Wynn.

The people above all, however, for whom I have more thanks than I could ever express are my family. My sisters, Ann and Colette, have provided me with unfailing friendship and a lot of laughter, and have poked fun at me when I have been inclined to be too serious. My aunty Ann has been a constant support, as has Joan. My nan, Patricia, has continued to surround me with love and care, and has been a second mother to me. My parents, Jackie and Paul, have been so faithful in their love of me that they have allowed me to glimpse something of the unconditional love of God, and I owe to them everything. I am blessed to have been born into such a family, and I thank God for them every day.

But it is to God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, that my final and eternal thanks must be given. At the end of working on a book that seeks to consider the economy of the Son and the Spirit, George Herbert's words seem most apposite:

Small it is in this poor sort
 To enrol thee:
 E'en eternity's too short
 To extol thee.

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Abbreviations

- I/1; I/2 etc. refer to individual volumes of *CD* (see below)
- CCel.* *Contra Celsum*
Henry Chadwick, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965). Greek taken from M. Borret, *Origène. Contre Celse*, 4 vols, *Sources chrétiennes* [SC] 132, 136, 147, 150 (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1: 1967; 2: 1968; 3 4: 1969).
- CD* *Church Dogmatics*
Karl Barth (ed. G. W. Bromiley and T. F. Torrance) 4 vols (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1936 77).
- ChrL* *The Christian Life: Church Dogmatics Volume IV, Part 4 Lecture Fragments*
Karl Barth (trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley) (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1981).
- CommJer.* *Origen Commentary on Jeremiah*
The Fathers of the Church: A New Translation Vol. 97
John Clark Smith, ed. (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1998).
Greek taken from P. Husson and P. Nautin, *Origène. Homélie sur Jérémie*, 2 vols, SC 232, 238. (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1: 1976; 2: 1977).
- CommJn.* *Origen Commentary on the Gospel According to John*
The Fathers of the Church: A New Translation, Vols 80 and 89
Ronard E. Heine, ed. (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, Vol. 80: 1989; Vol. 89: 1993). NOTE: quotations in English taken from the above editions as indicated in the text. References to sections of the text (rather than individual paragraphs) taken from *Origen's Commentary on John*, The Ante Nicene Fathers, Vol. X, A. Menzies, ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979).
The Greek is taken from C. Blanc, *Origène. Commentaire sur saint Jean*, 3 vols, SC 120, 157, 222 (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1: 1966; 2: 1970; 3: 1975).
- CommMt.* *Origen Commentary on Matthew*
The Ante Nicene Fathers Vol. X

- J. Patrick, ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979).
Original text taken from E. Benz and E. Klostermann, *Origenes. Matthäuserklärung 1. Die Griechischen Erhaltenen Tomoi (Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller (GCS) edition)*, Vols 10.1 10.2 (Leipzig: Teubner, 10.1: 1935; 10.2: 1937).
- CommRom.* *Origen Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*
The Fathers of the Church (A New Translation) Vol. 103
Thomas P. Scheck (from the translation of Rufinus), ed. (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2001).
Latin taken from C. Bammel, *Der Römerbriefkommentar des Origenes: kritische Ausgabe der Übersetzung Rufins*, 3 vols (Frieburg: Herder, 1990 8).
- CommSong* *Origen: The Song of Songs Commentary and Homilies*
Ancient Christian Writers
R. P. Lawson, ed. (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1957).
Original taken from W. Baehrens, *Origenes. Homilien zur Samuel I, zum Hohelied und den Propheten. Kommentar zum Hohelied*, GCS edition, Vol. 8 (Leipzig: Teubner, 1925).
- Credo* *Credo. A Presentation of the Chief Problems of Dogmatics with Reference to the Apostle's Creed*
Karl Barth (trans. James Strathearn McNab)
(London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1936).
- De Princ.* *Origen: On First Principles: Being Koetschau's Text of the De Principiis into English, together with an Introduction and Notes*
G. W. Butterworth, ed. (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1973).
Greek taken from H. Görgemanns and H. Karpp, *Origenes vier Bücher von den Prinzipien* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1976): 462 560, 668 764.
Latin taken from H. Crouzel and M. Simonetti, eds, *Traité des principes I V*, 4 vols, SC 252, 253, 268, 269 (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1978 84).
- Dialogue* *Dialogue with Heraclides*
Robert Daly, ed. (New York: Paulist Press, 1992).
Original taken from J. Scherer, *Entretien d'Origène avec Héraclide*, SC 67 (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1960).
- EvangTheol* *Evangelical Theology*
Karl Barth (trans. Grover Foley)
(London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1963).

- FragG&G* *Fragments Grave and Gay*
Karl Barth (ed. Martin Rumscheidt; trans. Eric Mosbacher)
(London: Collins, 1971).
- GD* *The Göttingen Dogmatics. Instruction in the Christian Religion*
Vol. 1
Karl Barth (ed. Hannelotte Reiffen; trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley)
(Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990).
- GHN* *God Here and Now*
Karl Barth (trans. Paul M. van Buren)
(Liverpool: Charles Birchall & Sons, 1964).
- HoG* ‘Humanity of God’
in *God, Grace and Gospel*
Karl Barth (trans. James Strathearn McNab), SJT Occasional
Papers 10 (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1959).
- HomEx.* ‘Origen Homilies on Exodus’
Origen Homilies on Genesis and Exodus
The Fathers of the Church: A New Translation Vol. 71
Ronard E. Heine (from the translation of Rufinus), ed.
(Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press,
1982).
Latin taken from W. Baehrens, *Origenes. Homilien zum Hexa-
teuch in Rufins Übersetzung*, GCS edition, Vols 6 7 (Leipzig:
Teubner, 1920 1).
- HomGen.* ‘Origen Homilies on Genesis’
Origen Homilies on Genesis and Exodus
The Fathers of the Church: A New Translation Vol. 71
Ronard E. Heine (from the translation of Rufinus), ed.
(Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press,
1982).
Latin taken from W. Baehrens, *Origenes. Homilien zum Hexa-
teuch in Rufins Übersetzung*, GCS edition, Vols 6 7 (Leipzig:
Teubner, 1920 1).
- HomJosh.* *Origen Homilies on Joshua*
The Fathers of the Church: A New Translation Vol. 105
Barbara J. Bruce (from the translation of Rufinus), trans.;
Cynthia White, ed. (Washington, DC: The Catholic University
of America Press, 2002).
Latin taken from W. Baehrens, *Origenes. Homilien zum Hexa-
teuch in Rufins Übersetzung*, GCS edition, Vols 6 7 (Leipzig:
Teubner, 1920 1).

- HomLev.* *Origen Homilies on Leviticus*
 The Fathers of the Church: A New Translation Vol. 83
 Gary Wayne Barkley (from the translation of Rufinus)
 Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press,
 1990. Latin taken from W. Baehrens, *Origenes. Homilien zum*
Hexateuch in Rufins Übersetzung, GCS edition, Vols 6 7 (Leip-
 zig: Teubner, 1920 1).
- HomLk.* *Origen Homilies on Luke*
 The Fathers of the Church: A New Translation Vol. 94
 Joseph T. Lienhard, S. J. (from the translation of Jerome)
 Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1996.
 Original taken from M. Bauer, *Origenes. Die Homilien zu Lukas in*
der Übersetzung des Hieronymus und die Griechischen Reste der
Homilien und des Lukas Kommentars, GCS edition, Vol. 9 (Berlin:
 Teubner, 1959).
- HomSong.* ‘Origen Homilies on The Song of Songs’
Origen: The Song of Songs Commentary and Homilies
 Ancient Christian Writers, R. P. Lawson, ed. (London: Long
 mans, Green and Co., 1957).
 Original taken from W. Baehrens, *Origenes. Homilien zur*
Samuel I, zum Hohelied und den Propheten. Kommentar zum
Hohelied, GCS edition, Vol. 8 (Leipzig: Teubner, 1925).
- HomNum.* ‘Origen Homilies on Numbers’
Origen
 R. A. Greer (from the translation of Rufinus), ed. (New York:
 Paulist Press, 1979).
 Latin taken from W. Baehrens, *Origenes. Homilien zum Hexa*
teuch in Rufins Übersetzung, GCS edition, Vols 6 7 (Leipzig:
 Teubner, 1920 1).
- KD* *Kirchliche Dogmatik*
 Karl Barth (Zollikon Zurich: Evangelischer Verlag AG, 1942 70).
- Martyr* ‘An Exhortation to Martyrdom’
Origen
 R. A. Greer (from the translation of Rufinus), ed. (New York:
 Paulist Press, 1979).
 Original taken from P. Koetschau, *Die Shrift vom Martyrium.*
Gegen Celsus. Die Shrift vom Gebet, GCS edition, Vols 1 2
 (Leipzig: Teubner, 1913).

- Phil.* *The Philocalia of Origen: A Compilation of Selected Passages from Origen's Works made by St. Gregory of Nazianzus and St. Basil of Caesarea*
G. Lewis, trans., from the J. Armitage Robinson edition (T. & T. Clark: Edinburgh, 1911).
- Prayer* 'On Prayer'
Origen
R. A. Greer (from the translation of Rufinus), ed. (New York: Paulist Press, 1979).
Original taken from P. Koetschau, *Die Schrift vom Martyrium. Gegen Celsus. Die Schrift vom Gebet*, GCS edition, Vols 1 2 (Leipzig: Teubner, 1913).
- Romans(II)* *The Epistle to the Romans*
Karl Barth (trans. Edwyn C. Hoskyns from the sixth edition) (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968).
- RtoR* *From Rousseau to Ritschl*
Karl Barth (trans. Brian Cozens) (London: SCM, 1959).
- Testimonies* *Final Testimonies*
Karl Barth (ed. Eberhard Busch; trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley) (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2003).
- TT* *Karl Barth's Table Talk*
John D. Godsey, ed., SJT Occasional Papers 10 (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1963).

1

Introduction

1 NATURE OF STUDY

This study seeks at a basic level to be simultaneously two things. Firstly, it seeks to be an interpretative work on two major theological figures—Origen (c.185–c.254) and Karl Barth (1886–1968). The focus of this interpretation is the economic dynamics of the second and third persons of the Trinity in their respective theologies. The work seeks to understand how Origen and Barth consider the Son and Spirit to be involved in the economy of God in relation to each other and to all of humanity.¹ Secondly, this book seeks to be a formative piece of theology on the topic of soteriology. It does not seek simply to be a footnote on the history of the interpretation of Barth and Origen, but instead seeks to be a piece of contemporary systematic theology which offers a new and creative approach to the question of universalism. This formative aspect is not to be separated from the interpretive nature of the study: it is believed that the separation of these tasks of theology is unhelpful. If formative theology is to be anything more than creative writing, it must build upon the work of others. It is its basis in scholarship which provides its weight, grounding and orientation in the tradition.²

¹ Here, one must immediately become mindful of the doctrine of appropriations. One cannot think in a tritheistic manner of God's work of salvation as having been divided into three tasks fulfilled by three persons. However, one can speak of certain actions of God as being more appropriate to one of the divine persons than to the others, without denying the presence of all three persons in this. This is evident in Barth, who discusses the doctrine in I/1, 373ff. It is also present in Origen's understanding of the *proprium* each person performs. See Kilian McDonnell, 'Does Origen Have a Trinitarian Doctrine of the Holy Spirit?', *Gregorianum* 75, no. 1 (1994), 24–5.

² See Tom Greggs, 'Why Does the Church Need Academic Theology?', *Epworth Review* 33, no. 3 (2006), 28–30.

However, interpretation alone is not systematic theology. The study and interpretation of past theologians is not at its best when it exists only for its own sake. It must instead be used to form and shape contemporary theology.³ Thus, the study of Barth and Origen's economic dynamics of Spirit and Son is undertaken to provide the foundation for a formative and creative dialogue which seeks better to understand and articulate soteriology in the present day. Therefore, the study seeks to ask not only how Barth and Origen understand the economic dynamics of the second and third person of the Trinity, but also how we (building on them) might better understand this issue today.

2 MOTIVATIONS FOR STUDY

The motivations for this study are several.

(a) Questions about soteriology

The primary motivation for engaging in this research is to understand salvation better. In an age in which fundamentalism is being so loudly articulated, the divisive and binary nature of certain understandings of salvation is being clearly heard. The sense that being a member of a community of faith separates and divides is not only heard in sermons but also in the explosion of bombs directed at causing terror for those unbelievers who await the terrors of hell anyway. It is, after all, only a short step from stating that God wills eternal terror for those opposed to His will and uses that terror to keep people on the right path, to justifying the use of terror in the world among those understood to be against God's will in order to influence their decision-making in the present. Salvation needs, therefore, to be expressed in a way which does not divide humanity

³ This approach to systematic theology is analogous to Williams's approach to church history. See Rowan Williams, *Why Study the Past? The Quest for the Historical Christian Church* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 2005), esp. 1 and his interpretation of Barth (98).

into binary groupings, but which allows for a simultaneous discussion of the salvific plan of God for all humanity as well as those who profess faith.⁴ In an age of multiculturalism in which our neighbours are people of many faiths and none, this is of paramount importance.

The division of humanity into saved or damned, elect or reject, awaiting heaven or hell is not only dangerous in its implications for the way in which humanity is seen, but it is also dangerous in terms of its doctrine of God: it presents a doctrine of God in which the will of God is separated from His love, or else is flouted by the sinful choices of humans, or else is cajoled into conditional love (which is no love at all) by the faith of humans. This can lead to an almost modalist approach to the doctrine of God: the second and third persons of the Trinity can seem to come to exist to save humanity from its failings. Moreover, such a view of salvation imprisons God in human constructs of justice and love, creating in God the failings all too evident in humanity (to love only when first we are loved, wrath etc.) instead of allowing the doctrine of God to define these points. God is salvation: it is not simply an action He performs; this action is an act in which one can understand His being. Thus, the contrary is also true: if one fails to understand salvation, one will fail to understand God.

(b) Questions about the place for particularity

If the need to speak of God's universal love is clear, so too is the need to recognize the importance of particularity. A second motivation for this study is to articulate a version of Christian universalism in which particularity is not obliterated but established. The work seeks to present a form of universalism which does not stand in stark opposition to particularity, but still provides a place for the specifically Christian. This is twofold. In the first instance, the need to speak in particularist and Christian terms about universalism is paramount. Christian

⁴ The complexity of this is recognized by Hardy: 'the Trinitarian activity of God sustains a complexity of particularities, establishing "relativities" with their own integrity in fully contextual interweaving' (Daniel W. Hardy, 'The Spirit of God in Creation and Reconciliation', in *Christ and Context*, ed. Alan J. Torrance and Hilary Regan (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1993), 252).

universalism must be *Christian*, and not a universal imposed onto all paths and faiths by claiming we are all the same whether Sikh, Jewish, Hindu, atheist etc.; such a universal leads one directly back to the problem of universals crushing particulars. In the second instance, this book seeks to articulate a universalism which provides a place for Christian life, for variety and for temporality. This work seeks to demonstrate that universal salvation does not remove or lessen the importance of each present particularity, and therefore that it does not stand contrary to Christian faith and decision, but provides the place for genuine Christian faith and decision.⁵

(c) Questions about the study of Barth

A third motivation for this book concerns the study of Barth. Barth scholarship must never become merely retrospective, but must seek to be orientated to ever better expressions of God and His relationship to the world.⁶ To that end, Barth must be stretched, challenged, and considered by his own yardstick—scripture. Ever himself grounded in history and historical theology, Barth was nothing if not constructive as a theologian; he used his theological predecessors to help him construct his own theology⁷—never simply repeating them, but drawing from them, stretching them, and creatively reinterpreting them for his own age. The same approach must be applied to Barth himself. Barth, always a great conversationalist,⁸ must be brought into dialogue with other

⁵ It thus seeks to be a response to the problem Moltmann identifies: ‘If *universalism* is proclaimed, is the result not the light minded recklessness that says: why should I believe, and bother to lead a righteous life, if I and everyone else are going to be saved?’ (Jürgen Moltmann, *The Coming of God: Christian Eschatology*, trans. Margaret Kohl (London: SCM, 1996), 239).

⁶ This is seen in Barth’s constant desire to return to the beginning, as stipulated in his own description and analysis of what the task and nature of dogmatics is in I/1, §§1–3. Indeed, Barth speaks of the church being in an ongoing emergency concerning how it spoke about God yesterday and should do tomorrow (I/1, 77ff.), in essence reflecting on last Sunday’s sermon to make next Sunday’s better.

⁷ See John Webster, ‘“There Is No Past in the Church, So There Is No Past in Theology”’: Barth on the History of Modern Protestant Theology’, in *Conversing with Barth*, ed. John C. McDowell and Mike Higton (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004) for a discussion of Barth’s approach to historical theology.

⁸ See McDowell and Higton (eds), *Conversing with Barth*, ch. 1. Indeed, Barth’s study was organized in such a way as to allow him to converse continually with von Kirschbaum.

theologians, times and thoughts, in order that the theological legacy he left behind may live as a flowing river rather than stagnate like an old pond.⁹ The idea of ‘Barthians’ was anathema to Barth, however much he liked people to agree with his positions.¹⁰ As a Protestant theologian, he advocated *ecclesia semper reformanda*¹¹—a reformation which must equally be applied to his own thought.

Furthermore, this study reacts against those thinkers who do not recognize in Barth the vital importance of particularity. It seeks to underline the importance of reading Barth in a Trinitarian manner, reading the Trinitarian nature of I/1 as the lens through which all of his subsequent dogmatics must be read.¹² This is particularly important when one is confronted with critiques of Barth on the Holy Spirit and on particularity. The centrality of Jesus Christ for Barth is not such that it leads to Christomonism, but is instead grounded in Trinity.¹³

⁹ For a discussion of the need to interpret Barth thus, see John Colwell, *Actuality and Provisionality: Eternity and Election in the Theology of Karl Barth* (Edinburgh: Rutherford House Books, 1989), 315.

¹⁰ Barth cites the danger of Barthian scholasticism, using *CD* as a Protestant *Summa*: *TT*, 12.

¹¹ *IV/2*, 713.

¹² This is not to say, however, that the argument of this book necessarily accords with Molnar *et al.* over McCormack *et al.* See Paul D. Molnar, *Divine Freedom and the Doctrine of the Immanent Trinity: In Dialogue with Karl Barth and Contemporary Theology* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 2002), 61–4; Edward Chr. van Driel, ‘Karl Barth on the Eternal Existence of Jesus Christ’, *Scottish Journal of Theology* 60, no. 1 (2007); Bruce McCormack, ‘Grace and Being: The Role of God’s Gracious Election in Karl Barth’s Theological Ontology’, in *Cambridge Companion to Karl Barth*, ed. John Webster (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); and Bruce McCormack, ‘Seek God Where He May Be Found: A Response to Edwin Chr. Van Driel’, *Scottish Journal of Theology* 60, no. 1 (2007). The present work attends principally to the economic dynamics of the Spirit and the Son, rather than considering the immanent Trinity: thus, space does not allow a thorough entry into this debate. As will be seen in Chapter 2, the doctrine of election takes a primary position in this book. However, it will become clear in this work that eternity takes a central role as a concept alongside election. It is believed that in the doctrine of eternity (which Barth worked on after his 1936 realization over election) can be found a way of mediating between the two conflicting presentations of Barth which could also allow McCormack to support more fully his assertion: ‘I should emphasize again, before proceeding, that I have never held that the revision of Barth’s doctrine of election meant a break with *all* that went before. . . . *Church Dogmatics*, II/2, is, for me, like the peak of a mountain’ (McCormack, ‘Seek God Where He May Be Found’, 71).

¹³ Jeannine Michele Graham, *Representation and Substitution in the Atonement Theologies of Dorothee Sölle, John Macquarrie and Karl Barth* (New York: Peter Lang, 2005), 194–5.

(d) Questions about the study of Fathers

The book arises from a further concern over the separation of historical from systematic theology. If systematic theology is to be theology, it must recognize the importance of history; if historical theology is to be theology, it must recognize its importance in shaping present-day Christianity.¹⁴ These two disciplines should not be separated. This means that early Christian theologians should not be forgotten in the formation of theology, nor seen only as historical figures. However, it simultaneously means they should not simply become a scholastic yardstick for contemporary theology; these theologians must be brought into dialogue, questioned, and stretched. This work is not about ‘who wins’ or ‘who is better’ out of Barth and Origen, but how these two figures in creative dialogue can help *us* better to understand the question of the economic dynamics of Spirit and Son. The book hopes, therefore, to embody a method of theological enquiry which values the living legacy of great theologians of the past in order to use those theologians in the present formation of theology, recognizing the importance of patristic thought not only in the past history of the church but also in its ongoing life.

3 METHOD

(a) Approach

The method of this work seeks to reflect the dual intentions of providing interpretation and formation in theology. The argument is structured in two parts—the first considering the economic dynamics of the Son, the second the Spirit. Each of these sections is comprised of three chapters—the first an interpretation of Barth, the second an interpretation of Origen, and the third a formative chapter, building on the preceding chapters, of creative and critical dialogue between Origen, Barth, and the author. The approach of

¹⁴ See further Greggs, ‘Why Does the Church Need Academic Theology?’, 28–30.

producing a book comprising of one section on Barth and one on Origen with a short comparative conclusion has been avoided. Instead, the two theologians have been brought into dialogue in a manner which is not only reflective but formative for theology, indicative of the manner in which the research for this study has been undertaken—a simultaneous study of Origen and Barth. This is not to say that previous Barth and Origen study has been ignored: the Barth chapters contain consideration of Barth scholarship; the Origen chapters, consideration of Origen scholarship. However, in the dialogue chapters, these two figures are brought into conversation with each other and more general biblical and systematic scholarship.

(b) Why Barth and Origen?

The decision to study Barth and Origen results from a belief that these two theologians are the theological greats of their respective periods. Origen was the first ever ‘systematic’ theologian, and, although later anathematized, his influence can be seen in many of the subsequent concerns of the early church. Similarly, Barth is the one figure of twentieth-century theology whose contribution is so great that it cannot be avoided (even if it is to be opposed). Yet, it might still seem rather peculiar to study these two giants together, especially for those who know one, other, or both only by reputation. To those who know them through reading their works, however, it is hoped the grounds for dialogue seem ineluctable.

Both theologians were firmly ‘church’ theologians: their concern was for the church of which they were a part in their respective lifetimes, but not to the exclusion of a concern for wider society. However, both were in some ways outsiders within that church: Origen had a troubled ordination, never reached any ecclesiastical heights (such as the position of a bishop), caused scandal for reputedly castrating himself, and was eventually anathematized; Barth spent most of his life in Basel (rarely travelling until he was much older), was viewed with suspicion by considerable sections of the academic community, and caused scandal through his rather strange

relationship with von Kirschbaum.¹⁵ Furthermore, both theologians mark part of the quieter stream of tradition in Christian theology that extends the hope of God's salvation to all humanity.¹⁶ Both also lived in a time of persecution: for Origen this was more clearly so, but Barth's involvement in the Confessing Church and opposition to Hitler similarly marked a form of Christian faith that could lead to martyrdom (as it did for Bonhoeffer). Moreover, although strongly influenced by the philosophy contemporary with them, both theologians desired to be biblical in approach without succumbing to biblical fundamentalism. Rather, both were (to employ a modern term) Christocentric, realizing that Jesus Christ is God's revelation and scripture is revelation inasmuch as it is about Him.

This said, no major work bringing Origen and Barth into dialogue exists.¹⁷ A number of significant figures have written on both separately, for example, von Balthasar and Rowan Williams. However, little exists bringing the two into conversation.¹⁸ This may not be surprising when one considers that Barth makes little use of Origen and seems not to understand his works in any detail.¹⁹ However, it is

¹⁵ On the life of Origen, see Jean Daniélou, *Origen*, trans. Walter Mitchell (London and New York: Sheed & Ward, 1955), 3 51; Henri Crouzel, *Origen*, trans. A. S. Worrall (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1989), 1 51. On the life of Barth, see Eberhard Busch, *Karl Barth: His Life from Letters and Autobiographical Texts*, trans. John Bowden (London: SCM, 1976). Barth's own sense of isolation is brought out clearly in IV/4, p.xii.

¹⁶ As Ludlow correctly observes, it is most appropriate to discuss the issues surrounding universalism through the patristic and modern periods, as these mark the periods when the theme has been most discussed. See Morwenna Ludlow, *Universal Salvation: Eschatology in the Thought of Gregory of Nyssa and Karl Rahner* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 8.

¹⁷ John David Dawson does construct his work around Origen and Frei (who was heavily influenced by Barth) in his *Christian Figural Reading and the Fashioning of Identity* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California, 2002). Both Origen and Barth are mentioned in certain works by other authors in close proximity. For example, Pannenberg draws on both, e.g. in his discussion of election (Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology Vol. 3*, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1998), 440ff.).

¹⁸ Hunsinger, *Disruptive Grace*, does discuss each of them in his consideration of universalism, but does not bring them into formative dialogue: he, instead, pairs Barth with Maximus the Confessor, and Origen with J. A. T. Robinson (234 9 and 242 8).

¹⁹ Barth's references to Origen in *CD* can be found at I/1, 276 7 (listing *Peri Archon* as a regular dogmatics), 352, 439, and 482 3 (criticizing Origen's subordina

believed that precisely because of this Barth and Origen can be brought into genuine dialogue: the lack of use of Origen by Barth can actually be construed positively in that there is scope for a new and formative dialogue that can creatively further theology, forcing one to engage in something beyond the descriptive with each figure. It is believed that this is all the more creative given that both theologians lived in a time when the rules of theology were not concretely set, having not reached Nicea by the time of Origen and having gone through the Enlightenment and liberal theology by the time of Barth. Both theologians correspondingly have to reason from first things, and so an insight into the inner logics of both is possible from a consideration of how each reaches his conclusions. Moreover, both theologians lived in times when Christianity was not the dominant and powerful monolith it was from the age of Constantine to the French Revolution, and living in such times raises directly the question of the salvation of those outside of the church and the simultaneous question that results of the place for Christian faith in that setting. It is the ecclesially focused natures of the two in pluralist settings which makes their theologies so interesting for the question of soteriology.

tionism); I/2, 548 (on the Bible), 603 (as an 'ecclesiastical writer' compared to a church Father); II/1, 200 (quoting *DePrinc.* I.3.1 on the incomprehensibility of God), 443 (referring to *DePrinc.* I.Pref.4 on the oneness of God), 571 (on Thomist interpretations of Origen); III/1, 29 (referring to *DePrinc.* II.9.4 on the goodness of God in creation); III/2, 153 (citing Origen in favour of *creatio ex nihilo*), 573 (in a very brief discussion of pre existence of souls); III/3, 156 (on the Son of Man Himself being the Kingdom in Origen's writing), 300 (by implication rejecting the notion that there might be salvation even for the devil), 370 (again quoting *DePrinc.* on angels), 393 (on Thomas's rejection of Origen on the corporeality of angels), 406 (on angelology); III/4, 455 (citing Origen among those who declared that *militia Christi* is incompatible with taking part in carnal warfare); IV/1, 180 (citing *DePrinc.* Pref.4 to demonstrate that Origen thought it self evidently established as a rule of faith that the *Logos homo factus mansit, quod erat*); IV/2, 13 (citing Origen's ascetic tendencies but still referring to him as 'great'), 162 3 and 198 (on Christ Himself as the Kingdom), 738 (on *eros* and *agape*). While this may seem a significant number of references to Origen, 24 mentions of him in a work of over six million words hardly suggests an important interlocutor. What is more, references to Origen are either from general knowledge of the history of his life or from *DePrinc.* (and principally only the preface and book I). Indeed, it is worth noting that Origen is mentioned less in *CD* than Marcion (who is mentioned 48 times in the work). However, in Barth's study there can be found annotated copies of Origen's *Prayer*, *CCel.*, and *Martyr*.

(c) **Some honesty about some problems**

It must be recognized, however, that considering these two theologians is not an easy exercise. A number of difficulties exist and must be highlighted to the reader.

i. History and time

With any such piece of research there exists the necessity of being careful not to force comparisons and similarities onto two such different theologians. It is important to remember them in their extremely different times and contexts, and always to appreciate them within the framework of their entire work, not simply to select what seem to be parallel issues without consideration of the broader theological motivations of their works. To help to counter this, the research for this book has engaged a broad reading of both Origen and Barth in order to appreciate individual issues and doctrines within their holistic theological contexts. Research has also taken place into the historical situations of both third-century Christianity and nineteenth- and twentieth-century Germany and Switzerland, with consideration of historical issues particularly to be found in the footnotes. The work seeks also to consider *why* each theologian makes the theological judgments he does in order not to divorce either from his particular context, and also to seek to understand better the inner logics and reasoning in their thought in very different contexts. The argument seeks, furthermore, to be constructive, rather than simply to give a series of parallels. In that, there is greater freedom to use aspects of Barth's and Origen's theologies where there is disagreement than in a plainly comparative piece.

ii. Being overly systematic

Another difficulty that exists with a project such as this is the risk of becoming overly systematic. This exists in two ways. In the first instance there is the danger of becoming overly systematic with the comparison between the two—forcing a structure alien to both onto each. Secondly, there lies the danger of systematizing the theme of

this study (soteriology) too greatly; this is particularly problematic in seeking to bring together systematically two theologians who are already themselves (in some ways) systematicians. In attempting to overcome this difficulty, an eye will continually be kept on the complexity of scripture (especially in the dialogical chapters).

iii. Being overly creative

With the desire to be constructive in the argument contained in this book, a concern arises that one might not do justice to each of the theologians studied. This would be a concern even for a work singularly on one or the other: both Origen's and Barth's writings are simply too large to be able to be comprehensively treated in one work. In this study there exists the further concern that, in seeking to bring them into dialogue, each theologian might not be sufficiently considered in his particularity. To counter this, the secondary literature on the two theologians and their corpuses has been read as research for the work. Moreover, the chapters specifically on Origen and Barth individually are written in some senses to stand alone as (perhaps somewhat conservative) work on Origen and Barth, while the dialogues seek to build on these: to be overly creative with either Origen or Barth in the chapters which attend specifically to each of these would be to cut off the branch on which the more dialogical and creative chapters of the book sit.

iv. Language

A further difficulty with the study comes in terms of language. This is not only in terms of the necessity of dealing in at least three (Greek, Latin, and German); the length of the book means that only limited consideration of linguistic matters has been possible, and they are raised only where they are significant, although the original languages have been consulted throughout. A greater difficulty lies, however, in terminology. A piece of theology which spans two theologians separated by a millennium and a half must recognize the gross differences in the use of terms (theological and philosophical) in the works of each. Here, two things must be noted. Firstly, the

work is intended primarily to be a piece of contemporary systematic theology. Therefore, although a major pre-Nicene theologian is used, the questions posed to him are questions of contemporary importance. It is hoped that in this way Origen's thought is not abused, even if the themes and the terminology used to express those questions are modern. This is of particular relevance in the dialogical chapters where the argument seeks most clearly to be constructive.²⁰ Secondly, the work seeks to build its own terminology in order to overcome the problems of staging a conversation between two theologians so greatly separated by time. The book seeks to do this by identifying the inner logics and reasoning of the theologians in their own historical and linguistic settings, and uses this to stage the dialogue and theological performance.

v. What counts as Origen's corpus?

A significant difficulty exists in establishing what counts as Origen's corpus. The loss of Greek texts for a considerable number of Origen's works,²¹ alongside discrepancies in translation between the Greek and the Latin lead to enormous problems in establishing what Origen, the historical man, actually wrote.²² This is further complicated by the ensuing politics over the orthodoxy of Origenism and Origen in the centuries after his death. Moreover, Rufinus admits to giving a non-literal translation of Origen's work, instead offering the true meaning of it.²³ For the purpose of this study, a number of points should be noted. Firstly, in a work on Origen and Barth which seeks also to provide a formative theology, space simply does not allow a thorough treatment of the provenance of each of the texts. The establishment of the identity of Origen in comparison to his translators is, secondly, not the primary purpose of the study itself.

²⁰ It must also be noted that this problem also arises with Barth. This book, for example, to avoid confusion speaks in the dialogical chapters of 'persons' in the Trinity and not 'modes of being'.

²¹ Not only in terms of texts which have been lost altogether, but also in terms of those we possess only in the Latin. For example, of the 574 known homilies of Origen, only 22 survive in Greek.

²² For more on the reliability of the Latin texts, see for example, *HomGen.&Ex.*, 30 43; *HomJosh.*, 13 17; *HomLk.*, pp. xxxii xxxix; and *CommRom.*, 12 19.

²³ *De Princ.* Pref.2.

This work is theological: it is theological such that it builds upon the works of others, but it is nevertheless primarily a theological exercise. The purpose of the work is not to establish who Origen is over and against his redactors and translators. Rather, it seeks to understand the wisdom Origen's corpus has to offer to the topic of the economic dynamics of the Spirit and Son. Thirdly, there is the danger that, in such a piece as this, one might construct the Origen one wants in one's own image, with statements that agree with one's own presentation of Origen considered authentic, and those not, inauthentic. This is particularly the case, no doubt, with regard to pneumatology. Therefore, for the purpose of this book a broad and comprehensive approach to Origen's corpus has been taken: Latin and Greek texts have been utilized and trusted. This is because the study seeks to learn all it can from Origen for the sake of the more constructive aspects of the book. Nevertheless, attention is paid in the footnotes in the chapters on Origen to critical points at which the reader is made aware of certain discrepancies that exist between the Latin and Greek, and problems over the authenticity of certain quotations are highlighted, particularly with a mind to the dangers of Origen's translators reading into his work later Trinitarian assumptions.

vi. What about the Father?

The final difficulty of this study is the recognition that it is not able to deal with the whole of the Trinity. This is not out of a desire to avoid consideration of the Father, but because space does not allow it. In some ways, however, this is apt for two theologians who protect the very Godness and mystery of God with the Father.²⁴ Although all the Trinity is involved in every work of the Trinity, the Father's involvement in the economy is often as the person who protects the sovereign power of God in all of His works.²⁵ It is hoped, therefore, that the argument of this book is in no way binitarian (nor suggestive of that for either Origen or Barth), but rather one which seeks to consider one particular aspect of the Trinitarian relations—that of the economic dynamics of Spirit and Son.

²⁴ E.g. I/1, 393 cf. *De Princ.* I.1.

²⁵ E.g. I/1, 324 cf. *De Princ.* I.1.8.

4 ARGUMENT

This book considers that those dynamics are thought of in similar ways by both Origen and Barth, with each of them employing similar inner logics. Building on chapters on Origen and Barth, it seeks to establish that a proper understanding of the eternal plan and being of God in the person of Jesus Christ accounts for a universal salvation of humanity, regardless of individual professed religious beliefs. When the eternity of God is given a proper and prominent position in soteriology, one can see that salvation is not for God a second plan, but is from His position as Alpha and Omega a work of restoration, albeit something new for humanity in time: salvation properly understood should seek not to separate creation and eschatology but to read each through the other. However, this salvation is not achieved through a general principle or rule, but through the very particularity of the Son in whom all humanity is saved. The sense in which this ‘in’ must be understood should be actual rather than instrumental: particular human beings are saved in their relation to Christ’s humanity or (in Origen’s language) as reasonable creatures in relation to the Logos. The particularity of Jesus Christ has a universal implication for all particulars which are saved in Him: in Him, eternity and temporality are not in dialectic, and all human temporality finds salvation in His. This is not, however, in a way which removes individual particularities, but one which establishes them in Christ who was Himself particular and historical.

The second section of the book seeks then to establish the further place for human particularity in the work of the Spirit. Here, one finds the reverse dynamic to that of the Son’s economy: while the particularity of the Son has universal effects for all particulars, the universality of the Spirit particularizes that universal to individuals and communities in the present. The work of the Spirit is, therefore, the particularizing work of God in the present in the church and Christians. This is not in a way which separates Christians from all other humans as saved in comparison to those who are damned. It is, instead, in a manner in which Christians are led into the greater depths of God, in a way which allows multiple densities of God’s Spirit to be present with humans and human communities in their

temporal particularities. This allows for the place of faith, ongoing history, community etc. within a soteriological schema which is universalist. It is believed that the Spirit is the means by which to avoid the binaries of saved-damned or heaven-hell while still creating room for speech about particular faith communities and the importance of the decision of faith. In many ways this is a reversal of the Spirit's normal role: not a general *Geist*, the Holy Spirit is emphatically the *Holy* Spirit, particular and involved in particulars.

It is believed that the inner logics and the conception of the dynamics of the Spirit and Son in Barth and Origen provide the foundation for the movement of this argument, and that it is this chiasmic pattern of the particularity of the Son effecting a universal work and the universality of the Spirit effecting God's particular work that results from this conversation which spans one and a half millennia.

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Part I

Universalism in the Son

This part examines a genuinely Christian universalism which is grounded in salvation in the Son, a salvation which is neither simply pluralist nor exclusivist. It also seeks to articulate eternity properly in salvation, and to do so in a manner which does not undermine (but rather underscores) present temporality and human particularity. To do this, it examines and brings into dialogue Barth's doctrine of election and Origen's doctrine of apokatastasis.

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2

The eternal election of humanity in Jesus Christ (Barth)

1 INTRODUCTION

The foundation for Barth's economic dynamics of the Son is found in his doctrine of election (*Erwählung*), which can hardly be overestimated in importance.¹ It marks Barth's strongest break with his Reformed tradition, as Barth himself is aware.² Moreover, his extraordinary decision to discuss the doctrine within his volume on the doctrine of God gives election a position in which it has precedence over all subsequent doctrines, and provides the medium for the discussion of the doctrine of God begun in the first part of the volume: it is only because of God's election that humans exist and can speak of God at all. Election logically is the prior step that allows God's self-revelation to take place, and it is God's decision in election that leads to His self-revelation to the world in the person of Jesus Christ.

¹ Indeed, election has been described as the 'heartbeat' of Barth's theology. E.g. Hans Urs von Balthasar, *The Theology of Karl Barth*, trans. S.J. Edward T. Oakes (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 1992), 174; cf. Graham, *Representation and Substitution*, 197, and McCormack, 'Grace and Being', 92.

² II/2, p. x. Moreover, as Torrance reminds us, election marks the point where Calvin was most dependent on Augustine, thus bringing Barth to an even more radical disjuncture with the tradition (Thomas F. Torrance, *Karl Barth Biblical and Evangelical Theologian* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1990), 189). On Barth and Augustine, see also Oliver Crisp, 'Augustinian Universalism', *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 53, no. 3 (2003), 137ff. Barth himself goes further, also criticizing Lombard, Aquinas, Isidore of Seville, Gottschalk, and the Reformers on election (II/2, 16-17).

Barth justifies his discussion of election within the doctrine of God on the grounds of scripture, rejecting all other bases for the doctrine.³ The implications of this are considerable. McCormack is correct in seeing the doctrine as the 'ontic ground' and 'capstone' of Barth's dogmatics:⁴ the doctrine is worked out through the volumes of *CD* that follow alongside and in connection with the Trinitarianism espoused in Volume I.⁵ Election forms the conceptual framework in *CD* for the doctrine of God;⁶ covenantal understandings of creation;⁷ anthropology;⁸ providence;⁹ theodicy;¹⁰ the ethical material;¹¹ and undergirds his doctrine of reconciliation.¹² Although the term may be distasteful in sensitive Barthian mouths, election (along with its corresponding concepts of time and eternity) fulfils the function of metaphysics in Barth's biblically grounded dogmatics.¹³ It is no doubt

³ II/2, §32.2. Barth relies on the *sensus plenior* of scripture as he develops his doctrine of election. This is combined with a use of individual texts (such as Rom. 13.8, Jn 1.1 14, and Eph. 1.4) and specific *pericopes* (such as the account of Judas's death) which point towards what Barth sees as the *sensus plenior*. The danger of this is that he decides on a position for which he claims the overarching sense of scripture, which he then proves by citing individual texts that confirm his predecided norm. This problem is furthered by Barth's presumption that he knows what the Bible means when biblical scholars lack agreement (S. W. Sykes, 'Barth on the Centre of Theology', in *Karl Barth: Studies of His Theological Method*, ed. S. W. Sykes (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), 49). It is not the present writer's belief that Barth follows this path completely. Nevertheless, a vigilant eye will be kept on the Bible throughout this piece.

⁴ McCormack, 'Grace and Being', 92.

⁵ Balthasar, *The Theology of Karl Barth*, asserts that a radical reaction to the doctrine of predestination can be seen even in the not fully dialectical first edition of *Romans* (174). It is also clearly evident in *GD*, 440 75. However, the present work is concerned with Barth's mature development of the doctrine following the work of Peter Barth presented at the 1936 *Congrès international de théologie calviniste* and the work of Pierre Maury which laid the foundations for Barth's own reworking of the doctrine of predestination. On this, see Bruce L. McCormack, *Karl Barth's Critically Realistic Dialectical Theology* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 22; and McCormack, 'Seek God Where He May Be Found', 63 6.

⁶ II/2, chapter VII, esp. §§32 3.

⁷ III/1, esp. §41.

⁸ III/2, 'The Creature', esp. §43 5 and 47.

⁹ III/3, §§48 9.

¹⁰ III/3, §50.

¹¹ E.g. II/2, chapter VIII.

¹² IV/1 3.

¹³ The relationship between Barth's uses of the Bible and philosophy is a complex one. Clearly Barth himself brings certain presuppositions to the texts he uses. He discusses the relationship between philosophy and biblical exegesis in forming

for this reason Barth seems most willing overtly to be a preacher when dealing with this doctrine:¹⁴ he is desirous that his thoughts have scripture rather than philosophical speculation as their master, and wants to emphasize that his Geneva gown is most certainly not just a philosopher's cloak, despite any similarities.¹⁵

Barth's presentation of the doctrine has sparked considerable discussion and critique.¹⁶ Many accurate summaries of Barth on

dogmatics in I/2, 728-40. Barth is clear that philosophy is crucial in exegesis as servant but not as master. He asserts that one cannot replace philosophy with a 'dictatorial, absolute and exclusive theology' and that theology must not forget that in itself and apart from its object it is a hypothetical form of philosophy (I/2, 734). For Barth, to write a biblically grounded dogmatics is to be aware of 'essential distance between the determinative thought of Scripture and our own imitative thought determined as it is by our own philosophy' (I/2, 730). Indeed, Higton has advocated that Barth's thought is not a static system, but a dynamic attempt to teach readers to read scripture and the world differently (Mike Higton, 'The Fulfilment of History in Barth, Frei, Auerbach and Dante', in *Conversing with Barth*, 136-7). Nevertheless, Barth is able to admit: 'In attempting to reflect on what is said to us in the biblical text, we must first make use of the system of thought we bring with us, that is, of some philosophy or other' (I/2, 729). See here Andrew Louth, 'Barth and the Problem of Natural Theology', *Downside Review* 87 (1969), 276; and Colin Gunton, 'No Other Foundation: One Englishman's Reading of *Church Dogmatics* Chapter V', in *Reckoning with Barth: Essays in Commemoration of the Centenary of Karl Barth's Birth*, ed. Nigel Biggar (Oxford and London: Mowbray, 1988), in which Gunton argues Barth is still tainted with the syndrome of the Enlightenment, despite his seeming opposition to it (64ff.). However, as much as philosophy may be a servant in helping Barth to understand what underlies everything, it is such only as it is servant to the master of the Bible from which Barth claims to draw his doctrines. It is worth observing, moreover, that McCormack seems correct in stating that Barth's anti-metaphysical stance is a rejection of a particular way of knowing concerned with observing the phenomena around one and deducing or inducing a first cause. Knowledge of God could come only in terms of God's self disclosure in Christ (McCormack, *Karl Barth's Critically Realistic Dialectical Theology*, 246); the first cause of this self disclosure is election.

¹⁴ Interestingly, Berkouwer cites pastoral concerns as at the heart of Barth's reworking of the doctrine of election (G. C. Berkouwer, *The Triumph of Grace in the Theology of Karl Barth*, trans. Harry R. Boer (London: Paternoster, 1956), 95ff.).

¹⁵ II/2, 148-9. Here, Barth advocates that basing his doctrine on Christ is more Christian and biblical and less philosophical. He does admit that there is little directly on election in the Bible, but claims its whole subject is the eternal and electing God. In II/2, 18, he goes on to ask that the doctrine be assessed on the basis of whether or not it 'is understood in conformity with the Bible and therefore with divine revelation'.

¹⁶ The present chapter presumes this dialogue, and references previous scholarship throughout. Given the economic focus of this book, space does not allow thorough reflection on this theme in terms of the immanent Trinity and the reader is directed to McCormack, 'Grace and Being'; Molnar, *Divine Freedom*, 61-4; Kevin

election exist and it will not be the purpose of this chapter merely to recount the work achieved by others.¹⁷ Instead, following a brief introduction to the doctrine, the work will follow the approach of such commentators as Jüngel,¹⁸ reflecting reparatively on criticism of Barth and following an analytical approach to the doctrine within the framework of the larger theme of universality in Christ. Primarily, the chapter will argue that this doctrine is the foundation of Barth's soteriology in terms of the eternal election of humanity in Christ.¹⁹ It will be advocated that this doctrine tends very strongly in a universalist direction. However, the principal focus of this chapter is to demonstrate that these universalist leanings do not in any way undermine particularity. This study will provide the reflective theological material for the formative aspect of the book's interpretation of universal salvation in the Son in Chapter 4.

2 SIMULTANEITY OF ELECTION IN CHRIST

The central determining issue for Barth's discussion of election is the person of Jesus Christ.²⁰ Following and refining a step taken by his

W. Hector, 'God's Triunity and Self Determination: A Conversation with Karl Barth, Bruce McCormack and Paul Molnar', *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 7, no. 3 (2005); Paul D. Molnar, 'The Trinity, Election and God's Ontological Freedom: A Response to Kevin W. Hector', *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 8, no. 3 (2006); Driel, 'Karl Barth on the Eternal Existence of Jesus Christ'; McCormack, 'Seek God Where He May Be Found'; and George Hunsinger, 'Election and the Trinity: Twenty Five Theses on the Theology of Karl Barth', *Modern Theology* 24, no. 2 (2008).

¹⁷ E.g. David F. Ford, *Barth and God's Story: Biblical Narrative and the Theological Method of Karl Barth in the Church Dogmatics* (Frankfurt am Main: Verlag Peter Lang, 1985), ch. 5, esp. 72–90; McCormack, 'Grace and Being'; Graham, *Representation and Substitution*, 197–220; Herbert Hartwell, *The Theology of Karl Barth* (Bungay: Richard Clayton & Co, 1964), 101–12 and 123–31.

¹⁸ Eberhard Jüngel, *God's Being Is in Becoming. The Trinitarian Being of God in the Theology of Karl Barth. A Paraphrase*, trans. John Webster (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 2001).

¹⁹ McCormack records that from his earliest times, Barth was adamant in his rejection of penal substitution theories, which he considered too 'mechanical' (McCormack, *Karl Barth's Critically Realistic Dialectical Theology*, 151).

²⁰ Hartwell, *The Theology of Karl Barth*, is correct in asserting the Trinitarian nature of election, however: election takes place 'in obedience to the Word, spoken to Him by His Father within the innertrinitarian life of God and accepted by Him as the Son in the mutual love of the Holy Spirit' (109).

brother,²¹ Barth asserts that the doctrine of election must be understood Christologically.²² It is Jesus Christ who is the subject and object of election as electing God (*der erwählende Gott*) and elected human (*der erwählte Mensch*). Jesus Christ as God and human stands between them as mediator: in Him God reveals Himself to humanity and humanity knows God; in Him, one sees the will, judgment, deliverance, and gift of God.²³ The event of Jesus Christ is, therefore, the first, truest, and fullest reality of election that there can be. All other election concerns Him: 'He is the election of God before which and without which and beside which God cannot make any other choices.'²⁴ Jesus Christ is God in His movement towards and covenant with humanity.²⁵

This Christological simultaneity of electing God and elected human in Jesus Christ is seen in the self-electing of Christ in obedience to the Father's will. Here, again, one is able to see a radical departure from tradition, as the election of Christ is not passive and confined to His human nature, for Christ is simultaneously electing God:²⁶ only in the active and passive election of the Son of God does humanity have the basis for its election.²⁷ It is in this that one has 'the hope of eternal life that God, who never lies, promised before the ages began' (Titus 1.2). Thus, God's election of all humanity is with and in Christ's own election.²⁸

In seeing Christ as electing God,²⁹ one is able to see the reason for the radical inclusion of the doctrine in Barth's doctrine of God: it reveals

²¹ II/2, 194.

²² While this is seen in a very early form in *GD*, 468 and 470, this early expression does not contain the simultaneity of Christ as elected and electing.

²³ II/2, 94.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ II/2, 7.

²⁶ Barth asserts that Aquinas overlooks this point (II/2, 107). He also states that he differs not in being Christocentric (which he considers Aquinas and indeed Calvin to be), but in seeing a continuity between the Christological centre and the *telos* of God's temporal works, as distinct from those who did not want to bring together the work of God and the eternal presupposition of that work (II/2, 149).

²⁷ II/2, 104 5.

²⁸ II/2, 105 6. Barth cites scripture to buttress his beliefs: e.g., in Jn 13.18 and 15.16 and 19, Jesus points to Himself as the one who elects His disciples.

²⁹ On Christ as Subject of election, see John Thompson, 'The Humanity of God in the Theology of Karl Barth', *Scottish Journal of Theology* 29, no. 3 (1976), 252 3.

who the 'Subject God' is, differentiating Him from all other false and abstract ideas of God.³⁰ Barth is clear from the start that his work in no way concerns a generalized deity. Barth's purpose is to show who the God about whom he writes is. God is the electing God,³¹ and in the primal history of the covenant of God in the union of His Son with Jesus of Nazareth, one sees the gracious relating of God to humanity.³² To present a true doctrine of God, the church must not speak of God simply in Himself, but of all of His ways and works also, and the way in which these have been determined—that is in His primary decision to be electing God in Jesus Christ. In realizing this, one can begin to present a doctrine of the graciousness of God as the beginning of all of these ways and works.³³ In this, one is able to see the self-determination of the electing God: 'In so far as God not only is love, but loves, in the act of love which determines His whole being God elects.'³⁴ Throughout the doctrine of election, Barth's concern seems to be not to separate the will of God from the love of God as certain theologians had done, and as fundamentalism of every theistic variety continues to do.³⁵ It is perhaps because of this that his tone is at times sermoniac:³⁶ Barth does not want to confront humanity with a God who might as well condemn people as save them, who might not be able to allow His deep Yes to overcome His No to sin. Equally, the love of God cannot be separated from the will:

³⁰ II/2, 5 7.

³¹ This is significant for Barth's universalist tendencies. These in no way arise from a pluralistic, liberal belief that all religions or forms of spirituality are expressions of the same God, such as in John Hick, *God Has Many Names: Britain's New Religious Pluralism* (London: MacMillan, 1980), or John Hick, *God and the Universe of Faiths: Essays in the Philosophy of Religion* (London: MacMillan, 1973). In considering electing God, God is separated from all other discussions of or reflections on different gods. The particularity of God as known in the church and Israel is maintained. Barth's soteriological universalist elements do not come at the cost of a denial of revelational exclusivism in Christ and the Bible. See Tom Greggs, 'Bringing Barth's Critique of Religion to the Inter Faith Table', *Journal of Religion* 88, no. 1 (2008), 79, n.16.

³² II/2, 8f.

³³ II/2, 99.

³⁴ II/2, 76. For a fuller description of the effect of the placing of election in the doctrine of God, see Jüngel, *God's Being is in Becoming*. 'God's being in act' means God is His decision, and that the primal decision which is made by and determines God is the election of grace. This leads to 'God's free self determination' (87).

³⁵ Hart, 'Universalism', sees this desire not to separate the love and will of God as the heart of Christian universalism (15 16).

³⁶ For example, his frequent movement into the second person (e.g. II/2, 322 3).

God 'loves in freedom.'³⁷ Although it is an eternal decision, Barth wishes God's electing to remain a free decision in order to remain gracious. There must still be personhood and a centre of self-consciousness behind that loving in freedom,³⁸ a point much of neo-Protestantism had forgotten.³⁹

The placement of election in the doctrine of God sees its most radical outworking in terms of Christ being the elected human,⁴⁰ 'before all created reality, before all being and becoming in time, before time itself, in the pre-temporal eternity of God'.⁴¹ There is no room for a prior decision of God to create, or elect and condemn before the decision to elect Jesus Christ (no *decretum absolutum*);⁴² instead, Jesus Christ is Himself the ultimate *decretum absolutum*.⁴³ This indicates a singularly positive turning towards humanity, in that it is eternally in Christ that God makes this movement and determines Himself for this covenant of grace. Indeed, in Barth's actualistic inner logics,⁴⁴ it might even be

³⁷ II/1, §28, emphasis added.

³⁸ II/1, 285ff.

³⁹ II/1, 288–97.

⁴⁰ On Christ as elected human, see Thompson, 'The Humanity of God', 253ff.

⁴¹ II/2, 94.

⁴² See II/2, 127–45 in terms of Barth's discussion of supra- and post-lapsarianism. In this, Barth sides with supra-lapsarianism, but in a critical way which almost indicates that the doctrine itself does not go far enough. He rethinks the matter in terms of his own theme of Jesus as the particular Subject and object of election. The 'prior' willing of God is not *homo labilis* for the fall, but humanity's 'uplifting and restitution by an act of divine power; the demonstration in time, in the creaturely sphere, of His eternal self-differentiation' (142). Cf. Hartwell, *The Theology of Karl Barth*, 106ff. and 139ff.; J. C. McDowell, *Hope in Barth's Eschatology: Interrogations and Transformations Beyond Tragedy* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), 141; Graham, *Representation and Substitution*, 388.

⁴³ II/2, 100–1. Barth asserts here as elsewhere, it is the election of God that is described in Jn. 1.1–2 as the result of the repetition of *ὁὗτος ἦν* which he considers refers to Jesus being 'the same' who was. In IV/2, 33, Barth draws attention to the further use of this *ὁὗτος ἦν* in the proclamation of the Baptist at v.15 referring to the incarnate Christ. He sees this incarnate one as the referent for the earlier *ὁὗτος*. On the *decretum absolutum*, see Colin Gunton, 'Karl Barth's Doctrine of Election as Part of His Doctrine of God', *Journal of Theological Studies* 25, no. 2 (1974), 382. On Christ as *decretum concretum*, see Berkouwer, *Triumph of Grace*, 103.

⁴⁴ On actualism, see George Hunsinger, *How to Read Karl Barth. The Shape of His Theology* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), esp. 30ff. A different account is given by McCormack, 'Grace and Being', 98ff., and Paul T. Nimmo, *Being in Action: The Theological Shape of Barth's Ethical Vision* (London: T. & T. Clark, 2007), esp. 4–12. See also, James W. Hanvey, 'Hegel, Rahner and Karl Barth: A Study

stated that God is this movement and turning towards humanity: His economy and ontology cannot be separated.⁴⁵ Thus, for God who is love, election is the act of His love in its most glorious forms of condescension, patience, freedom, overflowing.⁴⁶ In self-electing, God brings the other upwards to Himself, so that He can never again be without it.⁴⁷ Election's nature is, therefore, Gospel.⁴⁸ The dialectic evident in *Romans* remains and can be seen between electing God and elected human in its most extreme form in terms of election and rejection. Humanity continues to need to be rescued by God in its rejection of Him. What is new is that this dialectic is now considered in a wholly Christological way which brings together the Yes and No of God in the simultaneity of the elected and rejected Christ. It is He who demonstrates salvation as its originator and archetype. It is, therefore, in the humanity of the elected Christ that one needs to consider the destiny of human nature.⁴⁹

While the simultaneity of being elected and electing in Jesus Christ may seem dangerous enough,⁵⁰ what is more, in the election of Jesus Christ, God elects for Himself the negative part of predestination—perdition, death, rejection, exclusion, and the No of God.⁵¹ These are the things humanity deserves, and yet God decides in His freedom to suffer them in His self-election in Jesus Christ. This does not excuse human sinfulness, but in election God irreversibly takes its torment to Himself.⁵² Predestination becomes, therefore, not one *modus* of salvation but *the modus* of the divine work of redemption, indeed of all of God's works *ad extra*.⁵³ In it, Christ has willed to take to Himself rejection in order that rejection can never again become the portion of humanity: 'He is *the* Rejected, as and because He is *the* Elect. In view of His election, there is no other rejected but Himself.'⁵⁴

in the Possibilities of a Trinitarian Theology' (D.Phil. dissertation, Oxford University, 1989), 222–5.

⁴⁵ This point is, however, protected by Barth's continual and emphatic insistence throughout *CD* on the 'mystery' of God. See, for example, I/1, 320–1.

⁴⁶ II/2, 9–10.

⁴⁷ II/2, 10.

⁴⁸ II/2, 13–14.

⁴⁹ II/2, 118 cf. 13.

⁵⁰ It raises issues of human freedom, divine freedom, Christology, eternity, history, etc. See below.

⁵¹ II/2, 166.

⁵² II/2, 167.

⁵³ II/2, 191.

⁵⁴ II/2, 353.

It is this which makes the election of humanity in Christ so radical. Belief in the simultaneous nature of Christ as elected and elector sees the self-election of Christ bringing rejection into the sovereignty of God, so that those who reject Him are nonetheless elected in Him, since He has elected to bear their rejection. Barth goes, therefore, beyond the simple binary of Calvin's elected and rejected humanity, by positing the integrity of election and rejection and yet uniting these in the person of Jesus Christ in a chiasmic move in which the elected of God (Jesus Christ) elects rejection in order that the rejected (sinful humanity) may be elect in His election of rejection: Christ suffers rejection on the cross and elects this in order that humanity may be elect even in its rejection of God.

The effects of this on soteriology cannot be underestimated. The election of the community and individuals (who are elect only for the sake of the community⁵⁵) comes to belong to the sphere of the simultaneous divine-human self-election in Christ. Election occurs only in the prior election of Jesus Christ, and cannot be abstractly separated from this. Included in Christ's election is the election of the other—the many 'whom electing God meets on this way'.⁵⁶ Barth writes:

That which has been eternally determined in Jesus Christ is concretely determined for every individual man to the extent that in the form of the witness of Israel and of the Church it is also addressed to him and applies to him and comes to him, to the extent that in His Word the electing God enters with him into the relationship of Elector to elected, and by His Word makes him an elected man.⁵⁷

While it is human election in the form of community and individuals that election concerns, it is only 'in Christ' that this election has its

⁵⁵ II/2, 196. It is also important to note that §34 comes before §35. Balthasar, *The Theology of Karl Barth*, correctly asserts that it is for the sake of the community that the individual is chosen. He sees Barth's initiative in placing the community as a middle term between Christ and the individual as one of an outward opening: 'It breaks open the narrowly individualistic colouring that the Church's claim to be the means of salvation now possesses and opens her to the world' (183). The church becomes, therefore, 'an open space' (*ibid.*). On Barth's prioritizing of the community over the individual in election, see also John Colwell, 'The Contemporaneity of Divine Decision: Reflections on Barth's Denial of Universalism', in *Universalism and the Doctrine of Hell*, 146ff.

⁵⁶ II/2, 195.

⁵⁷ II/2, 309 10.

meaning. Here, one is able to see at work the dialectic of the particular and the universal. While the universal implications of the doctrine seem clear,⁵⁸ the original election of Jesus Christ is what gives particular truth to individual election,⁵⁹ just as it is in witness to this that the particularity of church and Israel is maintained. What both witness to is Christ's self-elected rejection: one can see Christ's self-electing of rejecting humanity in the church and Israel in their positions pre- and post-crucifixion and resurrection.⁶⁰ Election and rejection belong together in the primal decision of Christ to elect for Himself the rejection belonging to humanity.⁶¹

⁵⁸ See, albeit stated critically, Berkouwer, *Triumph of Grace*. See further my consideration of Barth's response to Berkouwer: Tom Greggs, "'Jesus Is Victor': Passing the Impasse of Barth on Universalism', *Scottish Journal of Theology* 60, no. 2 (2007).

⁵⁹ II/2, 310.

⁶⁰ There is a second almost chiasmic movement in Barth: the particular elect of Israel reject and are thus rejected in order that the mercy of God may be revealed in His eternal promise to them despite their rejection (e.g. II/2, 305); just as the rejected elect and are elected in order that the universality of God's election can be witnessed (e.g. II/2, 238ff.). These two communities must exist in simultaneity to indicate the simultaneous election and rejection of Christ and thus the simultaneous rejection and election of humanity in Him (II/2, 205ff.). When one considers the date of this volume's publication (1942), the importance of Barth's speaking of the church and Israel synecdochically as both elected and rejected cannot be underestimated. For more on Barth and the Jews, see Eberhard Busch, 'Indissoluble Unity: Barth's Position on the Jews During the Hitler Era', in *For the Sake of the World: Karl Barth and the Future of Ecclesial Theology*, ed. George Hunsinger (Cambridge and Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2004); Katherine Sonderegger, 'Response to Eberhard Busch', in *For the Sake of the World*; Mark Lindsay, 'Dialectics of Communion: Dialectical Method and Barth's Defense of Israel', in *Karl Barth: A Future for Post Modern Theology?*, ed. Geoff Thompson and Christiaan Mostert (Adelaide: Openbook, 2000); Berkouwer, *Triumph of Grace*, 108ff.; Clement Chia, 'Is Barth a Supersessionist? Reconsidering the Case in the Historical Context of The Nazi Jewish Question' (paper presented at the Society for the Study of Theology, Leeds, 2006); Eugene F. Rogers Jr., 'Supplementing Barth on Jews and Gender: Identifying God by Analogy and Spirit', *Modern Theology* 14, no. 1 (1998), esp. 55-6 and 60-7; Donald W. Norwood, 'Israel and Islam as an Ecumenical Challenge in Barth' (paper presented at the Society for the Study of Theology, Leeds, 2006); and Katherine Sonderegger, *That Jesus Was Born a Jew: Karl Barth's 'Doctrine of Israel'* (Pennsylvania, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992).

⁶¹ One sees this, interestingly, in Barth's discussion of Judas (II/2, 458-506). See Ford, *Barth and God's Story*, 85ff.; David F. Ford, 'Barth's Interpretation of the Bible', in *Karl Barth: Studies of His Theological Method*, 85; Ben Quash, *Theology and the Drama of History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 125; and for a response to such views, McDowell, *Hope in Barth's Eschatology*, 228.

Thus, the relationship between Christ as elected human and all other humans is, for Barth, an actual understanding of election in Christ. Rather than instrumentalizing the ‘in’, election is actual both in terms of the self-determination of God in His act in Jesus Christ and in the resultant identity of Christ with each member of humanity.⁶² Barth summarizes this well: ‘Nor does it mean only through Him, by means of that which He as elected man can be and do for them. “In Him” means in His person, in His will, in His own divine choice, in the very basic decision of God which He fulfils over against every man.’⁶³ Jesus Christ elects humanity as electing God, ‘electing them in His own humanity’.⁶⁴ While His election is unique, it must also be said that ‘His election is the original and all-inclusive election; the election which is absolutely unique, but which in this very uniqueness is universally meaningful and efficacious, because it is the election of Him who Himself elects.’⁶⁵ As such, Christ’s election is the type of all election: although Barth rejects *apokatastasis*, all are saved in Christ’s election of humanity.

Whether or not this amounts to universalism is a hugely disputed area. Although the logic of Barth’s theology clearly seems to point in a universalist direction,⁶⁶ Barth himself at various points in his theology emphatically denied that he was a universalist.⁶⁷ In this much, it may seem that Barth simply presents a dialectic which cannot be resolved, and demands instead a recognition of the mystery of the work of God. However, it is difficult to deny that Barth’s theology tends very strongly in a universalist direction. This is borne out not only in *Church Dogmatics*, but also in Barth’s additional writings. Maxims abound to that effect, and we see it perhaps most clearly towards the end of Barth’s career when he writes regarding universalism:

⁶² III/2, 133.

⁶³ II/2, 117.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ On the logical outcome of Barth’s position, see Berkouwer, *Triumph of Grace*; Oliver Crisp, ‘On Barth’s Denial of Universalism’, *Themelios* 29 (2003); and Oliver Crisp, ‘On the Letter and Spirit of Karl Barth’s Doctrine of Election: A Reply to O’Neil’, *Evangelical Quarterly* 79, no. 1 (2003).

⁶⁷ For example, II/2, 417 and 476 7; and also CD IV/3, §70.3 ‘The Condemnation of Man’.

It would be well not to yield to that panic fright which this word seems to have a way of spreading around it, at least before one has come to an understanding with regard to its possible sense or nonsense . . .

It would be well, in view of the ‘danger’ with which the expression is ever and again seen to be encompassed, to ask for a moment, whether on the whole the ‘danger’ from those theologians who are forever sceptically critical, who are again and again suspiciously questioning, because they are always fundamentally legalistic, and who are therefore in essentials sullen and dismal, is not in the meantime always more threatening amongst us than that of an unsuitably cheerful indifferentism or even antinomianism, to which one could in fact yield oneself on one definite understanding of that conception. One thing is sure, that there is no theological justification for setting any limits on our side to the friendliness of God towards man which appeared in Jesus Christ . . .⁶⁸

Furthermore, in Barth’s rejection of Berkouwer’s analysis of his work, no limitation on the extent of salvation is ever made.⁶⁹ There is certainly no agnosticism in Barth’s approach to the question of universal salvation.⁷⁰ Instead, Barth’s rejection of the category of ‘universal salvation’ is a rejection of any approach to theology in which a principle replaces Christ as a person. It is a rejection of any approach to salvation that does not have at its centre the particularity of Jesus Christ—a particularity that cannot be gained from a principle, not even that of grace. Furthermore, this emphasis on the particularity of salvation in Jesus Christ ensures that the sovereignty of God is in no way depreciated by the universal election of all humanity: God is under no obligation to elect, and in Jesus Christ, one is able to see the mysterious sovereign *will* of God. God is not bound to creation by a principle of universal salvation, but chooses to bind Himself to creation in the particular person of Jesus Christ. That Barth rejects dogmatic universalism on occasion does not mean that Barth posits a limitation of the friendliness of Jesus Christ. Rather, Barth’s rejection of universalism posits a limitation of the

⁶⁸ *HoG*, 49–50. ⁶⁹ *IV/3*, 173–80.

⁷⁰ See here David Fergusson, ‘Will the Love of God Finally Triumph?’, in *Nothing Greater, Nothing Better. Theological Essays on the Love of God. Papers from the Sixth Edinburgh Dogmatics Conference*, ed. Kevin J. Vanhoozer (Grand Rapids and Cambridge: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2001), esp. 195, n.20. Fergusson correctly indicates that the leaning of Barth’s theology is clearly in a universalist direction, and not simply at an equidistant point between limited atonement and universalism.

problems that can arise from such a universal scope for salvation—namely, a lack of particularity. Barth, therefore, rejects universalism as a principle, but he advocates the total and final victory of Christ as a person: his universalism is one which entirely arises from particularity. Barth is a new type of universalist, whose universalism recognizes that there can be no undermining of particularity.⁷¹

3 SALVATION IN CHRIST⁷²

(a) Participation ἐν αὐτῷ

Barth asserts that in God's act of election God stands in relationship to the other 'in an actuality which can neither be suspended nor dissolved.'⁷³ According to Barth, the Reformers thought that it was enough to see Christ's election as the first of the elect according to his human nature. Against this, he argues, 'They missed the fact that this basis is quite insufficient to explain the ἐν αὐτῷ of Eph 1.4.'⁷⁴ Earlier

⁷¹ Space does not allow for a thorough defence of Barth as a universalist. This is a question I have tackled elsewhere, and the reader is directed to Greggs, 'Jesus Is Victor'. For the sake of style and concision, at points this book refers to Barth as a universalist; this is in the sense outlined above and in the referenced article. For further discussion of this theme, see Berkouwer, *Triumph of Grace*; Joseph D. Bettis, 'Is Karl Barth a Universalist?', *Scottish Journal of Theology* 20, no. 4 (1967); Colwell, 'The Contemporaneity of Divine Decision'; J. C. McDowell, 'Learning Where to Place One's Hope: The Eschatological Significance of Election in Barth', *Scottish Journal of Theology* 53, no. 3 (2000); McDowell, *Hope in Barth's Eschatology*, on the general development and implications of Barth's eschatology; Fergusson, 'Will the Love of God Finally Triumph?', esp. 194–5; Trevor A. Hart, *Regarding Barth: Essays toward a Reading of His Theology* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1999), ch. 6, esp. 137–8; and Huninger, *Disruptive Grace*, ch. 10, esp. 242ff. See also below, Ch. 4 §2(iii) and (iv).

⁷² "In Christ" is the key indicator of Barth's soteriological objectivism.' Huninger, *How to Read Karl Barth*, 114.

⁷³ II/2, 7. This section does not seek to offer a further different reading to the various presentations of actualism already noted. It, instead, seeks better to understand the implications of the universal scope and soteriological objectivism of Barth, grounding this in Christ. 'Actual' is, therefore, used in this instance grammatically in contrast to 'instrumental', albeit it does also convey the sense of Barth's actualistic ontology. For discussion of actualistic ontology, see Nimmo, *Being in Action*, 4–12.

⁷⁴ II/2, 110. In this, Barth praises Coccejus and his followers in the early seveneenth century who made a beginning in this direction.

theologians had failed to recognize Jesus Christ as elector and articulated merely a passive election with the result that the elected are not elected in Christ but only for Christ.⁷⁵ However, election is, for Barth, an election which is actual in Christ,⁷⁶ and instrumental in the role of the community which is the medium of this election.⁷⁷ Thus election is not only a passive and objective reality with regard to humanity as a whole, but also an active and subjective reality for members of the Church. There is a clear level of reciprocity about this:

Because God is One; because His eternal Son, the only begotten, the beginning of all His ways and works, is the One on whom God wholly (*individua*) bestows His love; because in this One He has made Himself the God of mankind; because in this One He has called man His son — therefore it is the individual (that is, this or that single man) to whom God's deity for men and God's condescension to men (in time and from all eternity) refer; and it is only in this individual that they also refer to the many and the totality.⁷⁸

The universality of God's election of all humanity in the particularity of the election of Jesus Christ does not obliterate the particularity of the community or individual human beings. However, this in no way undermines the totality of the many: God who elects all humanity in Jesus Christ is the God of the individual and the particular, but this individual is never removed from the many. There is no unhelpful individualism to be found here, but nor is there any form of unhealthy Christomonism at the cost of creaturely particularity.

One way of attending to this dual nature of the universal and particular dynamics of election is in terms of participation in Christ, a participation which universally and passively includes all people,

⁷⁵ II/2, 112 cf. 117. On how best to understand the 'in', see Berkouwer, *Triumph of Grace*, 97–101.

⁷⁶ This comes close to the deep inner logics of actualism within Barth. This was famously pointed to in the early reading of Barth offered in Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Act and Being: Transcendental Philosophy and Ontology in Systematic Theology*, ed. Wayne Whitson Floyd, Jr, trans. H. Martin Rumscheidt, vol. 2, DBW (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996). See, for example, Part B.1. However, one already sees in the previous quotations, Barth's shift from an act so contingent on the freedom of God that it can be dissolved at any moment to one which cannot be suspended or dissolved. The effect of this on Barth's understanding of human and divine freedom will be discussed below.

⁷⁷ II/2, §34.

⁷⁸ II/2, 314.

but which is active for members of the community of the church.⁷⁹ Certainly, and most radically, participation in Christ seems not to be limited to the participation of what might traditionally be thought of as the 'elect' (that is, the church), since the rejected human has participation with the elect in her relationship to them, and in this participation has her own determination.⁸⁰ The logical fulfilment of this claim is that the 'rejected' has participation with those who have participation in the life of God, making participation in Christ, for Barth, a theme for all humanity. In the elected Jesus, one needs always to consider the destiny of the human nature and 'the manner of its participation in this exaltation by the free grace of God'.⁸¹ Participation in Christ, therefore, is a universal theme for all human beings. However, participation in Christ is not only passive for all human beings (including the rejected); it is also active for the believer. This is clearly important for Barth's doctrine of election, in which—alongside the election of all humanity in Christ—he considers both the election of the community and the election to a particular way of life.⁸² Barth asserts that God's concern in the act of election is 'not men as private persons in the singular or plural. It is these men as a fellowship elected by God in Jesus Christ and determined for all eternity for a peculiar service'.⁸³ Participation in Christ in election is, therefore, communion with God by participating in the community of His grace:⁸⁴ the particularity of God's

⁷⁹ This is a distinction made in Graham, *Representation and Substitution*. Graham differentiates active and passive participation: the Christian is engaged in active participation in Christ through the Holy Spirit (see Ch. 5 below); the non Christian is engaged in passive participation (318–20 and 396). A similar distinction is made in terms of active and objective participation in George Hunsinger, 'A Tale of Two Simultaneities: Justification and Sanctification in Calvin and Barth', in *Conversing with Barth*, ed. John C. McDowell and Mike Higton (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), 76–9.

⁸⁰ II/2, 458.

⁸¹ II/2, 118.

⁸² See John Webster, *Barth's Moral Theology: Human Action in Barth's Thought* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1998), esp. 90–1; and Nimmo, *Being in Action*, esp. ch. 2.

⁸³ II/2, 196.

⁸⁴ II/2, 238. On participation in God, see Bruce McCormack, 'Participation in God, Yes, Deification, No: Two Modern Protestant Responses to an Ancient Question', in *Denkwürdiges Geheimnis: Beiträge Zur Gotteslehre. Festschrift Für Eberhard Jüngel Zum 70. Geburtstag*, ed. Ingolf U. Dalferth, Johannes Fischer, and Hans Peter Grosshans (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), esp. 348ff. However, McCormack's

community, the church, is retained in Barth's doctrine of election for all that the latter points in a universalist direction. It is this fellowship with God that calls the elect to be obedient and thankful: God not only elects fellowship with humanity for Himself; He also elects fellowship with Himself for humanity.⁸⁵ In His election, humanity is ordained, moreover, to participation in the glory of God; and it is in witnessing to the overflowing glory of God that the elect know what it is to be involved in eternal life.⁸⁶ The blessedness of the elect human is, for Barth, 'his participation in God's own blessedness'.⁸⁷

It may indeed be some of these themes that make Barth attractive to Roman Catholics,⁸⁸ and uncomfortable for many conservative evangelicals, since there is in Barth an ontological union in Christ:⁸⁹ salvation does not come simply in what Christ does or achieves on the cross, but most definitively in union with His person as it is mediated actively through the community.⁹⁰ In the act of election, 'The being of the elected person is indeed in the being of Jesus Christ, "hid with Christ in God" (Col. 3.3)'.⁹¹

presentation of the Orthodox understanding of *theosis* is to be questioned; see Ch. 7 §7(e) below. This may provide a response to some of the questions posed by Alan J. Torrance, *Persons in Communion: Trinitarian Description and Human Participation* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1996), e.g. 222–3. Quash is, nevertheless, correct in noting Barth's refusal to allow the creature to participate in Christ's saving work and merit (Quash, *Theology and the Drama of History*, 164, n.69).

⁸⁵ II/2, 168.

⁸⁶ II/2, 169. For the contexts of Christian participation (regarding resurrection and the Holy Spirit), see Graham, *Representation and Substitution*, 320ff.

⁸⁷ II/2, 412.

⁸⁸ Barth, indeed, notes his popularity among Roman Catholic readers (IV/2, p. ix). Hart similarly notes that Barth does not fit easily into either Roman Catholic or Protestant camps (Hart, *Regarding Barth*, 72–3).

⁸⁹ This is not to be confused with any mysticism (II/2, 113). However, such a reading of being in Christ also stands in sharp contrast to the almost ethical presentation of Kenneth Grayston, *Dying, We Live: A New Enquiry into the Death of Christ in the New Testament* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1990), 382–93, which for all of its carefulness cannot be accepted.

⁹⁰ On the mediation of the community, see John Yocum, *Ecclesial Mediation in Karl Barth* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004).

⁹¹ II/2, 323.

(b) Time, eternity and freedom⁹²

One of the most discussed aspect of Barth's reworking of the doctrine of election is its effects on the relationship between time and eternity.⁹³ Firstly, it is necessary here to outline Barth's understanding of eternity, and then to see its clear implications for the doctrine of election.

In considering the issue of time and eternity, it is crucial to remember that, for Barth, eternity is the unity of the beginning, middle, and end as one and not three—'pure duration' (*reine Dauer*).⁹⁴ Eternity is not time (which is a creation or a form of creation) since time has a beginning, middle, and end that are distinct. Instead, eternity belongs only to God who is free and unchangeable in this duration.⁹⁵ In Barth's concept of eternity, which he considers to be biblical, he builds on a Boethian presentation of eternity: *Aeternitas est interminabilis vitae tota simul et perfecta possessio*.⁹⁶ However, God's now, which is not subject to divisions of past, present, and future, is *stare* and *fluere* (but not *fluere* in the instability of creaturely time); and *fluere* and *stare* (but without the immutability that belongs to all creaturely *stare*). The eternity of God, therefore, does involve beginning, succession, and

⁹² This is a reflection on the mature version of the doctrine as found in *CD* II/1. Barth's earlier treatment of the dialectic between time and eternity (extremely important in *Romans* and *The Resurrection of the Dead*) essentially made eternity into timelessness. See McCormack, *Karl Barth's Critically Realistic Dialectical Theology*, 262ff.

⁹³ Indeed, Ford sees *CD* as 'standing like a massive, unfinished, but formally simple and consistent sculpture—a spiral round and round the self-expression of God in time' (David F. Ford, 'Conclusion: Assessing Barth', in *Karl Barth: Studies of His Theological Method*, 201, emphasis added). On time and eternity, see the informative but unsatisfactory Robert Jenson, *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: The Bobbs Merrill Co., 1969), esp. ch. 8 (cf. Hunsinger, *How to Read Karl Barth*, 15–19; and on the 'scandal of particularity', Ford, 'Barth's Interpretation of the Bible', 62, and Hart, *Regarding Barth*, 56ff.); Richard H. Roberts, 'Karl Barth's Doctrine of Time: Its Nature and Implications', in *Karl Barth: Studies of His Theological Method*, and Richard H. Roberts, *A Theology on Its Way? Essays on Karl Barth* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1991), esp. ch. 1 (cf. B. D. Marshall, 'Review of Richard Roberts, *A Theology on Its Way? Essays on Karl Barth*', *Journal of Theological Studies* 44 (1993); McDowell, *Hope in Barth's Eschatology*, 41–5 and 123–6; Hart, *Regarding Barth*, ch. 1).

⁹⁴ II/1, 608.

⁹⁵ II/1, 609.

⁹⁶ II/1, 610.

end.⁹⁷ However, it involves these in perfect divine simultaneity (*Gleichzeitigkeit*). Rather than some abstract timelessness, what one sees in Jesus Christ is that time pre-exists in God's eternity as His creation.⁹⁸ The decree of the will of God, for Barth, has its basis in God, and the predisposition of this basis is God's eternity. As the eternal one, He is and has absolutely real time (*wirkliche Zeit*). Present personally at every point of our time, He cannot be this unless He Himself has His own time.⁹⁹

For Barth, a correct understanding of the concept of eternity stems from understanding the real fellowship between eternity and time, God and creature. This means starting with the incarnation in which eternity, without ceasing to be eternity or divesting its power, became time. In Christ, God gives us time; and by submitting Himself to time, He permits created time to become and be the form of His eternity. This does not mean He ceases to be who He is in His own superiority. It involves no lessening of His deity, but is rather a display of the full power of deity. The concept of timelessness is an alien one to God since Jesus Christ's name is a refutation of the idea of God as timeless. This determines that God is not only eternally present to all time but temporal in His eternity in the act of the epiphany of the Messiah, and again in every act of faith in the Messiah.¹⁰⁰

The effect of this doctrine of time and eternity is that God's eternity is more than simply the unity of all times with the goal and purpose of His will. It is the presupposition of this unity. It is necessary for Barth, therefore, to speak of the pre-temporality, supra-temporality, and post-temporality of eternity. This, he asserts, is a biblical distinction within the unity of eternity in which it is possible to see eternity's positive relationship to time since in it God has the power to exist before, through and after time.¹⁰¹ There is, moreover, a need for this relationship to temporality for the sake of the Gospel.

⁹⁷ II/1, 611.

⁹⁸ II/1, 612. For Barth, the form of creation (including time) is the being of God for a reality distinct from Himself. However, Barth states: 'the form of God's being for us and our world is space and time. The prototypes in God's being in Himself which correspond to this form are His omnipresence in regard to space, and His eternity in regard to time' (*ibid.*).

⁹⁹ II/1, 613.

¹⁰⁰ II/1, 617.

¹⁰¹ II/1, 619.

God's pre-temporality means His existence precedes our existence and the existence of all things.¹⁰² It is in this that one can begin to understand the direct relationship to the doctrine of election. Emphatic in his belief in *creatio ex nihilo*, Barth reminds the theologian that creation is not eternal, and yet he claims its time was decided and determined before time: to reconcile the world to Himself, God decided that the world should be. Because of Jesus Christ's central position in this, one must say that all of this was determined beforehand by and in God Himself: 'To say that everything is predestined, that everything comes from God's free, eternal love which penetrates and rules time from eternity, is just the same as to say simply that everything is determined in Jesus Christ . . . we have to recognise that eternity itself bears the name Jesus Christ.'¹⁰³ Thus, God's eternal decision to elect takes precedence even over creation, and results in the work of salvation being the 'first' (rather than a subsequent) decision of God in the ordered simultaneity of His eternity.

Recalling that eternity is the simultaneous possession of all times, this pre-temporality cannot be separated from supra-temporality. God's eternity goes with time, moves with it.¹⁰⁴ Barth writes: 'God's eternity is in time. Time itself is in God's eternity.'¹⁰⁵ The divine life that bears time is God's eternity as supra-temporality. This is evident in the incarnation: it is an image of the height of God bending down to bring peace to humanity, in the proclamation of the angels in Luke 2.14. Incarnation expresses God giving humanity a fellowship and existence with Him, willing not to be alone. Eternity does not cease with the beginning of time, simply to start again at its end. Eternity is in its midst—just as God is. This supra-temporality is at heart the belief that having loved from eternity, God loves now.¹⁰⁶ As Psalm

¹⁰² II/1, 621.

¹⁰³ II/1, 622, justified on the basis of Jn 8.58; Eph. 1.4f.; I Pet. 1.18–19.

¹⁰⁴ See Colwell, 'The Contemporaneity of Divine Decision', 151ff.; Gerhart Sauter, 'Why Is Karl Barth's Church Dogmatics Not a "Theology of Hope"? Some Observations on Barth's Understanding of Eschatology', *Scottish Journal of Theology* 52, no. 4 (1999), 420ff.; and Thompson, 'The Humanity of God', 258ff. On the historical development of this idea in Barth's thought, see McCormack, *Karl Barth's Critically Realistic Dialectical Theology*, 371ff.

¹⁰⁵ II/1, 623.

¹⁰⁶ II/1, 624.

2.6–7 testifies, God’s temporal presence is the *nunc aeternitatis*.¹⁰⁷ This is also expressed in the life of Christ as summarized in John 1.9–10: ‘Because in this occurrence, eternity assumes the form of a temporal present, all time, without ceasing to be time, is no more empty time, or without eternity.’¹⁰⁸

In this simultaneous possession of all time, God is also post-temporal.¹⁰⁹ God is when time will be no more. As created things the world and humanity will be no more, but eternity will be as it has been and is. Therefore, all roads lead to eternity. Any road that leads away from it leads to nothingness since beyond God there is nothing.¹¹⁰ God is, therefore, the unsurpassable future of all time. All life, and everything that has ever been, ends in Him. This is the sense of God’s being ‘all in all’ (I Cor. 15.28). Again one should not think of this as a linear procession: God is already ‘all in all’ supra- and pre-temporally.¹¹¹ Nevertheless, there is in eternity a direction which is irreversible, since all humans are led towards God’s post-temporal eternity.¹¹²

The importance of this to Barth’s doctrine of election scarcely needs emphasizing. Barth’s doctrine of election determines that ‘from and to all eternity God is the electing God.’¹¹³ There is thus an eternal willing of salvation from the primal decision of God, and this is expressed in the eternal existence of Jesus Christ. For many commentators, this appears to suggest that there is a dissolution of time and history.¹¹⁴ This fails, however, to appreciate the careful relationship of time to eternity in

¹⁰⁷ II/1, 625. The richness of Barth’s understanding of eternity should be contrasted here with Tillich’s use of the term, ‘the eternal Now’ in Paul Tillich, *The Eternal Now* (London: SCM, 1963).

¹⁰⁸ II/1, 626.

¹⁰⁹ McDowell, *Hope in Barth’s Eschatology*, correctly re-emphasizes this aspect of Barth’s thought.

¹¹⁰ II/1, 629.

¹¹¹ II/1, 630.

¹¹² II/1, 639.

¹¹³ II/2, 77.

¹¹⁴ For the most thorough discussion of this, see Roberts, *A Theology on Its Way*, ch. 1. In this, Roberts engages in a thorough and fierce criticism of Barth on time, concluding that Barth is ultimately ‘ambiguous’ and seeing the dissolution of time by eternity in Barth’s theology. For Roberts, there is an overly strong influence of Hegel and Kant on Barth that leads him along the path of idealism to the resulting destruction of real human time. The present writer hopes the following discussion

Barth, and to see the importance of simultaneity in Barth's thought. Such criticism might be approached from three angles. Firstly, in seeing eternity as the total and perfect simultaneity of all times, one should not consider there to be a lack of integrity for each individual moment of time. For a lover of Mozart, it seems a musical analogy might perhaps be best: a chord comprises notes which are ordered and can be played in succession, yet which when played simultaneously do not cease to be what they are in themselves, but become something more in their simultaneity while still retaining their distinctiveness and order. Thus, one might understand eternity as the simultaneous playing of the 'notes' of history in a way which does not dissolve their individual integrity. To understand eternity as the simultaneity of all time determines the reciprocity of the relationship: if eternity is comprised of history without its passing form, history too is required for eternity.¹¹⁵ Secondly, such criticism fails to appreciate the co-temporal eternity of God with the world, instead emphasizing the pre-temporal as the single controlling factor.¹¹⁶ Thirdly, this criticism fails to appreciate that there is time in the very eternity of God.¹¹⁷ In the eternal decision to elect, it is clear that time has always in some way existed in the Godhead. As Gunton notes of Barth, the eternal humanity of God in Christ allows a genuine grounding for the concept of human freedom.¹¹⁸ Far from dissolving time, eternity exalts time to a place in the Godhead that has

will allow some redress of the picture painted by Roberts, which he considers to miss the relationship between time and eternity reducing it to a one way relationship in which eternity over takes time. See also here, Berkouwer, *Triumph of Grace*, and Barth's response to him in IV/3, 173-80. Also of note is McCormack, 'Grace and Being'; Hunsinger, *How to Read Karl Barth*, 12-15; and Greggs, 'Jesus Is Victor'.

¹¹⁵ This begins to point towards a potential deeper criticism of Barth – the necessity of incarnation. See below.

¹¹⁶ This point is made well by Colin E. Gunton, 'The Triune God and the Freedom of the Creature', in *Karl Barth: Centenary Essays*, ed. S. W. Sykes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 55ff. Cf. II/2, 185, in which Barth asserts that there is no separation of the temporal and the eternal: election takes place in the present as much as it does in pre-temporal eternity.

¹¹⁷ E.g. III/2, 440-1.

¹¹⁸ Gunton, 'The Triune God and the Freedom of the Creature', 61. For now, it is sufficient to remember that, in Christ, humanity is elected from eternity with the freedom to confirm God's election in obedience. It is God's love which allows humans to do this, calling them to true fellowship and union with Himself. Cf. III/1, 264-6; III/2, 142ff.; III/3, 261.

allowed Barth to be developed along dangerous lines which would portray him standing close to process thought. The universal and eternal nature of election far from destroys the particularity of human temporal existence; in fact, given that election takes place in the particularity of the person of Jesus Christ, human temporality finds its origin and grounds, for Barth, in election. Indeed, in comparison to those who fear that in Barth there is a dissolution of time into eternity, a possible danger might be considered to lie in Barth's concept of time and eternity far more (surprisingly one might think) in a lack of freedom for God over and against the creature.¹¹⁹ Despite being so emphatic an advocate of God's freedom, it seems difficult at times to maintain this alongside a belief in the self-determination of God seen in His relation to humanity in the person of His Son:¹²⁰ there is the danger that God is not free to be God without humankind.¹²¹ Or else, if there is a 'before' for God in terms of this self-determination in election, then there is the danger that God 'becomes' Trinity, which would evince some version of modalism. If this modalism is to be avoided in Barth's presentation, eternal humanity in Christ in the primal decision of God, through which God self-determines Himself, seems to obligate God to incarnation in order that He can be this Being-in-becoming.¹²² Indeed, one might find the reason for what is possibly an overemphasis on the divine perfection of freedom in the perhaps corresponding attempt to maintain the correct balance of paradox and dialectic. The scandal of

¹¹⁹ However, it is important to note here that, for Barth, freedom does not involve any form of arbitrariness. Indeed, his own reworking of the doctrine of election seems to result from his desire to protect the doctrine of God from this (Colwell, 'The Contemporaneity of Divine Decision', 142).

¹²⁰ In IV/2, 113, Barth does assert the non obligatory nature of incarnation, but one is mindful to consider whether this is a logical fulfilment of Barth's position in his discussion of election.

¹²¹ Jüngel, *God's Being Is in Becoming*, foresees this problem: 'In his provenience he [God] is "before" anything which he is obligated to do. But in this very way he is *for* humanity and *against* nothingness. He thus wills to reveal himself, not on the basis of an obligation, but because he obligates himself as *the one who loves in freedom*' (94). One might be concerned to ask whether this works with some form of Boethian understanding of eternity, or whether there is a point before the beginning of eternity in this description.

¹²² This objection has been raised by Hanvey, 'Hegel, Rahner & Karl Barth', 241 and 262ff.

Barth's doctrine of election and eternity is not the scandal of universality; it is, instead, the scandal of particularity.¹²³

(c) Christology

It is clear that the doctrine of election has a considerable impact on Barth's Christology.¹²⁴ What is more, it is also clear that any speech about universal salvation in the Son both is affected by Christology and has effects on Christology: if universal salvation is brought about in Christ's humanity, then it is necessary to consider how that humanity is expressed and the effects of this on the hope of universal salvation. Given Barth's desire to orientate all of his doctrinal reflection on Jesus Christ, and given his willingness to affirm that 'Jesus is Victor' rather than that he was a universalist,¹²⁵ it is imperative to reflect on the relevant Christological considerations for this topic in Barth's theology.¹²⁶

Most significant among these reflections, for the present discussion of particularist universalism, is Barth's rejection of the *λόγος ἄσαρκος*¹²⁷ as a means of speaking of the Son's pre-incarnate

¹²³ This potential difficulty could, however, be overcome by a consideration of the way in which Aquinas understands creation *ex nihilo*. For Aquinas, creation would be *ex nihilo* even if the world were everlasting (that is without beginning or end). This is because to be created out of nothing means primarily to have existence dependent on the will of God, so even an everlasting creation could be *ex nihilo* (*Summa* Q46). If one applied this to the Christological considerations presently under discussion, it would be possible for Christ to have an eternal humanity which did not remove any freedom from God, but existed by virtue of the will of God (which is the case for Barth); thus, eternal humanity would involve no necessity of incarnation for the being of God – only a willed decision.

¹²⁴ It may indeed be truer to say Christology has an impact on election since, for Barth, it is Jesus Christ on whom all theology should be centred.

¹²⁵ IV/3, 173ff.

¹²⁶ Needless to say, this can hardly be a thorough treatment for a work such as Barth's, but it is hoped that salient points that will aid the present discussion and future dialogue are brought out. For the relevance of the following section to the overall movement of the book, see also Ch. 4, esp. §§2–4.

¹²⁷ See Charles T. Waldrop, *Karl Barth's Christology: Its Basic Alexandrian Character* (Berlin, New York, and Amsterdam: Mouton, 1984), 46ff. For a critical perspective, see Ford, 'Barth's Interpretation of the Bible', 74–5; and Ford, *Barth and God's Story*, 129 and 182–3.

existence.¹²⁸ Wishing not to speak of Christ *in abstracto* but *in concreto*, Barth prefers instead to speak of a *Verbum incarnandum*.¹²⁹ As a result, he claims that it is *Jesus Christ* who is ‘before all things’ and in whom ‘all things consist’.¹³⁰ Indeed, Barth even goes so far as to speak of an eternal *λόγος ἐνσαρκος*¹³¹ as the reason for creation, since God already was both fully human and fully divine in Christ.¹³² This presence of Christ in pre-temporal eternity in the decision of God simultaneous to God’s supra-temporal eternity is at the heart of Barth’s sense of the self-election of God in Christ.¹³³ The result of this is to place an eternal humanity in the Godhead in the person of Jesus Christ.¹³⁴

Clearly, there could be dangerous implications to Christology associated with this move. Jüngel considers that some of the dangers of this move are avoided by Barth’s later use of *anhypostasis* and *enhyposstasis*,¹³⁵ but this does not seem sufficient in terms of Barth’s theology at this point. This is not a move made overtly by Barth himself at this point (which Jüngel himself notes), but only later in IV/2, 49–50. Given McCormack records the move to *anhypostasis* and *enhyposstasis* in Barth’s theology in May 1924,¹³⁶ one might conclude that Barth could have made this move explicitly in II/2 should he have wished to do so. Furthermore, because of the

¹²⁸ E.g. IV/2, 33. Barth cites Col. 1.15–16; Jn 1.2, 6.51, 8.58 to support his position. Further relevant reflection on Jn 1 can be found at II/2, 95–8.

¹²⁹ I/2, 165; IV/2, 683; IV/3, 724. Indeed, the gerundive used here implies an obligation that which must be done. This underlines earlier concerns about the freedom of God in Barth’s understanding of election.

¹³⁰ II/2, 98, referring to Col. 1.17.

¹³¹ See Waldrop, *Karl Barth’s Christology*, 106ff.

¹³² III/1, 51 cf. 54.

¹³³ II/2, 104.

¹³⁴ See, for example, *HoG*. Cf. III/2, 155.

¹³⁵ Jüngel, *God’s Being Is in Becoming*, 96–7. A similar point is made by McCormack, ‘Participation in God’, 357ff. Cf. Rowan D. Williams, ‘Barth on the Triune God’, in *Karl Barth: Studies of His Theological Method*, 178–9; Thompson, ‘The Humanity of God’, 256ff.; Hart, *Regarding Barth*, 6; and in a less complimentary way, Alister E. McGrath, *The Making of Modern German Christology: From The Enlightenment to Pannenberg* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986), 113–14. Neat summaries of this doctrine are given by Graham, *Representation and Substitution*, 272–4; and Waldrop, *Karl Barth’s Christology*, 112–15.

¹³⁶ McCormack, *Karl Barth’s Critically Realistic Dialectical Theology*, 19.

rejection of the *λόγος ἄσαρκος* as anything other than the *Verbum Incarnandum*, Barth does not work with any prior conceptions of God or humanity with which to make this move independently of election. The doctrine of *anhypostasis* and *enhyposstasis*, moreover, does not receive the attention by Barth that his commentators give it. Rather, it seems best to understand Barth's use of this doctrine as a means of avoiding so-called Nestorianism, and making clear that the Logos did not inhabit an already existing human being, thereby also rejecting any form of adoptionist Christology.¹³⁷ Instead, the difficulty with Barth here results from there being no definition of either 'God' or 'human' independent of Christ. While this may be in keeping with his general approach, it leads to a seeming inevitable circularity in Christology:¹³⁸ Christ is true God, true human and true God-human; but as God-human, He demonstrates what true human and true God is.

In terms of our purposes, the particular difficulty that arises is that, for Barth, Jesus's human nature gives exhaustive and superior insights to all other presuppositions about humanity.¹³⁹ Yet, there can be no question of human nature as we know it being the same as the human nature of Jesus (thus no *direct* deduction of anthropology from Christology): Christ's human nature is unique.¹⁴⁰ The issue is even more complex, moreover, as Barth claims also later that Christ assumes sinful flesh, and stands in the same relationship to God as fellow humans.¹⁴¹ Indeed, Barth wishes to claim that Jesus is totally like and totally unlike the rest of humanity:¹⁴² 'He is man totally and

¹³⁷ See *ibid.*, 362. It is worth noting here that as well as the insufficiency of pointing to *anhypostasis* and *enhyposstasis*, it is also insufficient to say that Barth moves between Alexandrian and Antiochene Christologies as in George Hunsinger, 'Karl Barth's Christology: Its Basic Chalcedonian Character', in *Cambridge Companion to Karl Barth*, ed. John Webster (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000): Chalcedon is not simply a conflation of the two, nor is one Chalcedonian by speaking *qua* Alexandrian at one moment and *qua* Antiochene another.

¹³⁸ Ford, *Barth and God's Story*, 126, makes this point well.

¹³⁹ III/2, 43 and 47–50.

¹⁴⁰ III/2, 47–50. Barth goes on to assert that it is our sinful distortion which Christ does not have to bear (51–2).

¹⁴¹ For example, IV/2, 25ff.

¹⁴² See Graham, *Representation and Substitution*, 278–89; and Hartwell, *The Theology of Karl Barth*, 185–6. For a general defence of Barth's understanding of humanity, see Stuart McLean, *Humanity in the Thought of Karl Barth* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1981), ch. 4.

unreservedly as we are' and 'He is not only a true man, but *the* true man'.¹⁴³ What could result is a humanity which, while Barth clearly wishes to conceive of Christ in a Chalcedonian way, could find unity with God's divinity at the expense of our own humanity. Certainly there are implications to our consideration of salvation in Christ in this issue. The danger that exists with this is that humanity is saved in its election in Christ's humanity, but a divorce exists between Christ's humanity and all other humanity, rendering that election of our humanity meaningless. Certain commentators see this apparent fault arising directly from Barth's understanding of eternity in which time is superseded by eternity.¹⁴⁴ Far more helpful are commentators who wisely conceive of this distinction between Christ's humanity and ours not as a matter of absolute difference, but in terms of eschatological tension.¹⁴⁵ True humanity for Barth is not the sinful humanity that all other human beings possess; it is the perfect humanity that Christ possesses. This is not a difference of nature between Christ's humanity and all other humanity, but a difference in terms of eschatology. The humanity of Christ is a humanity in which all other humanity will come to share eschatologically. The distinction between Christ's humanity and ours is thus a distinction which arises from time and order, not one which arises from kind. There is no removal of human particularity in Barth's Christology, but there is an establishing of a genuine human particularity from the perspective of eternity. God does not will and elect *homo labilis* for the fall, but humanity for 'uplifting and restitution by an act of divine power; the demonstration in time, in the creaturely sphere, of His eternal self-differentiation'.¹⁴⁶ From the human perspective of time, this distinction between Christ's humanity and ours exists;

¹⁴³ IV/2, 27. It is the present writer's belief that this issue arises from the emphatic simultaneity in Barth's approach to Christology, with exaltation belonging to the human nature of Christ (IV/1) and humiliation to the divine (IV/2) which results in a 'human' God and an 'exalted' human.

¹⁴⁴ These points are asserted in the conclusions of Ford, *Barth and God's Story*, 182-3. For him, this criticism stems out of the rejection of the *λόγος ἄσαρκος* and results (following an argument forwarded by Bouillard) primarily from Barth's understanding of eternity and time.

¹⁴⁵ See McDowell, *Hope in Barth's Eschatology*, 137-45. See below Ch. 7 §7(d). A further possible way of understanding this tension is suggested above in Ch. 4, n.134.

¹⁴⁶ II/2, 142.

from the divine perspective of eternity in the eternal election of humanity in Christ, it does not.

The present writer believes that this is a potentially problematic area for Barth's theology, but one which can be further repaired, building on the prior discussion of Barth's understanding of eternity.¹⁴⁷ First, it is necessary to underline strongly the identity of Christ's humanity with our humanity—from the perspective of eternity the humanity we are destined to be from all eternity, but also from the perspective of time the humanity which is not undermined by Christ's eternal humanity but established and actualized in our becoming truly human.¹⁴⁸ This exists in Barth, as discussed, and must be brought more to the fore in discussions flowing from his work. Clearly, Barth does not ignore the humanity of Christ; but there is perhaps a case for a greater amount of balance at times.¹⁴⁹ For Barth, particularly in his discussion of election, it is important to identify overtly the humanity elected from all eternity in the primal history of the self-determination of God with our humanity in its becoming true humanity (that is, in its temporality). This makes Christ's election of our humanity more fully particularist: election makes us human, and continues to make us more fully human. It is this, second, which needs to be emphasized as His self-determination from all eternity, therefore. It is this real humanity in its becoming which finds its place in the being of God, bringing together time and history in the perfect possession and simultaneity of time and eternity.

This could lead to both a more fully universal understanding of salvation, for all humans who are in Christ in their becoming fully human eschatologically, and a more fully particular emphasis on human particularity, with the identity of that human becoming with Christ's humanity. Furthermore, it may allow for a fuller sense of what it is to be in Christ, allowing for a more positive place for

¹⁴⁷ See also here Ch. 4, §3 (iii) and (iv).

¹⁴⁸ This is articulated well in Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Christology*, trans. John Bowden (London: Collins, 1966): 'Neither does it mean that the statement, "This man is God," adds anything to his humanity. That is the essential point' (107).

¹⁴⁹ This point is well made by Gunton, 'The Triune God and the Freedom of the Creature', 60. See also Waldrop, *Karl Barth's Christology*, 172ff.

humanity in a theology often (wrongly) criticized for its undervaluing of the human. A greater emphasis on the humanity of Christ would truly see the ‘taking up of humanity into the event of the being of God’¹⁵⁰ which seems to be the heart of his doctrine of election, and may remove notions of humanity being mere humanity, seeing it instead as truly the humanity of God. Furthermore, this may provide the necessary framework that Barth lacks in his denial of natural theology.¹⁵¹ Barth in his later work becomes almost overt in this:

We speak of creation, of the *creatura* which is distinct from God yet actualised by Him, of the creaturely world. This was foreseen in the eternal election of Jesus Christ, and specifically called into being in the beginning and as itself the beginning of all things, to be the theatre and setting, the location and background, of the ordinary and extraordinary mediation of His life and work.¹⁵²

These themes need to be brought to the fore in discussions of the economic implications of the doctrine of election. Greater balance is required to ensure the particularity of the human creature is not undervalued.

On a related point, the criticism that Barth’s theology involves passivity in terms of Christ’s humanity must also be discussed. The eternal humanity of Christ in Barth’s theology cannot simply be allowed to be engulfed by the divine through an ἡγεμονικόν.¹⁵³ Although there may be a level of understatement in order to emphasize the gracious election of humanity by God, one cannot deny that Barth does point to Christ’s election of the divine will as a human being.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵⁰ Jüngel, *God’s Being is in Becoming*, 75.

¹⁵¹ Hauerwas may be getting towards this point in his realization that for Barth the Christological nature of reality can mean that there is no neat division of grace and nature (Stanley Hauerwas, *With the Grain of the Universe: The Church’s Witness and Natural Theology* (London: SCM, 2002), 163ff.). Cf. Jüngel, *God’s Being is in Becoming*, 97n. A similar point regarding Barth’s use of the doctrine of the Trinity is also made by Gunton, ‘Karl Barth’s Doctrine of Election’, 389 n.3.

¹⁵² IV/3, 137.

¹⁵³ This is a critique put in slightly different terms in McGrath, *The Making of Modern German Christology*, 94–115, esp. 114–15.

¹⁵⁴ This is a criticism identified by Quash, *Theology and the Drama of History*, 122ff.: the passivity of the creature in Barth. However, Webster, *Barth’s Moral Theology*, offers an emphatic defence of Barth over such criticisms. Clearly, Christ’s election of the divine will is present (II/2, 177–8 cf. 605–6), but there may well be an issue of emphasis and greater balance, given Barth’s desire to emphasize the free grace of God in election.

Certainly in Barth, the electing Christ usually is divine, and rarely human. Barth even seems to ignore the human when he considers Jesus' calling of the twelve.¹⁵⁵ But Barth is attentive to the fact that in terms of the electing aspect of Christ's person, the life of Jesus reveals the Christ who as a human elects God. This is evident in the temptation pericopes,¹⁵⁶ in which Christ rejects the devil, instead electing the will of God, which Barth discusses.¹⁵⁷ He is clear that the mercy of God remains as faithful to Jesus as Jesus is ready to do the will of God: there is a steadfastness on both sides, and it is this which sees Satan resisted, defied, and defeated.¹⁵⁸ For Barth, 'The mystery of the elected man Jesus is the divine and human steadfastness which is the end of all God's ways and works and therefore the object and content of the divine predestination.'¹⁵⁹ While Barth might well be charged with understating these human elections of God,¹⁶⁰ it cannot be denied that they are there. Indeed, Barth does state: 'The purpose and meaning of the eternal divine election of grace consists in the fact that the one who is elected from all eternity can and does elect God in return.'¹⁶¹ This is seen in the event of the revelation of Jesus Christ, who is not a puppet, but who prays, acts, and speaks. Again, this relates to Barth's understanding of eternity: what took place in the life of Jesus was not just a temporal happening, but the eternal will of God 'temporally actualised and revealed in that event'.¹⁶² This temporal actualization cannot be reduced to any system, even that of grace, for its subject is the life of Jesus in which election takes on an historical form.¹⁶³ Clearly one could point to other places in the biblical narrative in which one might see this. In Gethsemane, one sees the human Jesus elect the will of the Father:¹⁶⁴ this is particularly clear in His indication that He could have

¹⁵⁵ II/2, 106.

¹⁵⁶ Mt. 4.1 11 and parallels.

¹⁵⁷ II/2, 122ff.

¹⁵⁸ II/2, 125.

¹⁵⁹ II/2, 126.

¹⁶⁰ 'We cannot assert too strongly that in the election of grace it is a matter of the decision and initiative of the divine good pleasure, that as the One who elects God has absolute precedence over the One who is elected. We can hardly go too far or say too much along these lines, more particularly when we remember that the theme of the divine election is primarily the relationship between God and man in the person of Jesus Christ.' II/2, 177.

¹⁶¹ II/2, 178.

¹⁶² II/2, 179.

¹⁶³ II/2, 180.

¹⁶⁴ Mt. 26.36 56 and parallels. On this theme, see Paul Dafydd Jones, 'Karl Barth on Gethsemane', *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 9, no. 2 (2007), esp.

called upon the Father to rescue Him from arrest.¹⁶⁵ Likewise, the irony of the mocking crowds also suggests that Jesus could have spared Himself the agony of the cross; but Jesus chooses to follow the will of God to the cross. It is for this that He is vindicated in resurrection.¹⁶⁶ Moreover, His sinlessness cannot be seen simply in terms of those sins He did not perform, but must also be seen in His positive choice of the will of God. In attending to these aspects of the life of Christ, more room for human response to the divine election can be found in the person of Jesus who is simultaneously God electing humanity *and* a human electing the will of God. This helps to develop more fully the idea of active participation already discussed which is very clear in Barth's doctrine of election, enabling humanity not only to be elected by God but also to elect God in return. This further provides a place for the contingency of history within the co-temporal eternity of God in Christ's election of God within the contingencies of His own human history. It also provides a full logical basis for the ethical implications of the doctrine of election—an ethics which reflects the movement of God to humanity in humanity's own movement in electing the God of Jesus Christ.¹⁶⁷ The election of God's will by humans in Jesus Christ ensures election does not simply allow God to be for humanity; in Christ, it also allows humanity to be genuinely for God.¹⁶⁸ Within a theology that points in a universalist direction, such an emphasis helps to bring out further the place for *human* particularity both passively *and* actively in Jesus Christ's own true humanity. These are themes which will be discussed further in the chapters on pneumatology below.

157 69; albeit, as he notes, Barth only spends ten pages on his excursus on Gethse mane. There remains, therefore, the need for greater balance.

¹⁶⁵ Mt. 26.53.

¹⁶⁶ See, for example, Phil. 2.8–9.

¹⁶⁷ An excellent discussion of Barth on this issue is to be found in Nimmo, *Being in Action*. Some of the themes Nimmo explores may be found in the current book's discussion of freedom in consideration of Barth's pneumatology, which accords with Nimmo's discussion of the Trinitarian nature of the *concursum* (121).

¹⁶⁸ On this theme, see below Ch. 4, §5(b); Ch. 5, §§3 and 7; and Ch. 7, §7(c).

(d) Resurrection and theodicy¹⁶⁹

The hermeneutical key that may be put in place to allow for an accentuating of the above argument is the resurrection,¹⁷⁰ in which there may be seen a real simultaneity that allows for the humiliated God and human *and* the exalted God and human. In grouping these two considerations of theodicy and resurrection together it is hoped to provide for an insight into the problem of the existence of human sufferings and their relation to Christ's given the particular and universal election of humanity in Jesus Christ.¹⁷¹ Here, the method will be to engage Barth on his own terms—scripture,¹⁷² considering the principal biblical passages on Christ's election that Barth cites.

Resurrection does make a prominent appearance in II/2,¹⁷³ and it is also present in Barth's exegetical work on the eternal predestination of Jesus Christ. Once again, there exists here an issue concerning balance and emphasis. Barth refers to the climax of Christ's election as being His election 'to suffering'.¹⁷⁴ In emphasizing the pre-temporal decision to do this, Barth at times underemphasizes the significance of supra- and post-temporal eternity evident in the biblical passages he uses. Clearly, in the passages this theme of suffering and passion is there. However, so too, is a future sense—both in terms of the resurrection and eternity. This can be seen in several of Barth's exegetical discussions in which he fails to appreciate

¹⁶⁹ Here, it is worth noting (following discussions on time and eternity in Barth) that Ford, *Barth and God's Story*, observes that Roberts fails to recognize the importance of the forty days post Easter (143). This section of the present work is also to be considered as a response to earlier criticisms on eternity and time, therefore. For the further relevance of this section to universalism, the reader is also directed to Ch. 4, §5(b).

¹⁷⁰ For general discussion of Barth on resurrection, see Gerald O'Collins, 'Karl Barth on Christ's Resurrection', *Scottish Journal of Theology* 26, no. 1 (1973).

¹⁷¹ Ford, *Barth and God's Story*, notes the effects of Barth's understanding of time and Christology on human suffering (131). On Barth and theodicy, see the emphasis on the tragic in McDowell, *Hope in Barth's Eschatology*.

¹⁷² II/2, 152.

¹⁷³ For example, with regard to the ethical decisions of the elect II/2, 539 and 558; or regarding the elect community, II/2, 200.

¹⁷⁴ II/2, 118.

the full implications of his own argument.¹⁷⁵ Furthermore, when one considers Christ's prophetic voice concerning His own resurrection in the gospels,¹⁷⁶ it is clear that this is an important theme for the whole of the New Testament: Christ is simultaneously elected to both death *and* resurrection. Elsewhere, Barth is emphatic that the one cannot be abstracted from the other,¹⁷⁷ and there is clear evidence of this in Barth's discussion of the election of Christ.¹⁷⁸ Yet the emphasis on Christ's election to suffering and rejection at times fails to do justice to what seems to be his earlier suggestion that the resurrection provides the point of the convergence of all times;¹⁷⁹ and his later statement that we have to do only with the crucified one as the resurrected.¹⁸⁰ Hints of this are present in the discussion: 'The Word of the divine steadfastness is the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, His exaltation, His session at the right hand of the Father.'¹⁸¹ However, they could beneficially be brought more fully to the fore. The crucified and resurrected Christ is simultaneously and eternally one within a simultaneity that allows for order:¹⁸² Christ as the resurrected and exalted human eternally bears the marks of the crucified;¹⁸³ Christ as the humiliated God on the cross

¹⁷⁵ The following biblical references come from II/2, 102-3, in which Jesus's pre-temporal eternity is not their most natural, or only, sense of temporality: Jn 12.34, which states that the Jews are aware that the Messiah lives forever, seems to have a future dimension; Heb. 7.16-17 and Ps. 110.4, which present Jesus as a Priest forever, must surely also be understood as a future 'forever' in their most natural sense; Mt. 3.17 at the baptism also seems most naturally an appointment to and proclamation of a present status and order (indeed, it has led some to conclude adoptionism); Col. 1.19 appears to be a post-resurrection reference as also is Lk. 22.29; Eph. 1.3-5 and 1.9-11 contain future elements; 1 Pet. 1.20 again shows an important place for the resurrection; Heb. 9.26 can also be considered post-ascension; in Acts 2.23 it is the 'plan' that is foreknown, and in 4.27-8 Jesus is anointed to do the (surely present) 'acts' predestined; and, finally, Jn 17.3 also contains a present and a future sense.

¹⁷⁶ Mk 6.31 and parallel verses.

¹⁷⁷ E.g. I/2, 110-111.

¹⁷⁸ II/2, 125 and 262ff.

¹⁷⁹ I/2, 115. This theme also recurs in a more thorough discussion in III/2, 441-510, and again in IV/1, §59.3.

¹⁸⁰ IV/1, 343.

¹⁸¹ II/2, 125.

¹⁸² Barth clearly does make this point at other stages in his theology, e.g. at IV/1, 316. The emphasis that Ford, *Barth and God's Story*, places on narrative brings out the importance of order to Barth's thought.

¹⁸³ On the wounds of Christ in Barth, see McDowell, *Hope in Barth's Eschatology*, 173ff. (esp. 175) and 236.

is eternally the resurrected body. An increased emphasis on this may help to accentuate Barth's determined belief that election is to a history, a life lived, and must be considered from this perspective, rather than presented as if everything were 'sewn-up' in some systematic point in pre-temporal eternity that dissolves such histories and narratives. The Yes and No (ultimate and penultimate) must stand in the present in perfect but ordered simultaneity, which allows for an eternity in which history exists in all its complexity without dissolving every present and penultimate No into an ultimate Yes:¹⁸⁴ even resurrection does not swallow up crucifixion; even crucifixion cannot stop resurrection. The One Christ is the resurrected Lord who was crucified. In attending to these themes, one can see further grounds for human particularity within the universalistic salvific implications of Barth's doctrine of election. While this in no way undermines the all-encompassing nature of the election of humanity in Christ, Barth himself puts it thus:

If it is true that this man is the Elect of God, if it is true that the free grace which is the basis of all election is the reality of the divine and human steadfastness determined and actualised in this man, the reality of the resurrection and the prayer of Jesus, then in respect of those who are elected 'in Him' it follows that their election consists concretely in their faith in Him.¹⁸⁵

Emphasizing resurrection, and Christ's election to resurrection as a result of His steadfastness, provides further grounds for establishing human particularity within the irresistible nature of God's gracious election of humanity in Christ.

It is indeed here that one might also see greater room for theodicy within a theology that tends in a universalist direction.¹⁸⁶ The exalted human Christ continues to bear the wounds of the crucified just as the humiliated God is recognized in these marks also; in these wounds, there is the space for human suffering and the No of God within His ultimate Yes;¹⁸⁷ in these is room for the risk and danger in

¹⁸⁴ The failure to recognize the interplay of ultimate and penultimate is what leads to the mistaken readings of Barth seen in the like of Berkouwer, *Triumph of Grace*, e.g. 107. See further here Greggs, 'Jesus Is Victor', 207ff.

¹⁸⁵ II/2, 126.

¹⁸⁶ IV/2, 184.

¹⁸⁷ IV/1, 516, speaks of the role of rejection and negative judgment in the crucified one who lives.

God;¹⁸⁸ indeed, in these is Christ recognizable as God by one suffering.¹⁸⁹ The wounds of Christ do not disappear with the resurrection, just as our humanity is not dissolved by eternal election. There is through the resurrection a continued role for humanity in the continued work and witness in Christ, and his ‘contingent contemporaneity’ (*kontingente Gleichzeitigkeit*) with the world. World history and temporality continue after Christ’s ascension, and the struggle in history between evil and good progresses even within the assured claim of the victory of Christ.¹⁹⁰ In seeking to emphasize the simultaneity of election to both crucifixion and resurrection, further grounds for human particularity and continued history can be found within this heavily universalist theology. Accentuating election to the resurrection as well as the crucifixion can mean that ‘God’s predestination is a completed work of God, but for this very reason it is not an exhausted work, a work which is behind us. On the contrary, it is a work which still takes place in all its fulness to-day.’¹⁹¹ The simultaneous humanity and divinity, spatiality and omnipresence, exaltation and humiliation, temporality and eternity in the resurrection of the crucified Christ as He is co-present in every contingent situation through the Holy Spirit brings out an election which is not at a point removed from eternity or humanity, but truly an act and event in genuine eternity for all of humanity in Christ.¹⁹²

5 CONCLUSION

It is hoped that this chapter has presented a sympathetic discussion of Barth’s doctrine of election, which has sought to identify, emphasize and accentuate elements of Barth’s own dogmatics to allow a clearer

¹⁸⁸ Balthasar, *The Theology of Karl Barth*, emphasizes the risk in election for God since He in creating actually knows how the creation will turn out, and yet still commits Himself to it (176–7).

¹⁸⁹ It is the fulfilment of Jn 20.25 that leads Thomas at 20.28 to say, ‘My Lord and my God!’

¹⁹⁰ Cf. IV/3, 713–14.

¹⁹¹ II/2, 183.

¹⁹² See Chs 5 and 7 below.

sense of the place of particularity both as the basis of universal salvation and as existing within universal salvation.¹⁹³ Throughout, it has been clear that there is a repeated conceptual emphasis on simultaneity in Barth's thought—a simultaneity which points to a particularist understanding of Christian universal salvation grounded in the particular person of Jesus Christ.¹⁹⁴ In the move to emphasize the election of God in resurrection, it is hoped that this theme might be brought out more fully, with a positive effect on the conceptions of the humanity of Christ, eternity and freedom, and participation in Christ. In these considerations, it has been noted that emphasis needs to be placed on the simultaneity of the Christ who as human elects God alongside the God who elects humanity. It is this which might allow for a fuller role of particularity to bear the weight of the universal salvific implications of the doctrine of election.¹⁹⁵ Throughout, it is hoped that it has been demonstrated that the universal salvific implications of the doctrine of election do not undo particularity, but are grounded in the particularity of Jesus Christ. Against certain presentations of Barth's doctrine, this chapter has sought to ensure that Christ Himself is not reduced to being a principle, but is understood fully as a person. In this way, although the implications of Barth's doctrine of election may seem to present some form of universalism, Barth's 'universalism' (for all of the anxieties he had with the term) is something new: as grounded in the election of humanity in Christ, belief in the final victory of Jesus does not remove human particularity, freedom, temporality and will; it grounds them.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹³ It is hoped that this account has followed the suggestion that where the real weaknesses of Barth do exist, they do not deserve the harshness of some critiques, but rather as Barth would wish should be treated as foundations to be built upon by the generations that follow (Gunton, 'The Triune God and the Freedom of the Creature', 66).

¹⁹⁴ There is not space in this chapter to consider Barth's relation to other particular faiths. The reader is referred to Glenn Chestnutt, 'The Secular Parables of the Kingdom' (paper presented at the Society for the Study of Theology, Leeds, 2006); Carys Moseley, 'Karl Barth's Theology of Religion: Interpreting Religious Change Yesterday and Today' (paper presented at the Society for the Study of Theology, Leeds, 2006); and Greggs, 'Bringing Barth's Critique of Religion to the Inter Faith Table'.

¹⁹⁵ This theme of particularity in salvation is developed far more fully in Ch. 5 with regard to Barth's theology.

¹⁹⁶ See Greggs, 'Jesus Is Victor', 204–12.

3

Pre-existence and restoration: Logos and Logika (Origen)

1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter seeks to explore the relationship between pre-existence and restoration in Origen's soteriology. It wishes to consider how eschatology and protology are mutually self-determining in Christ who is simultaneously Alpha and Omega. It will do this by charting the journey of the soul in Origen's theology from pre-existence to restoration, considering the connection between Origen's two highly controversial doctrines of the pre-existence of the soul and the universal restoration of all things. It is considered that this connection is the foundation for speaking about Origen's soteriology,¹ and marks Origen's way of discussing the chief concern of philosophy contemporary to him—the question of the relationship between God and humanity in providence.² The material contained herein will be developed creatively and formatively for the question of universal salvation in Chapter 4 of this book. Throughout, it is intended that there should be a sensitivity to the relationship between particularity and universal salvation: the universalism Origen presents is one which in no way undermines particularity; instead, it is one which arises out of and results in particularity.

¹ See Celia E. Rabinowitz, 'Personal and Cosmic Salvation in Origen', *Vigiliae Christianae* 38 (1984). Although this aspect of her conclusion should be accepted, the present writer would not wish to distinguish so sharply between eschatology and soteriology for Origen.

² Daniélou, *Origen*, cites this as a chief concern of the philosophy of Origen's time (74 and 205).

2 PRE-EXISTENT SOULS

(a) What are pre-existent souls?

The doctrine of pre-existent souls has been condemned as heterodox,³ and considered to depend on Origen's Platonizing tendencies (however they may be understood).⁴ Moreover, it is not one which has informed any systematic theology of which the present writer is aware. Although it is not to be accepted in its entirety as a satisfactory doctrine, if its usefulness to the question of restoring human particularity in a universalist presentation of salvation is to be maintained, it is necessary to consider what logics underlie such a belief.

For Origen, the soul (*anima*) is a substance which may be described as *sensibilis* or *φανταστική* and *mobilis* or *ὀρμητική*, and which exists in all living things.⁵ Origen believes that the word *ψυχή* comes from *ψύχεσθαι*, which indicates the cooling that takes place as the soul moves away or is moved away from its participation

³ The Ecumenical Council of 553 condemned it with the words, 'If anyone asserts the fabulous pre existence of souls, and the monstrous restitution which follows from it, let him be anathema.' This followed Ephiphanius' attacks on Origen. See Jon F. Dechow, 'The Heresy Charges against Origen', in *Origeniana Quarta*, ed. Lothar Leis (Innsbruck: Tyrolia Verlag, 1987), esp. 113-14. However, one should note that Pamphilus could not treat Origen as a heretic for his understanding of pre existence because nothing certain is said in scripture regarding the matter, as observed in Crouzel, *Origen*, 208.

⁴ See Mark J. Edwards, *Origen against Plato* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), 89. Others, however, point one towards the Platonic nature of this doctrine. Heine states that one can see this clearly regarding *HomEx.* 2.1 in its discussion of the soul of Pharoah 'remembering' paradise. In *HomEx.* 2.1n., Heine interprets this using *De Princ.* 1.4.1; 2.8.3-4; 2.9.1-2,6, and directs the reader to Plato's *Phdr.* 246 B-D. Similarly, Stead sees Origen's doctrine as analogous to Platonic thought, despite all the criticism Origen mounts against Platonic theory (G. C. Stead, *Substance and Illusion in the Christian Fathers* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1985), 175), although he also points to similar ity with Philo (184). Daniélou, *Origen*, also sees the doctrine as Platonic (206), as does Crouzel, *Origen*, 207. Osborne sees the doctrine as 'Origen's Stoic world under a Platonist heaven' (Eric Osborne, 'The Apologist Origen and the Fourth Century: From Theodicy to Christology', in *Origeniana Septima: Origenes in Den Auseinandersetzung Des 4. Jahrhunderts.*, ed. W. A. Bienert and U. Kühneweg (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1999), 55). However, Bostock traces the doctrine of pre existence through Philo to the biblical and Jewish foundation of the doctrine (Gerald Bostock, 'The Sources of Origen's Doctrine of Pre Existence', in *Origeniana Quarta*).

⁵ Albeit there is no evidence that angels have souls (*De Princ.* II.8.1).

in the divine fire. This cooling in fervour from the divine fire (along with *satietas*) seems to be the reason for the soul's fall from contemplation of God, yet the soul retains its ability to be restored to its original position and nature.⁶ While its existence begins in the eternal fire of God, the soul itself is not eternal in the same way as God: it is spoken of as 'ingenerate', but in such a way as to suggest it is unable to be procreated like bodies.⁷ Although Origen is careful to remind the reader of the speculative nature of his thoughts on this topic, he suggests that scriptural evidence points to the soul functioning as an intermediary between flesh and spirit within humanity.⁸ Any speech of God's 'soul' in the Bible must, therefore, be understood as merely anthropological imagery.⁹ However, Christ, who Himself possesses a human soul,¹⁰ may in some way be understood in His intermediary work to be the soul of God.¹¹

Considering more directly the specific issue of pre-existence, the soul is clearly demarcated from the flesh in Origen's anthropology; and the pre-existence of the soul does not involve in any way a pre-existence of the body. Instead, the soul is implanted into the body from without.¹² Indeed, souls are considered to 'descend' into bodies.¹³ Therefore, their pre-existence is a pre-existence prior to the existence of the body. However, at no point is the soul without *some form* of bodily dress: only the Trinity is incorporeal for Origen.¹⁴ Perhaps the best way to

⁶ *De Princ.* II.8.3.

⁷ G. L. Prestige, *God in Patristic Thought* (London: SPCK, 1952), 51. Anatolios suggests that, despite Origen's tendency to link the divine being too closely with the world, his intention was quite the opposite to safeguard divine transcendence (Kahled Anatolios, 'Theology and Economy in Origen and Athanasius', in *Origeniana Septima*, 166).

⁸ *De Princ.* II.8.4.

⁹ *De Princ.* II.8.5.

¹⁰ E.g. *De Princ.* II.8.4.

¹¹ *De Princ.* II.8.5. Cf. Rowan A. Greer, *The Captain of Our Salvation: A Study in the Patristic Exegesis of Hebrews* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1973), 45; and Aloys Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition: Vol. I: From the Apostolic Age to Chalcedon (451)*, trans. John Bowden, reprint, 2nd edn (London and Oxford: Mowbrays, 1975), 146.

¹² *De Princ.* I.7.4. In what follows Origen suggests this is even more the case for the sun, moon, and stars.

¹³ *CommJoh.* VI.25.

¹⁴ Crouzel, *Origen*, 91; cf. *De Princ.* I.1. As Daniélou points out, corporeality is not bad in itself for Origen, as evil is exercised in the will alone: being in a body may be some form of punishment for Origen, but punishments are meant to restore (Daniélou, *Origen*, 218).

understand pre-existence is alongside Edwards: 'The essences of creatures are eternal and consubstantial with the Logos, but the subsistence of these creatures as single entities depends on matter (*Peri archon* I.6.4), and this is neither an effluence of the deity nor a coeternal substrate, but creation out of nothing by his will.'¹⁵ Edwards goes on to define the essence of humans in Origen as incorporeal rationality, but states that Origen does not allow the soul to live without a body of some kind either before or after its sojourn in the present world. However, it may be necessary to consider further the individuality ascribed to pre-existent souls, and instead to suggest that this subsistence is individual and particular. Origen suggests, for example, that John the Baptist's being sent is a sending from heaven indicating a bodiless pre-existence. This, he asserts, applies to an extent to all human beings who are people of God inasmuch as God created them.¹⁶ This sense of a soul's pre-existence clearly does not involve any notion of transcorporation (*μετενσωμάτωσις*).¹⁷ It may well be worth understanding Origen's terms akin to St. Paul in I Cor.: while flesh and blood (perhaps matter) will not inherit the Kingdom of God (I Cor. 15.50), it is clear that resurrection is still bodily (I Cor. 15:40); so too for Origen, while souls may not possess matter individually before their time in this world, they can nevertheless subsist in a bodily way even if not as fleshly bodies.

What is clear from the beginning of Origen's consideration of the pre-existence of the soul is that any notion of its pre-existence involves both unity and diversity, and in diversity an element of

¹⁵ Mark J. Edwards, 'Christ or Plato? Origen on Revelation and Anthropology', in *Christian Origins: Theology, Rhetoric and Community*, ed. Lewis Ayres and Gareth Jones (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), 17.

¹⁶ *CommJoh.* II.24.

¹⁷ However, Bianci sees a tension in Origen's thought over transcorporation (Ugo Bianci, 'Origen's Treatment of the Soul and the Debate over Metempsychosis', in *Origeniana Quarta*). Similarly, Hanson asserts that Origen rejects transmigration of souls so strongly because his own doctrine of pre-existence is 'embarrassingly like it' (R. P. C. Hanson, *Allegory and Event. A Study of the Sources and Significance of Origen's Interpretation of Scripture* (London: SCM, 1959), 217). Nevertheless, it must be recognized that Origen is emphatic about the rejection of this throughout a number of his works. E.g. *CommJoh.* VI.7; *CommMt.* X.20, XIII.1 2; *CCel.* III.75, VIII.30; and *HomLk.* 4.5. Although the identity of a human changes (in regress and progress), it remains singular to the person who exercises her free will. Where people are identified together (for example, John and Elijah as in many of the above examples) it is the 'spirit' and not the soul which are identified.

individuality. Although the starting point of all souls is the same in participation in the holy fire, the process by which the soul finds its particular existence results in a vast array of differentiation.¹⁸ This is even the case for the opposing powers:¹⁹ the exercise of free will has led the opposing powers to be such as they are—not a variance in nature.²⁰ Variety is caused by the degree to which pre-existent souls move from the Logos.²¹ Indeed, it must be remembered that even the devil once enjoyed and participated in the light in which the holy ones share.²²

One sees this thought on pre-existence exemplified in Origen's discussion of Esau and Jacob. Origen advocates that God's preference is dependent on their previous existences. This should be applied to all creatures, each one of which must recognize 'the causes of diversity antecedent to his birth in the body'.²³ This does not remove any notion of free will. Instead, the body (or vessel) created is created in

¹⁸ Daniélou, *Origen*, states that the starting point of Origen's speculations is 'the empirical realization of the inequality existing in the conditions of created spirits' (209). Cf. Frances Young, *Biblical Exegesis and the Formation of Christian Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 25; and Basil Studer, *Trinity and Incarnation: The Faith of the Early Church*, ed. A. Louth, trans. Matthias Westerhoff (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1993), 78ff.

¹⁹ *De Princ.* I.5.4.

²⁰ This is contrary to the Valentinian view of election (*CommRom.* 8.11.2 cf. 1.3.1). Instead, for Origen, all souls come from God. See, for example, *Phil.* 1.23. Origen emphasizes free will's role in the fall in his statement: 'For the soul always possesses freewill, both when in the body and when out of the body; and the will's freedom always moves in the direction either of good or of evil, nor can the rational sense, that is, the mind or soul, ever exist without some movement either good or evil' (*De Princ.* III.3 5).

²¹ From the surviving texts, this seems in some sense to be a fall prior to Adam and Eve's individual (and lesser) fall. See C. P. Bammel, 'Adam in Origen', in *The Making of Orthodoxy: Essays in Honour of Henry Chadwick*, ed. Rowan Williams (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

²² *De Princ.* I.5.5. This seems to build on the tradition of Isa. 14.12–13, recognizing the devil and his angels in the person of Lucifer. However, given Origen's assertion that angels do not have souls, this is a rather puzzling suggestion: seemingly angels do not have souls, but demons do. This is an area in which Origen is unsystematic. It may well result from angels having not exercised their free will since they have not fallen from glory, and therefore having no individual souls. However, Trigg argues that even angels require salvation. See Joseph W. Trigg, 'The Angel of Great Counsel: Christ and the Angelic Hierarchy in Origen's Theology', *Journal of Theological Studies* 42, no. 1 (1991), 44–5. This may be a place where it is best to conclude Origen is being speculative, rather than systematic.

²³ *De Princ.* II.9.7.

the foreknowledge of the free will that will be exercised. This foreknowledge is not to a particular condition or to salvation, but a foreknowledge of the vessels dependent on what God knows the individual exercise of free will to be.²⁴ Regardless of the condition of the vessel as a result of its previous existence, for no soul is there an irrevocable lapse from God.²⁵ However, it certainly seems that the journey of the soul back to God is exponentially related to the lapse that has taken place: the greater the lapse not only the further to travel, but providentially the more difficult the journey.

(b) The soul and reason

For Origen, the soul is the seat of reason. At times, he is even prepared to identify the soul with reason (or rationality). For example, he speaks of ‘each spirit or soul [*animi*] or whatever else rational existences [*rationabiles subsistentiae*] ought to be called’²⁶ and of ‘the rational soul’ (ἡ λογικὴ ψυχὴ).²⁷ Similarly, the work of Jesus is described as His being ‘the light of the spiritual world because he shines on those who are rational [*λογικοῖς*] and intellectual [*ἡγεμονικοῖς*].’²⁸ Yet it is not entirely correct to assimilate the soul and reason: the soul is the place in which humanity may be rational. Thus, not all souls are engaged in the practice of the rational.²⁹ Souls have the capacity for reason, but may or may not hasten towards it.³⁰ Indeed, part of Christ’s work of salvation is to save humanity from the irrational.³¹

The soul’s participating in reason is part of its participation in the fount of all reason—the Logos. This is the special activity of Christ—His relationship as Logos to all rational creatures:³² ‘God the Father bestows on *all* the gift of existence; and a *participation* in Christ, *in virtue of his being the word or reason*, makes them rational.’³³ Thus,

²⁴ *De Princ.* III.1.20.

²⁵ *De Princ.* I.6.2.

²⁶ *De Princ.* II.1.2.

²⁷ *De Princ.* III.1.13.

²⁸ *CommJoh.* I.24.

²⁹ The soul is made up of a higher and lower element—the ἡγεμονικόν (or καρδιά in biblical terms) and a lower element added after the fall. See Crouzel, *Origen*, 88.

³⁰ *CommJoh.* I.29 (Heine, I.190, 72).

³¹ *CommJoh.* I.42.

³² *De Princ.* I.3.7. The Father’s special activity is that of everything that possesses natural life, and the Spirit’s is the life of the saints.

³³ *De Princ.* I.3.8, emphasis added.

humanity shares in rationality as a result of the Son's work in making humanity rational.³⁴ As the result of this, all humanity has a share in the being of the Logos: 'all rational beings are partakers of the word of God, and so have implanted within them some seeds, as it were, of wisdom and righteousness, which is Christ.'³⁵ Again, however, there is here some lack of certainty about what Origen is saying. In some places Origen is able to state that the Logos supplies reason to all humans,³⁶ while on other occasions he can write in a way which indicates that not all humans have a relationship to the Logos: 'And perhaps also only those who share [μετέχοντες] in the Word, in contradistinction to those who do not, know what the latter are missing.'³⁷ Despite this, one might be confident at least in saying that the Logos is present in all rational creatures.³⁸ At a base level, all human souls have some relation to reason even if this is not exercised.³⁹ Here, one may see a distinction between passive participation in the Logos, who supplies reason to all humans, and active participation in the Logos, through active exercise of the human will towards reason.

(c) The soul and the pre-existence of Christ⁴⁰

The doctrine of the pre-existent soul is complicated somewhat when one considers the soul and pre-existence of Christ. Regarding Christ,

³⁴ O'Leary suggests that the Son's work for Origen is primarily the perfecting of humanity's innate participation in the Logos (Joseph S. O'Leary, 'The Invisible Mission of the Son in Origen and Augustine', in *Origeniana Septima*, 610).

³⁵ *De Princ.* I.3.6.

³⁶ *CommJoh.* I.37, cf. *HomGen.* 13.3 in which Origen suggests every soul has 'rational understanding and the image of God'.

³⁷ *CommJoh.* II.4 (Heine, II.60, 109). Definition II for the Greek word μετέχοντες is 'participating in a universal' in Liddell and Scott (eds), *Greek English Lexicon Ninth Edition, Revised by Jones and McKenzie* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 1120.

³⁸ E.g. *De Princ.* I.3.5. The later sections on restoration will assert that the most sensible reading here is to view all of humanity (and all souls) as at least potentially rational.

³⁹ This is as *logika* which are differentiated from the *logikoi* a title which can only be applied to the saints: Crouzel, *Origen*, 95. However, Layton argues that even negative and sinful actions can be seen as rational, as in the case of Judas (Richard A. Layton, 'Judas Yields a Place to the Devil: The Appropriation of Origen's *Commentary on Ephesians* by Didymus the Blind', in *Origeniana Septima*, 534).

⁴⁰ Although this book concerns the *economy* of the Son and Spirit, certain moves regarding the narrowly Christological must be made at this point for the benefit of

there are two principal considerations for Origen: the soul of Christ and the eternal Logos. How the soul of Christ relates to the Logos to which all souls in some way relate will also be discussed in what follows. Prior to the incarnation, the theophanies reveal Christ appearing 'through the medium of his soul which, being without sin, has kept the primitive humano-angelic form.'⁴¹ However, to account for the pre-cosmic union between the Logos and the soul of Christ is difficult.⁴²

Origen's Christology seems to centre on the soul of Christ.⁴³ He asserts firmly that this soul is human: 'the first-born of all creation assumed a body and a human soul'.⁴⁴ Yet, this is no mere human soul, but one which deserved to be united with the Logos as a result of its virtues.⁴⁵ The Logos is united with the soul which is faithful in its union with God. What is more, in *Contra Celsum* we read that this soul of Christ is transformed (along with His body) into something divine: 'We affirm that his mortal body and the human soul in him received the greatest elevation not only by communion but by union and intermingling [οὐ μόνον κοινωνία ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐνώσει καὶ ἀνακράσει], so that by sharing in His divinity he was transformed into God.'⁴⁶ For a modern theologian, there are clearly problems with this as it does not allow for the integrity of the humanity or divinity in the Christological formulation: the human and divine intermingle, and the divine becomes the ruling agent.⁴⁷ Although a human soul, it was a human soul unlike any other with which the Logos was united in

later constructive work in the dialogical chapters regarding the relationship between our humanity and Christ's. See Ch. 4, §4.iv.

⁴¹ Crouzel, *Origen*, 70 cf. 192. Cf. O'Leary, 'The Invisible Mission', 611.

⁴² Greer, *The Captain of Our Salvation*, 43.

⁴³ Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 146; Studer, *Trinity and Incarnation*, 82.

⁴⁴ *CCel.* II.31. Cf. *CCel.* I.66 and III.41; and *HomLev.* 12.5.5.

⁴⁵ *De Princ.* II.6.4 (Latin text). Fragment 20 (Koetschau) is paralleled here. See also *HomLk.* 19.1.

⁴⁶ *CCel.* III.41. Indeed, in *CCel.* VI.47, he goes on to state that the soul and the Logos are no longer two but are so closely united as to be one.

⁴⁷ Hence, discussion of the how the divine (the Logos) is the *principale cordis* or *ἡγεμονικόν* the higher, or ruling part of the soul. As Lewis observes in *Phil.* 49n.4, this had a Stoic background. This is echoed by F. Gerald Downing, *Cynics and Christian Origins* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1992). Downing advocates a Stoic anthropology, albeit interwoven with Cynic strands (esp. 252-3).

Jesus Christ.⁴⁸ Seemingly, therefore, it may well have been a soul which, while Christ was tempted,⁴⁹ had no real free will to exercise in that temptation.⁵⁰

Despite this intermixing of human and divine, it is clear for Origen that the soul and body are united only following the incarnation of Christ: 'For *after the incarnation* the soul and body of Jesus became very closely united with the Logos of God.'⁵¹ The Logos assumes human nature, at the proper time, in His birth.⁵² This human flesh and soul is, moreover, true humanity. It is liable to 'lusts against the Spirit' and exists within 'human limitations'.⁵³ Yet this is, obviously, not to say that the soul does not itself exist prior to the act of incarnation. Like other souls, it too pre-exists. Origen speaks of: 'that soul [*anima*] of which Jesus said, "No man taketh from me my soul [*animam*]," clinging to God from the beginning of creation and ever after in a union inseparable and insoluble'.⁵⁴ Although it exists inseparably from the Logos after incarnation, His soul nevertheless exists prior to incarnation.⁵⁵

⁴⁸ This problem is also reflected in Origen's discussion of the humanity of Christ. He states that 'he was *more than man*... insofar as the rest of his astounding life' (*CommJoh.* I.220 (Heine, 70), emphasis added).

⁴⁹ *CCel.* I.69.

⁵⁰ This causes significant problems for Origen who sees free will and rationality as conjoined. Christ as the epitome of the rational (the Logos) seems not to enjoy free will.

⁵¹ *CCel.* II.9, emphasis added.

⁵² *CCel.* I.61.

⁵³ *CCel.* III.28.

⁵⁴ *De Princ.* II.6.3. One should note, however, that this is only from 'the beginning of creation', and not eternally.

⁵⁵ Bostock, 'The Sources of Origen's Doctrine of Pre Existence', claims that Chalcedon makes it necessary to believe in the soul of Christ having the very same nature as every other human soul, which means one cannot defend the pre existence of the human soul of Christ without defending the pre existence of every human soul (259). Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, further emphasizes that the soul of Christ is united with the Logos from eternity, drawing on the image of the iron and fire (*De Princ.* II.6.6), and claiming the union between the soul and the Logos is ontic and not moral (146). Here, it is necessary to part with Edwards, *Origen against Plato*, who advocates that the Latin *ab initio creaturae* (and in its probable Greek rendering) could mean 'from the beginning of *his* creation' rather than 'from the beginning of creation' (94). While the point about the ancient languages that Edwards makes is correct, the idea that this does not indicate a prior life of the soul need not necessarily be accepted: the whole context of the passage is the eternal Son. Indeed, Origen's great achievement was to articulate the eternal generation of the Son and Holy Spirit (Edwards, 'Christ or Plato', 11), although Edwards also argues Clement framed and

Thus, one must conclude that Jesus had a soul like other humans. This soul too was pre-existent,⁵⁶ and was the place in which tribulation etc. took place,⁵⁷ albeit the unique nature of the soul of the Logos seems to raise issues about how this can be understood, since there is a sense in which the soul of Christ lacks free will.

In terms of the Logos' relation to Christ's soul, Origen is clear that the Logos and Son of God is eternal, yet only the Father is uncreated.⁵⁸ Nevertheless, Christ sojourned with men before His bodily existence.⁵⁹ Although the Logos of which Origen speaks might be

held this view for the Son (Mark J. Edwards, 'Clement of Alexandria and His Doctrine of the Logos', *Vigiliae Christianae* 54 (2000), 171ff.). Even if the Son is still for Origen a creature (e.g. *De Princ.* I.3.3; see Mark J. Edwards, 'Did Origen Apply the Word *Homoousios* to the Son?' *Journal of Theological Studies* 49 (1998), 662ff.; and Greer, *The Captain of Our Salvation*, esp. 43, who advocates that Origen does not take sufficient account of the distinction between Creator and creature), if the 'his' in the passage quoted above refers to the Son, the soul remains eternal; if the 'his' refers to the soul, the sense is still that the soul had an existence prior to the incarnation; and if the 'his' refers to the historical person of Jesus, the statement could mean that the soul exists for a period during which it does not cling to God.

⁵⁶ However, it must be noted that the soul (unlike the Logos) is not eternal. In *CommRom.* III.8.9, in discussion of the text 'whom God pre determined as a propitiatory through faith', Origen observes that 'pre determined' is to be said of the soul of Christ rather than the deity since 'pre determine' means 'previously to determine' which implies a prior. Origen suggests what is not yet is 'pre determined' whereas what is already is 'determined'. Thus, he writes: 'It was therefore not fitting to say of him who always was, i.e., the Word of God, that he has been pre determined. It does not seem unsuitable, however, to say this of his soul which is, to be sure, inseparable from the Word of God, but nevertheless has been created and is posterior to his uniquely begotten deity. It will not seem inappropriate to be said of this soul that before it was, it was pre determined and preordained that it would be propitiatory.'

⁵⁷ Christ shares in our weakness without sharing in our sin: Crouzel, *Origen*, 89. Indeed, Van Den Hoek helpfully argues that Origen shifts the emphasis from the human soul being divinized to 'the divine soul on its way to being humanized' (Annewies Van Den Hoek, 'Origen's Role in Formulating Later Christological Language: The Case of *αναπαυσις*', in *Origeniana Septima*, 50).

⁵⁸ E.g. *CommJoh.* II.6. The Logos is in a different category from both the *logoi* and the Father. See Daniélou, *Origen*, 254. On the relationship of the Son to the Father, see especially Christopher Stead, *Divine Substance* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), 209–14; Richard P. C. Hanson, 'Did Origen Teach that the Son is *ek tes ousias* of the Father?', in *Origeniana Quarta*; and Edwards, 'Did Origen Apply the Word *Homoousios* to the Son?'

⁵⁹ *CommJoh.* I.9. Daniélou, *Origen*, emphasizes that Origen reconciles the changelessness of God with the event of the incarnation by stating that Christ as Logos existed before anything else, and that Christ was never without interest in humanity: He was always present to humanity and active on their souls (117). The incarnation is the principal coming of Christ, therefore, but it is only one of many (124). Greer, *The*

considered the *λόγος ἄσαρκος*, of later dogmatics, he is still able to refer to Him as the one who is ‘clothed with a garment sprinkled with blood, and His name was called “Word of God”’.⁶⁰

3 RESTORATION

Origen’s sense of salvation is—as a result of his ideas about pre-existence—primarily restorative, but this is not a restoration that is merely a repetition of what was before.⁶¹ While the soul returns to the place whence it came and is made what it was before, the efficacy of Christ’s work is such that at the end there will be no further repetition of the ages: there is in Origen no Stoic sense of cyclic and endless determinism, but a restoration in which there is progress and growth in the process.⁶² Part of the process of restoration is the soul recognizing what it is as a rational entity and growing in that to perfection.

(a) Participation

As a result of the relationship between Reason (Logos) and all rational beings, Origen’s sense of salvation is grounded in participation. All rational beings participate in the Logos. Yet this sense of participation is not only in terms of God’s participation in humanity through the economic Trinity but also in terms of humanity’s participation in God.⁶³ While Origen is clear that the greater work of salvation is on the part of God, nevertheless humans also have some involvement in

Captain of Our Salvation, 11: ‘Christ’s incarnation is unique not so much because it differs in kind from other revelations of the Word as because it represents a fullness not previously granted mankind’.

⁶⁰ *CommJoh.* II.4 (Heine, II.42, 105), although at other times Origen seems to suggest the humanity of the Logos is removed post resurrection (cf. *CommJoh.* I.9).

⁶¹ For further theological reflection on this, see Ch. 4, §3 and Ch.7, §7(d) and §10.

⁶² See also Greer, *The Captain of Our Salvation*, 16f. and 25; Ludlow, *Universal Salvation*, 35; Crouzel, *Origen*, 157 and 205.

⁶³ Daniélou observes this to be at the heart of the logic of Origen’s thought (*Daniélou, Origen*, 257).

it—completing the work of salvation by our involvement.⁶⁴ For Origen, human beings gain adoption as sons by participating in the Son of God; just as they receive wisdom in participating in Him as Wisdom, and are made holy and spiritual by participation in the Spirit.⁶⁵ Through devotion to spiritual disciplines, a human can become a participant in the divine counsel.⁶⁶ It is this participation which leads to the immortality of rational souls, and through which the human is transformed into the likeness of God.⁶⁷ This participation leads to a unity with Christ. In *On Prayer*, Origen writes: ‘For it is possible for the one united to Him [Christ] to become one Spirit with Him’.⁶⁸ In this, one is able to see how the image of the unity of the Logos with the body and soul of Christ (which concerns the preceding sentences of the quotation) is the greatest example of the type of unity available to humanity with the Logos within God.⁶⁹ In many ways, this says something about the humanity of Christ: His humanity is conjoined with our humanity in its relation to the Logos; His humanity is the most perfect and fullest expression of unity with the Logos that humans can participate in, as they become one spirit with Him.⁷⁰ Origen even speaks of being ‘dissolved’ (which seems the best reading of the verb ἀναλύω given the following καὶ σὺν Χριστῷ εἶναι) in order to be with Christ.⁷¹

What is more, this participation in Christ is not merely reserved for those who realize it is better to be ‘dissolved and to be with Christ’, but it is a participation in which all things take a part.⁷² All things, for example, which have received power participate in Him insofar as He is power.⁷³ All things which have come into being as the result of Wisdom participate in Christ who is all Wisdom—even

⁶⁴ *De Princ.* III.1.18.

⁶⁵ *De Princ.* IV.4.5.

⁶⁶ *De Princ.* IV.2.7.

⁶⁷ *De Princ.* IV.4.9.

⁶⁸ *Prayer* XXVI.3 cf. *CCel.* II.9.

⁶⁹ O’Leary observes that Jesus is the model of participation in the Logos, encouraging other humans (who as rational creatures universally participate in the Logos) to become more fully *logikos*. O’Leary, ‘The Invisible Mission’, 612.

⁷⁰ A similar sense of the relationship of the humanity of Christ to the divine by participation is also evident in *CCel.* III.41.

⁷¹ *CommJoh.* I.17 (cf. Heine, I.100 54). Cf. *Dial.* 23.

⁷² Although, as Daley records, Origen did understand knowledge of God to be a ‘mingling and union’ with God in love (Brian E. Daley, *The Hope of the Early Church. A Handbook of Patristic Eschatology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 51).

⁷³ *CommJoh.* I.38.

those who fail to recognize the Wisdom by which they were created.⁷⁴ In other places, however, even within the same book, there is a suggestion that participation is limited, separating those who have a part in the Word from those who do not partake of Him.⁷⁵ This seems to be an area in which again there is some variety in the position that Origen takes, for within only a few pages, he is once more to state: ‘all spiritual [rational] beings have a share in Christ.’⁷⁶ Nevertheless, Origen certainly wrestles with ideas of universal participation and limited and particular participation in the Logos.⁷⁷

(b) Sanctification and growth⁷⁸

One way of explaining this tension is to recognize that the seeming universal participation of the rational in the Logos does not come at the expense of precluding space for growth and sanctification in faith. Humans may participate in Christ’s sanctification,⁷⁹ and the nature of participation means that some may participate more fully than others.⁸⁰ The work of Christ provides not only an objective but a pedagogical soteriology,⁸¹ which allows for the self-disclosure of God

⁷⁴ *CommJoh.* I.39. ⁷⁵ *CommJoh.* II.4.

⁷⁶ *CommJoh.* II.6 (Heine, II.80, 115). The suggestion of ‘rational’ comes from the Greek: ἀλλὰ διὰ τὸ χριστοῦ μὲν πάντα μετέχειν τὰ λογικά.

⁷⁷ See further Tom Greggs, ‘Exclusivist or Universalist? Origen “the Wise Steward of the Word” (Commrom V.1.7) and the Issue of Genre’, *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 9, no. 3 (2007), esp. 317–20. Again, it may be worth considering whether one could usefully see a distinction between active and passive forms of participation in the Logos in Origen’s theology. Or else, a further means of interpreting such distinctions can be found in terms of the variety of means by which one may participate in the Logos; on this see Tom Greggs, ‘The Many Names of Christ in Wisdom: Reading Scripture with Origen for a Diverse World’, *Journal of Scriptural Reasoning* (2008).

⁷⁸ This is extremely important for Origen’s thought: Daniélou, *Origen*, 103.

⁷⁹ *CommJoh.* I.39. Indeed, it is in the cultivation of sanctification that humans become like Christ who is the image of God (*CCel.* VIII.17). In a similar manner, all righteousness and justice flow to the individual from the one Righteousness and Justice who is Christ. See *CommJoh.* VI.3 (Heine, VI.40–179). Heine translates the Greek here as ‘justice’. The present writer takes *δικαιοσύνη* to possess the fuller meaning of ‘righteousness’.

⁸⁰ Crouzel notes, for example, that the soul, which is made after the image of God, comes to be after the likeness of God (Crouzel, *Origen*, 95). On the journey between these points, there is variety in the stages of progress humans have reached.

⁸¹ E.g. *CommMt.* X.9.

and human progression in the knowledge of God.⁸² Progress is something after which the believer must strive with the help of the Trinity: 'In this way, through renewal of the ceaseless work on our behalf of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, renewed at every stage of our progress, we may perchance just succeed at last in beholding the holy and blessed life'.⁸³ It is to the journey towards holiness that the individual is chosen in Christ. Quoting the (often neglected) verses which follow the famous verse about election in Ephesians, Origen sees predestination in the following terms: 'in the letter to the Ephesians it is written concerning all those to be saved that the Father "chose" them "in Him," "in Christ," "before the foundation of the world" *that they should be "holy and blameless before Him, having destined them in love to be His sons through Jesus Christ."* (Eph.1:3-5).⁸⁴ To be chosen involves being chosen to be holy.⁸⁵ This is a process by which the flesh becomes obedient to the will of the soul and finally the soul reaches the stage at which it is perfect.⁸⁶

Growth is not only confined to humanity in Origen. Of the Son, he writes: 'After he had accomplished the work of his incarnation his divinity was more brilliant.'⁸⁷ It appears that, to Origen's mind, growth in holiness and splendour can even take place in the divine. Even if it is the case that this passage refers only to the human Christ post-resurrection, Christ Himself in human temporality engages in a growth which leads to His divinity becoming more glorious.

Furthermore, this spiritual growth is not confined to the present world for Origen.⁸⁸ Spiritual training follows in the afterlife:

⁸² See Karen Jo Torjesen, 'Pedagogical Soteriology from Clement to Origen', in *Origeniana Quarta*. This is how Young sees Origen's understanding of God's wrath and propitiation (Frances M. Young, *The Use of Sacrificial Ideas in Greek Christian Writers from the New Testament to John Chrysostom* (Cambridge, MA: The Philadelphia Patristic Foundation, 1979), 168ff.).

⁸³ *De Princ.* I.3.8.

⁸⁴ *Prayer* V.5, emphasis added.

⁸⁵ Daley advocates that Origen 'demythologises' eschatological thought in a pastoral direction to ensure that Christians realize that there is a continuity between the present life and the future, as humans grow towards union with God (Daley, *The Hope of the Early Church*, 48).

⁸⁶ *HomJosh* 22.2.

⁸⁷ *CCel.* II.65.

⁸⁸ Daniélou, *Origen*, argues that, in this way, Origen prepares the way for Gregory of Nyssa (213). This ongoing growth is fundamentally different to the development of

alike in these ages that are ‘seen’ and ‘temporal’ and in those that are ‘not seen’ and ‘eternal’, all those beings are arranged in a definite order proportionate to the degree and excellence of their merits. And so it happens that some in the first, others in the second, and others even in the last times, through their endurance of greater and more severe punishments of long duration, extending, if I may say so, over many ages, are by these very stern methods of correction renewed and restored, first by the instruction of angels and afterwards by that of powers yet higher in rank, so that they advance through each grade to a higher one, until at length they reach the things that are ‘invisible’ and ‘eternal’, having traversed in turn, by some form of instruction, every single office of the heavenly powers.⁸⁹

Throughout ‘many ages’ sanctification takes place through punishment and instruction from the angels. Here, no doubt exists an early version of the doctrine of purgatory, seen not only negatively in terms of punishment,⁹⁰ but also positively in terms of a growth towards holiness.⁹¹

(c) Restoration: *apokatastasis* and universalism?⁹²

The doctrine for which Origen is most (in)famous is the universal restoration of all things, *apokatastasis*.⁹³ Here, the important word for our purposes of enquiring into pre-existence is ‘restoration’—a return to how things were originally: ‘when the Son is said to be subjected to the Father the perfect restoration of the entire creation is

Maximus the Confessor who seeks to speak of ‘rest’ in eternal life. See A. Louth, *Maximus the Confessor* (London: Routledge, 1999), 66ff.

⁸⁹ *De Princ.* I.6.3.

⁹⁰ On the doctrine of divine punishment, see Morwenna Ludlow, ‘Universal Salvation and a Soteriology of Divine Punishment’, *Scottish Journal of Theology* 53, no. 4 (2000); Joseph W. Trigg, ‘Divine Deception and the Truthfulness of Scripture’, in *Origen of Alexandria. His World and His Legacy*, ed. Charles Kannengiesser and William L. Petersen (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 1988), 159–62; Hanson, *Allegory and Event*, 335–40; and F. W. Farrar, *Mercy and Judgment: A Few Last Words on Christian Eschatology with Reference to Dr. Pusey’s “What Is of Faith?”* (London: MacMillan, 1881), 330. To compare Origen’s understanding to that of Gnostics and Clement of Alexandria, see Daley, *The Hope of the Early Church*, 25ff. and 44ff.

⁹¹ See also Daley, *The Hope of the Early Church*, 57–8.

⁹² See Greggs, ‘Exclusivist or Universalist?’.

⁹³ For a history of this term, see Ludlow, *Universal Salvation*, 38–44.

announced, so when his enemies are said to be subjected to the Son of God we are to understand this to involve the salvation of those subjected and the restoration of those that have been lost.⁹⁴ Eschatology is seen as the ‘perfect restoration of the whole of creation’ (*perfecta universae creaturae restitutio*) which includes the ‘restoration of the lost’ (*reparatio perditorum*). Both *restitutio* and *reparatio* have the sense of returning to something that was before.⁹⁵ Given Origen’s earlier discussion of the soul which was originally a part of the divine but fell, this suggests a restoration to a life in full communion with God—restoration to the full participation in God that the soul once enjoyed.

This theme of restoration can be noted elsewhere in Origen’s writings: ‘I think the stopping point and goal is in the so-called restoration [τῇ λεγομένη ἀποκαταστάσει] because no one is left as an enemy then, if indeed the statement is true, “For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. But the last enemy to be destroyed is death.”’⁹⁶ For Origen, the end seems to involve a universal reinstatement, since there then remains *no* enemy against whom to fight. It appears indeed to be the time when God will be ‘all in all’: ‘that, when “God shall be all in all”, they [all creatures] also, since they are a part of all, may have God even in themselves, as he is in all things.’⁹⁷ What takes place in salvation is the soul becoming a second time what it was before:⁹⁸

Now I think that since the end and consummation of the saints will happen in those worlds that are not seen and are eternal, we must suppose, from a contemplation of this end . . . that rational creatures have also had a *similar*

⁹⁴ *De Princ.* III.5.7.

⁹⁵ Daley asserts that *apokatastasis* is retrospective as well as prospective for Origen (Daley, *The Hope of the Early Church*, 58). This is not, however, to deny the transformative nature of restoration for Origen: as Behr correctly observes, resurrection in Origen is akin to transfiguration (John Behr, *The Formation of Christian Theology I: The Way to Nicaea* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2001), 172). However, there is not in Origen the singularly forward orientated understanding of *apokatastasis* that Ludlow, *Universal Salvation*, records as being present in Gregory of Nyssa (258): in Origen, there is a sense of return.

⁹⁶ *CommJoh.* I.16 (Heine, I.91, 52).

⁹⁷ *De Princ.* I.7.5.

⁹⁸ *De Princ.* II.8.3. Yet, as above, not in the Stoic sense of cyclic and endless determinism.

beginning. And if they had a beginning that was such as they expect their end to be, they have undoubtedly existed right from their beginning in those worlds 'that are not seen and are eternal.'⁹⁹

Although the reference here is to the 'consummation of the saints', one is immediately directed to the broader category of 'rational creatures'; and in both cases, one is directed to an end which will be like the beginning.

This means that punishment in Origen's theology is not absolute.¹⁰⁰ Its purpose is instead to reform the soul.¹⁰¹ Although Origen does discuss those 'separated from every gleam of intelligence or reason' who will be clothed in darkness and live as if in a prison,¹⁰² there is little sense of a permanent hell in Origen's thought. Origen's sense of the graciousness of God always allows for a further opportunity in future aeons. Even 'the worst sinner, who has blasphemed the Holy Spirit and been ruled by sin from beginning to end in the whole of this present age, will afterwards in the age to come be brought into order, I know not how.'¹⁰³ Those seemingly beyond any salvation in the present age will receive grace in the future. The will of God must be done for the unjust as for the just.¹⁰⁴ Thus, just as Paul considers himself to be 'all things to all', so too 'The Saviour . . . in a way much more divine than Paul, has become "all things to all," that he might either "gain" or perfect "all things."¹⁰⁵ Origen continues,

The Saviour, therefore, is first and the last, not that he is not what lies between, but it is stated in the terms of extremities to show that he himself has become 'all things.' But consider whether the 'last' is man, or those called the underworld beings, of which the demons also are a part, either in their entirety or some of them.¹⁰⁶

Being first and last does not involve only temporality, but points to a personal understanding: the Saviour is first and last to everything in

⁹⁹ *De Princ.* III.5.4, emphasis added.

¹⁰⁰ *De Princ.* II.10.7. See Farrar, *Mercy and Judgment*, 330; and P. Tzamalikos, *The Concept of Time in Origen* (Bern: Peter Lang, 1991), 393.

¹⁰¹ *De Princ.* I.6.3.

¹⁰² *De Princ.* II.10.8.

¹⁰³ *Prayer* XXVII.15.

¹⁰⁴ *Prayer* XXVI.6.

¹⁰⁵ *CommJoh.* I.34 (Heine, I.217, 76).

¹⁰⁶ *CommJoh.* I.34 (Heine, I.219, 77).

salvation—an angel to angels, a human to humans and so on.¹⁰⁷ Salvation thus seems even to stretch (in speculation at least) to the demonic.¹⁰⁸ The work of the Logos cannot be limited.¹⁰⁹ Origen is insistent that Jesus came for the benefit of (at least) the whole human race.¹¹⁰

It seems that all things will receive salvation and that they are brought together in a unity in which all things become one:¹¹¹

Finally, when the world was in need of variety and diversity, matter lent itself to the fashioning of the diverse aspects and classes of things in wholly obedient service to the Maker, as to its Lord and Creator, that from it he might produce the diverse forms of things heavenly and earthly. But when events have begun to hasten towards the ideal of all being one as the Father is

¹⁰⁷ This is part of Origen's doctrine of the *epinoiai*. The form of the Logos is varied depending on the ability of those to whom He directs His economy to receive Him. Thus, there is constancy in the divine form of the Logos, but variety in His revelation. It is in this way that Origen is distinct from the Christological Gnostic versions of the doctrine (as seen in the likes of the *Acts of John* and the *Acts of Peter*): Origen's use of the *epinoiai* is soteriological, and depends on the spiritual ability and nature of individuals rather than on the nature of the Logos itself. See John A. McGuckin, 'The Changing Forms of Jesus', in *Origeniana Quarta*. On *epinoiai*, see *CommMt.* XII.36–8; *CommJoh.* I.22–42; *HomJosh.* 8.6; *HomGen.* 1.7, 14.1; *HomEx.* 7.8; *CCel.* II.64f., IV.16, VI.68, VI.75–7. See also Greggs, 'The Many Names of Christ in Wisdom'.

¹⁰⁸ This was a major concern to later critics and defenders of Origen. While Christ becoming a demon may well be the logical implication to Origen's thought, Origen himself never makes this move explicitly. Furthermore, as he states in his *Letter to Alexandrian Friends*, Origen is not prepared to extend salvation to the devil and demons. Given the economic nature of Origen's teaching on *epinoiai*, it may well be best simply to state that the economy of salvation does not stretch to the demonic, so Christ never becomes a demon to demons.

¹⁰⁹ Indeed, Williams defines heterodoxy for Origen as 'the limitation of the Logos of the one God to something less than the whole of the intelligible world' (Rowan D. Williams, 'Origen: Between Orthodoxy and Heresy', in *Origeniana Septima*, 13).

¹¹⁰ E.g. *CCel.* II.33, II.52; *CommJoh.* VI.37, I.24. There certainly exist many passages in Origen which point in a universalistic direction. *CommMt.* X.2 points to sins rather than people being subject to judgment; *CommRom.* 5.2.2 sees Christ's saving work as greater than the transgression of Adam; *CommRom.* 5.2.8 sees Christ leading more back to life than Adam led to death; *HomLev.* 7.2.9ff. suggests universalism in the image from Ezekiel of the dry bones; and *HomLk.* frag. 214 sees Christ as the Saviour even of people in hell.

¹¹¹ Clark claims that Jerome rejected the idea of *apokatastasis* because it did not allow sufficient room for a differentiation of heavenly rewards based on ascetic renunciation. While he could allow the ultimate forgivability of sins, he was more strongly committed to a hierarchy in the hereafter. Elizabeth A. Clark, 'The Place of Jerome's Commentary on Ephesians in the Origenist Controversy: The Apokatastasis and Ascetic Ideals', *Vigiliae Christianae* 41 (1987), 155. However, cf. *ibid.* n.xxx.

one with the Son, we are bound to believe as a logical consequence that where all are one there will no longer be any diversity.¹¹²

However, this again seems to be an area of Origen's thought where tensions over universalism arise.¹¹³ There are several instances in which salvation seems to be limited in Origen's theology:¹¹⁴

perhaps we shall be able to say that he alone who participates in this Word, insofar as he is such, is 'rational.' Consequently, we could also say that the saint alone is rational.

Again, if we understand the life which was made in the Word, namely him who said, 'I am the life,' we will say that no one outside the faith in Christ is alive, [but] that all who are not living for God are dead.¹¹⁵

The universalism understood thus is one which extends only to the saints as they are the only truly rational ones. Therefore, in restoring only the saints, everything that truly 'is' is restored: all else is dead, as only the saint is restored. There is no theory of eternal punishment, simply annihilation for those outside of Christ.

One way of understanding this is in terms of two senses of rationality: 'Now "reason" which is in men, in which we have said our species participates, is spoken of in two ways: according to the perfecting of concepts which occurs in everyone who has gone beyond childhood, the exceptional being excluded, or according to the excellence which is found in the perfect alone.'¹¹⁶ This twofold sense begins to draw out a

¹¹² *De Princ.* III.6.4.

¹¹³ Smith observes both universalist and non universalist elements in Origen's thought: John Clark Smith, *The Ancient Wisdom of Origen* (London and Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1992), 51ff. Norris also recognizes this tension: Fredrick W. Norris, 'Universal Salvation in Origen and Maximus', in *Universalism and the Doctrine of Hell*, 35-52.

¹¹⁴ Hanson, however, gives a fair reading of those texts which seem to suggest a limited salvation in a way which still accords with universalism (Hanson, *Allegory and Event*, 334-5).

¹¹⁵ *CommJoh.* II.10 (Heine, II.114-15, 125). One sees similar limitations to universalism in the likes of *CCel.* VIII.72 (in which universalism seems to mean people from all nations), III.81, IV.10; *HomJosh.* 3-5 (in which there is no salvation for those outside the church - an indication of Rufinus's echoing Cyprian, according to Adolf von Harnack, *Der Kirchengeschichtliche Ertrag Der Exegetischen Arbeiten Des Origenes* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1918), 83, n.2); *HomGen.* 2.3; *HomLev.* 5.7.2, 7.6.4; *CommRom.* 3.1-3, 5.1.29, 8.7.2. Obviously, the genre of the different works has a role here: it is hardly in the interest of the homilies which exhort the faithful to holy lives to suggest a universalism which may cause some to treat grace cheaply, just as *CCel.* is a work designed to convert the reader not allow them to simply rely on universalism. See further, Greggs, 'Exclusivist or Universalist?', 320-5 (esp. 325).

¹¹⁶ *CommJoh.* I.42 (Heine, I.273, 90).

notion of universality which still allows for a greater relationship of the Logos to the saints than that which He has merely to all rational creatures. This twofold relation to the Logos is also seen in Origen's quoting 'he [Christ] is the Saviour of all men, especially of the faithful'.¹¹⁷ Restoration is universal, but it is particularly for those who have faith in Christ.¹¹⁸

(d) Nothingness

As well as being Origen's most thorough attempt at theodicy, Nothingness is a teaching which seems to suggest that only those things which truly exist will be restored, and whatever is to be restored truly exists. There appears to be an ontic gradation which starts with Being and ends with Nothingness: the less one participates in the Logos, the further down the scale one is, the more the Nothing takes away the rational, until—devoid of any rationality—one is Nothing.¹¹⁹ Origen writes that Nothing is: 'everything which has received its apparent constitution neither from God nor through the Word'.¹²⁰ He considers that scripture teaches that the words 'Nothing' (*οὐδέν*) and 'Not-being' (*οὐκ ὄν*) are synonymous. What scripture adds to what he terms the Greek understanding of the words is the idea of evil.¹²¹ This concept of Nothing, then, seems to

¹¹⁷ *CommJoh.* VI.37 (Heine, VI.285, 245).

¹¹⁸ Edwards interprets this in terms of Origen's understanding of two resurrections, in which the saint partially anticipates in her mortal body what will be completed after death and will then be the portion of all humanity (Mark J. Edwards, 'Origen's Two Resurrections', *Journal of Theological Studies* 46, no. 2 (1995), 510). Edwards also correctly rejects Crouzel's belief that one should sharply distinguish between Hades and Gehenna in Origen's system (511 and 517). Cf. Henri Crouzel, 'Hadès Et La Géhenna Selon Origène', *Gregorianum* 49 (1978); Crouzel, *Origen*, 240ff. and 264ff.; and Lawrence R. Hennessey, 'The Place of Saints and Sinners after Death', in *Origen of Alexandria. An alternative explanation of this issue of the relationship between universalism and the special place of the saint is seen in Adele Monaci Castagno, 'Origen the Scholar and Pastor', in Preacher and Audience: Studies in Early Christianity*, ed. Mary B. Cunningham and Pauline Allen (Leiden: Brill, 1998). Castagno advocates that this dual understanding results from Origen's pastoral concern. Although she overstates her case, Rabinowitz, 'Personal and Cosmic Salvation', sees this tension as explicable in terms of the separation between soteriology and eschatology in Origen's thought. For a constructive interpretation of the relationship between universalism and particularity, see below, Chs 4 and 7.

¹¹⁹ Crouzel, *Origen*, believes this to be the case for the demons (213).

¹²⁰ *Ibid.* ¹²¹ *CommJoh.* II.7 (Heine, II.94, 119).

be employed to see a universal restoration of all creation insofar as it is rational, as only the rational truly is: ‘All, therefore, who share in “being”—and the saints share in it—would properly be called “those who are.” But those who have turned away from sharing in “being” have, by having deprived themselves of “being,” become “those who are not.”’¹²² This appears to suggest a limitation to universalism linked in some way to morality. The saints share in Being not because they are in a different ontological category than the unbeliever, but because they participate in God through the rationality of their lives and the exercise of will, in a similar way to variety in the world existing because of the exercise of will on the part of pre-existent souls. As the will is exercised in the soul towards that which is good, so the individual grows towards God and participates more fully in Being. The most morally corrupt do not do this, and may be considered to be Nothing.¹²³

The sense that only the church or saints exist needs to be qualified, however. Later in the *Commentary on John*, Origen considers the meaning of the word *κόσμος*, and criticizes the idea that the world is simply the *ἐκκλησία* alone.¹²⁴ He uses the idea of the church being the light to the world to justify the existence of both. Origen concludes by stating that Christ is the Saviour of the whole world, especially the faithful.¹²⁵ Elsewhere, one is told that salvation is not only for men but also for beasts: ‘For if “God saves man and beasts,” he saves what beasts [*κτῆνη*] he saves.’¹²⁶ The extension of salvation is, therefore, dependent on the will of God, and one cannot consider those who live *extra ecclesiam* simply to be Nothing.¹²⁷

¹²² *CommJoh.* II.7 (Heine, II.98, 120).

¹²³ It is in this way that one might see Origen’s identification of the devil with death (*DePrinc.* III.6; *CommRom.* 1.18.7, 6.6.5, cf. 5.3; *HomJosh.* 8.4), or indeed the idea that hell is reserved for the devil and demons (e.g. *HomJosh.* 8.5, cf. 14.2). The devil has exercised his will to such a point of moral corruption and is so far from Being that he will ultimately be ‘Nothing’.

¹²⁴ *CommJoh.* VI.38.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

¹²⁶ *CommJoh.* I.22 (Heine, I.122 59). The word *κτῆνη* was even used of swine (Liddell and Scott (eds), *Greek English Lexicon Ninth Edition, Revised by Jones and McKenzie*, 1002).

¹²⁷ They are perhaps (on the sliding scale of morality and rationality) further removed from Being than those in the church: not quite Nothing as the devil and demons will ultimately be, but not fully participating in God’s Being. This full participation is seen in the Holy Spirit who is reserved for the saints.

4 THEMES

(a) Time, eternity, and the aeons¹²⁸

Origen's understanding of time underpins his work on pre-existence.¹²⁹ His notion of time is on occasions difficult to understand, but seems to be the result of the interplay of on the one hand the simultaneity of the first and last, and on the other the integrity of the present temporal moment in growth.¹³⁰ What is more, there is a cycle of time, but this will end with the final consummation (*consummationem saeculi*).¹³¹

Origen is clear that there had to be a beginning to the world,¹³² and that this beginning was at a certain time.¹³³ This beginning, however, stems from a world that existed before this world.¹³⁴ This is not to say that there is an infinite regress of ages. There is one ultimate beginning just as there will be one ultimate end.¹³⁵ This reflects the idea of restoration already discussed, in which the world is restored to its original position and place. While there is a simultaneity to the beginning and the end, therefore, the movement of restoring allows for a present which has its own integrity between those two points (in the 'many differences and varieties' that arise).¹³⁶

¹²⁸ For a detailed examination of Origen's understanding of time, see Tzamalikos, *The Concept of Time in Origen*.

¹²⁹ This is a famously difficult topic in Origen to consider. Even Crouzel notes that there is no clear notion of eternity in Origen's work (Crouzel, *Origen*, 187). Stead suggests, however, that Origen was the first person in whom one sees the influence of 'eternalist Platonism', with its great emphasis on the distinction between the eternal and sensible worlds (G. C. Stead, 'Philosophy in Origen and Arius', in *Origeniana Septima*, 103).

¹³⁰ This complexity arises as the result of Origen's desire to uphold a tension: 'the consummation of all things in eternity... will entail the end of the visible and the temporal, but each soul must be credited with a private eschatology that depends on its merits and can thus be completed only in its own time' (Edwards, 'Origen's Two Resurrections', 506).

¹³¹ *De Princ.* III.5.1.

¹³² *De Princ.* III.5.2.

¹³³ *De Princ.* III.5.3; cf. Edwards, 'Christ or Plato', 23.

¹³⁴ *De Princ.* III.5.3. While there are pre-existent and future ages, there are no ages co-temporal with this one.

¹³⁵ *De Princ.* I.6.2.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*

What is important to note, however, is that the cycle of ages from which the beginning of this world stems does not lead to a belief in the eternal existence of the world: matter is created,¹³⁷ and all things stem from the creation of God.¹³⁸ Only for the Trinity is there no temporal limitation and no period before its existence.¹³⁹ Thus, the past is truly the past, and not timeless; and the beginning is a beginning, and not an infinite regress. The Son's work in time is one which does not replace the periods of past and future, but His cross marks a work so powerful that it restores not only the present age but also the past.¹⁴⁰

The culmination of all ages is the point of absolute restoration in which all will be as in the beginning. It may seem that Origen suggests that the end of the ages is just one end which will be followed by many subsequent ages. Not so: the end is seen by Origen as 'that period, namely, when all things are *no longer in an age*, but "God is all and in all"'.¹⁴¹ Origen describes what it is to be 'all in all'.¹⁴² In this, he states that the end, like the beginning, is beyond all future ages of purification and learning, when Nothing will have been exposed for what it is in the process by which each individual is purified. It is the moment of existence (rather than progression) in which God is 'all in all'. It is a time which is more than an age:¹⁴³ it is the end of all ages.

This end of the ages is preceded, however, by long and varied ages in which progress and purification take place.¹⁴⁴ These ages include that of the 'new heavens and new earth' which will precede the end of all time.¹⁴⁵ During this time, humans endure sufferings to lead them back to God through purgation and cleansing.¹⁴⁶ At times these are described as a 'perpetual and never ending [eternal] period' (*perpetuum et aeternum tempus*). However, if the end is not a moment of time, and is instead, something more than an age, then it seems that any everlasting temporal understanding of it must be wrong, and that the end lies at a point beyond that which is never-ending. Indeed, the Greek reading of this phrase gives an indication that this future growth of the soul lies *before* the end.¹⁴⁷ It speaks of the 'illimitable

¹³⁷ *De Princ.* II.1.4.

¹⁴⁰ *CommRom.* 5.10.14.

¹⁴² *De Princ.* III.6.3.

¹⁴⁴ *De Princ.* III.6.6.

¹⁴⁶ *De Princ.* III.1.13 (Latin version).

¹³⁸ *De Princ.* I.3.3.

¹⁴¹ *De Princ.* II.3.5, emphasis added.

¹⁴³ *De Princ.* II.3.5.

¹⁴⁵ *De Princ.* I.6.2.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.* (Greek version).

¹³⁹ *De Princ.* II.2.1.

age' (*ἀπέραντον αἰώνα*), which does not suggest necessarily something never-ending, but something which cannot have a limitation placed onto it.¹⁴⁸ These future ages are part of the long period before the end of the age. These ages are the period in which Jesus is considered to be 'with' believers rather than 'in' believers¹⁴⁹—that period prior to God being 'all in all'. At the end there will be 'no world at all, but something like that "end" which we understand will exist at the conclusion of all things'.¹⁵⁰

(b) Free will and election

Part of Origen's concern with matters of time and pre-existence is with regards to the doctrine of God's foreknowledge and the election of humanity to salvation.¹⁵¹ For Origen, these must always be held together with a strong sense of free will.¹⁵² Indeed, much of the work that he pursues on pre-existence stems from questioning the issue of how God elects some and not others. One sees this in his reflections on John the Baptist and Isaac and Esau, in which he quotes Rom. 9.11-14.¹⁵³ God's election and favour in the present world come to be seen as dependent on the pre-existence of human souls and their prior exercise of free will. It is this which explains present variety.

Moreover, Origen is careful to separate God's foreknowledge from the cause of human action.¹⁵⁴ Origen asserts that while God foreknows human happenings, it is the exercise of human free will which causes those happenings.¹⁵⁵ This is a very narrow understanding of

¹⁴⁸ Farrar, *Mercy and Judgment*, 10 and 377ff.; Daley, *The Hope of the Early Church*, 56-7.

¹⁴⁹ *CommJoh.* X.8.

¹⁵⁰ *De Princ.* II.3.1.

¹⁵¹ This is connected with Origen's concerns over Gnosticism which, he believed, robbed humans of liberty. See Daniélou, *Origen*, 205 and 211.

¹⁵² This tension is observed in Smith, *The Ancient Wisdom of Origen*, 47. For a discussion of this in contrast to Augustine, see Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology* Vol. 3, 440ff.

¹⁵³ *CommJoh.* II.25.

¹⁵⁴ Benjamin Drewery, *Origen and the Doctrine of Grace* (London: Epworth Press, 1960), 96ff.

¹⁵⁵ *CCel.* II.20. One sees this similarly in Origen's treatment of predestination in *CommRom.* At 7.8.2ff., Origen observes that not everyone who is called is justified: this is dependent on the exercise of free will. This point is similarly made regarding

freedom, in which human freedom seems only to be the absence of necessity from the foreknowledge of God. There is an almost inevitable circularity about this, however, since if foreknowledge is not the cause of something, that the thing is foreknown means that there is still a necessity about it.

Perhaps as a result of this, in Origen, the elect and the rejected are not set up in absolute opposition, but held together simultaneously. One can see this exemplified in two spheres. The first is with the rather special case of the Jews.¹⁵⁶ One observes in Origen's consideration of the Jews a kind of chiasmic move in which the elect nation becomes reject through its rejection of Christ in order that the rejected Gentiles can become elect through their election of Christ.¹⁵⁷ In the dialogue with Celsus, Origen states:

the Jew says: *Or was his purpose in coming down that we might disbelieve?* My reply to this is as follows: He did not come with the aim of bringing about the unbelief of the Jews, but by his foreknowledge he foretold that this would happen and used the unbelief of the Jews to call the Gentiles. For by their sin 'salvation is come to the Gentiles', of whom Christ said in the prophets, 'A people that I have not known shall serve me; to the hearing of the ear they were obedient'; and 'I was found by them who sought me not...'¹⁵⁸

The foreknown rejection of Israel becomes a mediating force for the election of the rejected world.¹⁵⁹ What is more, this does not lead to the ultimate rejection of Israel, but must be understood in terms of the ages which precede the end. Israel is not elected to ultimate rejection, but, when God is 'all in all', Israel will be restored.¹⁶⁰

the free choice of life or death (Christ or the devil) in *CommRom.* 1.18.7. (Cf. *De Princ.* 3.1.6 and 3.1.11 and *Dial.* 27.13ff.).

¹⁵⁶ On Origen and the Jews, see N. R. M. De Lange, *Origen and the Jews: Studies in Jewish Christian Relations in Third Century Palestine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976). While the Jewish people are a special case for Christian theology, the significance of the Jewish people for Origen's economic dynamics is seen more generally below. See Ch. 4, §2.iv.

¹⁵⁷ Roukema states that Origen believed the same judgment of God is applied to all people—Christians and Jews—on the basis of Rom. 2.12 (Reimer Roukema, 'Jews and Gentiles in Origen's Commentary on Romans II.19–22', in *Origeniana Quarta*, 22).

¹⁵⁸ *CCel.* II.78.

¹⁵⁹ Cf. De Lange, *Origen and the Jews*, 97.

¹⁶⁰ Origen does also point to a future in which 'all Israel' will be saved, but suggests only God knows who that includes (*CommRom.* 8.12.6) cf. *CommJoh.* X.26.

One sees a second exemplification of this unity of elected and rejected in the figure of Judas.¹⁶¹ Origen realizes the problematic nature of the betrayal narrative, and writes: 'if, as God, he [Jesus] has foreknowledge and his foreknowledge could not have been wrong, it was impossible that the one whom he foreknew to be his future betrayer should not have done so'.¹⁶² Demonstrating his desire to preserve free will, Origen states that Jesus' foreknowledge cannot be the cause of Judas' betrayal.¹⁶³ The betrayal was only foreknown. Judas was not actively elected to it: it was an exercise of his own will. What is more, as an exercise of Judas' will, it is not beyond forgiveness. Even as an ultimate rejector of Jesus, Judas still has some hope of election: Origen, commenting on the words and actions of Judas after the betrayal, asserts that for all of his betrayal there was some remnant of good in Judas and that he repented.¹⁶⁴ Although Origen notes that another is selected in the place of Judas, and that he is separated from the twelve, even in the rejection of his separation from the twelve, Judas stands with those who repent. Election and rejection stand together: it is not that some people are in one category and others are in another,¹⁶⁵ but rather that there are aspects of the same person which are elected and rejected dependent on the positive or negative exercise of free will. Election, therefore, is simultaneous to the exercise of free will, such that the elect and the reject stand simultaneously together,¹⁶⁶ not apart.¹⁶⁷ Origen's universalism involves no destruction of human free will.

(c) Varied participation in Christ

It is interesting to observe in Origen the interplay of all humanity already being in Christ with varied participation in Him: within

¹⁶¹ Origen's treatment of Judas is complex. While his positive reading is attested, Judas is dealt with more negatively in the homilies and commentaries (see *CommRom.* 7.8.2, 7.8.6; *HomLk.* 1.4,3.4, frag. 151). This is another issue of genre and what the texts are trying to achieve: homilies are designed to exhort the believer to a life of morality and purity, and therefore any positive understanding of Judas would be unwanted.

¹⁶² *CCel.* II.18.

¹⁶³ *CCel.* II.20.

¹⁶⁴ *CCel.* II.11.

¹⁶⁵ As the Valentinians considered the case (*CommRom.* 8.11.2 cf. 1.3.1).

¹⁶⁶ For further theological reflection on this 'simultaneity', see Ch. 4, §2.

¹⁶⁷ *HomJer.* 11.5.2, sees the universal need for punishment for universal purification.

Origen's universalism, there is room for variety and particularity. On the one hand, there is clearly a sense of all rational things being in Christ (just as all things are in the Father and all saints are in the Holy Spirit): 'at the consummation of the age, by his including in himself all those whom he subjected to the Father and who through him come to salvation . . . "all things" shall "subsist in him" and he shall be the "head of all things"'.¹⁶⁸ Similarly, election takes place in Christ: 'in the letter to the Ephesians it is written concerning those to be saved that the Father "chose" them "in Him," "in Christ," "before the foundation of the world"'.¹⁶⁹ Given election took place in the beginning, before the foundation of the world, and that for Origen the end is like the beginning, there is ultimately to be a unity of all things. This is achieved in Christ; for in Christ all are to be made alive.¹⁷⁰

On the other hand, Origen has a very clear sense of the variety of ways in which the Logos relates all rational creatures, which allows for a strong sense of particularity in the world: humans are not simply subsumed into Christ with the loss of their own identity, but are instead gifted with the freedom to participate variously as rational creatures in Christ. The variety arises because Christ gives: 'to all rational creatures whatsoever a participation in himself, in such a way that each obtained a degree of participation proportionate to the loving affection with which he had clung to him.'¹⁷¹

This aspect of varied participation in the Logos allows for diversity in creaturely growth towards the Son as creatures become more like Christ.¹⁷² The sense of this varied participation in the Logos is not to be separated from all that is rational being in Logos: it allows for an active and passive participatory relationship, and as one grows in rationality, so one enabled to participate more fully in the Logos. As Origen writes:

For if, by participating in him, we arise and are enlightened, and perhaps also are shepherded or ruled, it is clear that we also *become* rational in a

¹⁶⁸ *De Princ.* III.5.6.

¹⁶⁹ *Prayer* V.5.

¹⁷⁰ *CommJoh.* X.21.

¹⁷¹ *De Princ.* II.6.3 cf. *De Princ.* IV.4.2. Participation is, however, varied in terms of the capacity of the individual to participate. See *PeriPasch.* 30.

¹⁷² They do this by carrying in their bodies the death of Jesus, so that the life of Christ might be manifest in them (*CommJoh.* I.35).

divine manner *when he destroys in us all that is irrational and dead insofar as he is 'Word' and 'resurrection.'* But consider if, perhaps, all men participate in him insofar as he is Word.¹⁷³

Christ is thus present in all that is rational proportional to their participation in Him. As humans participate more fully in Christ, they are more enlightened and governed by Him, such that they not only are participating in Christ as Logos (because all humans do this), but also *become* rational, as that which is irrational is destroyed by Him. The fuller participation of our reason in the *Logos* is the means by which the *logika* are transformed into the *logikoi*.

(d) Variety, diversity, and identity

What is most interesting about the interplay of rational creatures being in Christ and having variable participation in Him is how this allows for variety within Origen's position on universalism, overcoming some of the tensions in the corpus observed earlier between seeming exclusivism and seeming universalism. He points towards a universalism which not only allows for the particularity of all things but results from the particularity of all things. Daniélou sees this as a crucial element in Origen's system: 'the argument that between absolute unity and the multiplicity of creatures there must be a being who is one and yet shares in that multiplicity.'¹⁷⁴ It is the very multiplicity of the Logos which makes His dealing with the *logika* possible. It is in this that He can adapt to all their diversity in His economy.¹⁷⁵

Indeed, much of Origen's reflection on pre-existence results from the variety which he observes in the world.¹⁷⁶ He attributes this variety to the descent of souls, and to those other bodies which must aid them in their return to God. Reflecting on Eph. 1.14, he writes that the variety of the souls' movements has led to the existence of every rank in life.¹⁷⁷ This variety results from a prior exercise

¹⁷³ *CommJoh.* I.42 (Heine, I.268 9, 89), emphasis added.

¹⁷⁴ Daniélou, *Origen*, 257. See also Rowan Williams, 'The Son's Knowledge of the Father in Origen', in *Origeniana Quarta*, 147; Williams, 'Origen: Between Orthodoxy and Heresy', 12.

¹⁷⁵ See Greggs, 'The Many Names of Christ in Wisdom'.

¹⁷⁶ In *De Princ.* II.9.4, he considers the question of how there is diversity if all things are made through the Logos, who is righteous.

¹⁷⁷ *De Princ.* III.5.4. See also *De Princ.* II.1.2.

of free will:¹⁷⁸ whether one is privileged or not in the present age is the result of one's former existence as soul.¹⁷⁹ The descent to earth causes the variety which presently exists and is observable.

However, there is also diversity in terms of God's response to that descent and variety. It is as a result of this diversity that there are four Gospels.¹⁸⁰ There are different names for Christ and accounts of Him: the one Christ meets the variety of the world in His manifold titles and roles (*epinoiai*),¹⁸¹ so that each can receive from Him in the way that each is capable of doing so.¹⁸² There is not one overarching uniformity impressed onto humanity by the coming of Christ, but instead a reaching out of the one Logos and His many aspects to the plurality and diversity of the world. This is not a docetic Christology, but marks a soteriological diversity in which the Logos' economy reaches out to people in the variety necessary for Him to be received by them.¹⁸³ Similarly, regarding Christ's being the truth, His truth is communicated but dependent on the state and ability of each individual to receive it:¹⁸⁴ He is King, Door, and Shepherd to those who need Him specifically as such, and even within these titles there are significant distinctions in the way He relates to individuals.¹⁸⁵ Christ's work does not stop at His being human, moreover. He becomes not only all things to all men, but all things to all things—even an angel to the angels,¹⁸⁶ and the first born of the dead to the dead.¹⁸⁷ Moreover, the work of Christ is not confined only to His person: Christ's being life is the reason for there being many lives,¹⁸⁸ and, through imitating the

¹⁷⁸ *De Princ.* III.5.5. Origen also advocates that this does not result from God's partiality towards any individuals or groups. See *De Princ.* I.8.2.

¹⁷⁹ *De Princ.* IV.3.10 (Latin version only).

¹⁸⁰ *CommJoh.* I.6.

¹⁸¹ On *epinoiai*, see further, McGuckin, 'The Changing Forms of Jesus'; Stead, *Substance and Illusion*, 184–5; Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 141ff.; Anatólios, 'Theology and Economy', 168; Drewery, *Origen and the Doctrine of Grace*, 115ff. and 159–60; Young, *The Use of Sacrificial Ideas*, 173; and Williams, 'The Son's Knowledge of the Father', 147.

¹⁸² *CommJoh.* I.11.

¹⁸³ See *CommRom.* 8.7.4 which indicates a variety in the way people are saved by grace, and 1.2.1 which discusses a variety of callings.

¹⁸⁴ There is variety in the way in which the Logos is apprehended: *CommJoh.* II.3. For more on the reception of revelation, see below, Chs 6 and 7.

¹⁸⁵ *CommJoh.* I.29–30.

¹⁸⁶ *CommJoh.* I.34.

¹⁸⁷ *CommJoh.* I.22.

¹⁸⁸ *CommJoh.* VI.3.

one Christ and being formed into his image, there are typologically speaking ‘many Christs’.¹⁸⁹ Thus, the one Christ is seen in the multiple existence of the saints whose lives typologically mirror His. This is even seen before the birth of Jesus, through figural exegesis of the Old Testament, in the character of Joshua, whom Origen describes as ‘a type of Jesus, the Christ’.¹⁹⁰ Origen observes that the Greek translation of ‘Joshua’ is ‘Jesus’ and sees him in a very narrow sense as a *τύπος*, thereby relating the two biblical testaments to one another.¹⁹¹ This emphasizes the sense of simultaneity in Origen’s understanding of time: even before incarnation, Joshua is a type, not only of the Logos, but of Christ. If Christ *qua* Christ is present (typologically) in the Old Testament, he is present in humanity (or at least certain humans) to a degree before his incarnation.

This variety was, it seems, required for the future restoration, but following this restoration, there will only be ‘one’,¹⁹² which itself points to the way in which the beginning is thought to have been. There will ultimately be a time when the many ‘speculations’ will be united to the monad of the Word: when words and reasons will realize their divisions and be united in the Word which is one *and composed of all of the many ‘speculations’*.¹⁹³

5 CONCLUSION: UNIVERSALISM AS THE RESULT OF ALL PARTICULARITIES

In conclusion, the interplay of pre-existence and restoration allows for a universalism which includes (or more aptly results from) the interplay of the particular, in all its variety, and the universal, which is monad. It is this interplay which provides the fullest sense of God being ‘all in all’. The soul is saved by becoming again a second time what it was before¹⁹⁴—recognizing its existence in Reason (Logos)

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁰ *CommJoh.* VI.26 (Heine, VI.229, 231).

¹⁹¹ On the Christological reading of scripture, see Young, *Biblical Exegesis*, 21–7.

¹⁹² *De Princ.* III.6.4. See above. However, Origen does note the variety of future degrees of glory and blessings (*CommMt.* XIII.15; *CommRom.* 4.8.9, 5.3.5).

¹⁹³ *CommJoh.* V.4.

¹⁹⁴ *De Princ.* II.8.3.

who dwells within it and growing in perfection to participate in the Logos who is fully present in each *logikos*, and variously present in every *logika*.

Jean Daniélou argues that the church does not reject *apokatastasis* outright in the anathematization of the fifth ecumenical council—only the Platonic distortion of it: *apokatastasis* ‘in Christ’ is considered by him to be orthodox.¹⁹⁵ It is hoped that this chapter has gone some way in demonstrating the Christocentric understanding of this doctrine for Origen, which sees restoration as fully in Christ, and not in a way which denies growth, diversity, and free will. Origen’s universalism is focused on the particularity of the Christian faith and allows for all of the particularities of creation.

¹⁹⁵ Daniélou, *Origen*, 288 9.

4

Dialogue: The restoration of humanity in Christ

1 INTRODUCTION

In a generation in which the evils of fundamentalism are all too plain to see in acts of terror and incitements of hatred by and towards ‘faith’ communities throughout our world, the need for the person of faith to break outside of the insider-outsider or saved-damned binary has rarely been so important. The need for each faith to recognize the place within the orthodoxy of its own soteriological system for those of other or no faith is paramount. It is for this reason that this chapter concerns the issue of a non-binary or non-separationist soteriology.¹ However, it is believed divisive approaches to soteriology can only be countered with a particularist agenda: the liberal pluralist agenda simply will not suffice,² and indeed—in its desire to enforce an alien universal onto all faiths and none—may well have contributed to the rise of exclusivist approaches to salvation. Thus, this chapter seeks to articulate an inclusivist and universalist approach to soteriology, which breaks through binary

¹ Fiddes observes that the atoning work of Christ should be understood in a way that reflects the questions of the present day (Paul S. Fiddes, *Past Event and Present Salvation: The Christian Idea of Atonement* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1989), 12). For the present generation of theologians, this is in a way which can counter fundamentalism, and find space both for hope for those of other faiths and none, and for the particularity of Christians.

² Discussion of pluralist approaches to universalism is found in Hart, ‘Universalism’, 3–15; and Gavin D’Costa, ‘Theology of Religions’, in David F. Ford (ed.), *The Modern Theologians: An Introduction to Christian Theology in the Twentieth Century*, 2nd edn, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997), 627–9. The reader is also directed to Hick, *God and the Universe of Faiths*. A short response to some of the difficulties of Hick’s position can be found in Ford, ‘Gospel in Context’, 7–8.

oppositions, but which is still grounded fully in the particularity of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Only in understanding that the work of the Son is a work for all creation can one begin to break down the view of salvation as a matter of being an insider rather than an outsider, saved rather than damned. Furthermore, only in recognizing this universal work *of Christ* can unhelpful separationism begin to be undermined on its own terms.³

Building from the preceding chapters, this chapter seeks to explore further the possibility of a genuinely *Christian* universalism. Each section will begin by identifying a theme in which the simple melody of the section will be heard. Discussions will follow giving my interpretations and more creative readings of Origen and Barth as variations on that melody, pressing their theologies further based upon the more expository work of the preceding chapters. Each section will end with a symphony of the variations in a way which it is hoped will be true to both Barth and Origen and yet will offer something creatively more. My own voice will also be heard in the implications and conclusions drawn from the symphony of Origen and Barth.

2 UNIVERSALISM IN CHRIST⁴

i. Theme

To express a genuinely Christian universalism, the particularity of Jesus Christ must be the starting point of any articulation of

³ It may, indeed, be useful to differentiate forms of exclusivism that can at times be unhelpfully confused. Certainly, one may differentiate between (a) Christological exclusivism; (b) revelational exclusivism; and (c) eschatological or soteriological exclusivism which denies salvation to the non-Christian. This book seeks to demonstrate that forms (a) and (b) of exclusivism do not lead necessarily to form (c) of exclusivism. This is not to deny that form (a) might not necessarily lead to form (b): that is another discussion for another book; this book is simply concerned to present a form of universalist soteriology that does not undermine Christian particularity. For further reflections on how these differentiated forms of exclusivism might relate to inter faith dialogue, see Greggs, 'Bringing Barth's Critique of Religion to the Inter Faith Table'; and the very helpful reflections in Hunsinger, *How to Read Karl Barth*, 245ff.

⁴ It is worth noting with Moltmann, *The Coming of God*: "Universalism"... is an eschatological question. But theologically it can be decided only in the framework of christology' (237).

salvation.⁵ This is so for both Origen and Barth in differing ways. In each of their soteriologies, there are twin foci: a universal optimism for humanity and an insistence that salvation comes only through Jesus Christ. There is, thus, a simultaneous desire for Christian particularity and for the salvation of all humanity. Far from a belief that 'all paths lead to heaven' or the equal validity of all faiths, there are few theologians more Christocentrically orientated, whether that be in terms of discussion of Christ or the Logos. Universal salvation and restoration is in the second person of the Trinity (in His Trinitarian economy). However, what is brought by the Son is a salvation for *all* people.

Although Barth was not willing to state overtly that he was a universalist, the universal hope of salvation in Jesus Christ is certainly the logical conclusion of his Christocentric doctrine of election, and his motivation for rejecting *apokatastasis* was to preserve the particularity of Jesus.⁶ Origen, on the other hand, is at times overt in his discussion of universalism. His version of *apokatastasis* was one contrary to the Stoic understanding of an unending cycle of universes.⁷ Instead, in speaking of *apokatastasis*, he uses a word which is used in scripture at Acts 3.21.⁸

ii. Origen

Origen's universalism stems from the Son's being as Logos. As Logos, the source of reason, the Son is the ground of all rational creatures,

⁵ Lindbeck correctly asserts: 'The major doctrinal concern [of Christianity] has been to preserve *Christus solus*, not to deny the possibility of salvation to non-Christians' (George A. Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine: Religion and Theology in a Postliberal Age* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster, 1984), 56). The present book seeks (with a similar concern to Lindbeck) to advocate that these two belong together, not simply to state that they are not incompatible.

⁶ Barth avoided using the term universalism, and while his theology points in that direction, it is left to God to be ultimate judge. In *HoG*, 49–50, Barth does speak of universalism (and indeed uses Origen's word *apokatastasis*). Where he rejects the term 'universalist', this is a rejection of the implications often associated with the term – not the placing of a limit on the scope of salvation. See Greggs, 'Jesus Is Victor', 206–12. For this reason and for the sake of concision, although Barth disliked the term, this book will refer to him as a 'universalist' albeit that is considered shorthand in his case for one who tends in a universalist direction.

⁷ As he makes clear in *CCel*. See Edwards, *Origen against Plato*, 112.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 113.

and provides salvation through the participation of all that is rational in Him. In many ways, Origen's universalism builds upon the work of Clement of Alexandria.⁹ The strain of universalism traditionally attributed to Origen comes from a discussion of his writing which follows primarily readings of his works through *De Principiis*, Origen's only directly systematic work. In it is contained his belief in *apokatastasis*, or the universal restoration of all things. This is to take place at the end of time when God will be 'all in all' (I Cor. 15.28).¹⁰ Ultimately, every soul will be saved by becoming (in a slightly different way) a second time what it was before.¹¹ Since all things were created in the Logos, so too all things are restored in the Logos.

Punishment in Origen's theology is not absolute. Its purpose is instead to reform the soul in order that it can be restored to what it previously was.¹² Origen's sense of the graciousness of God always allows for a further opportunity of salvation for all people in future aeons—even for those who have blasphemed the Spirit.¹³ The salvific will of God involves all, even the unjust and incontinent,¹⁴ since the end is always like the beginning for Origen.¹⁵ Thus, nothing created escapes restoration to its beginning in the Logos. This restoration is not because of a universal principle; it is, instead, a restoration to a beginning in relation the very *person* of the Logos. Origen's universalism is clear;¹⁶ but he is also equally clear that universal salvation comes through Christ, the Logos, in His particularity: only in the Logos is restoration possible.

⁹ See Ludlow, *Universal Salvation*, 31 ff.

¹⁰ *De Princ.* I.7.5.

¹¹ *De Princ.* II.8.3. Origen believed that cyclic and endless determinism would mean there was doubt as to the efficacy of Christ's death and resurrection (based on I Cor. 15.28). Therefore, as a result of Christ, the end is not exactly as the beginning (*De Princ.* III.6.3). The idea that Origen subscribed to successive cycles of fall and redemption is rightly rejected by Daley, *The Hope of the Early Church*, 58; Cruzel, *Origen*, 157 and 205; and Ludlow, *Universal Salvation*, 35–6.

¹² *De Princ.* I.6.3.

¹³ *Prayer XXVII.15.*

¹⁴ *Prayer XXVI.6.*

¹⁵ *De Princ.* I.6.2.

¹⁶ For an explanation of the non universalist passages in Origen, see Greggs, 'Exclusivist or Universalist?'

iii. Barth

Barth's universalism is grounded in the particular election of Jesus Christ.¹⁷ The effects of this on soteriology cannot be underestimated. The election of the community and of individuals belongs to the sphere of the simultaneous divine-human self-election in Christ. Human election occurs only in His prior election, and cannot be abstractly separated from this: included in Christ's election is the election of the other—the many 'whom electing God meets on this way'.¹⁸

Thus, the relationship between Christ as elected human and all other humans is, for Barth, an actual understanding of election *in* Christ.¹⁹ Jesus Christ elects humanity as electing God, 'electing them in His own humanity'.²⁰ While His election is unique, it must also be said that 'in this uniqueness [it] is *universally* meaningful and efficacious, because it is the election of Him who Himself elects.'²¹ While it is human election in the form firstly of community and secondly of individuals that concerns election, it is only in Christ that this election has its meaning. Here, one is able to see at work the dialectic of the particular and the universal.²² While the universal implications of the doctrine seem clear, the original election of Jesus Christ is what gives particular truth to individual election.²³ Salvation is offered to humanity in its election *in* Christ—the Christ of whom it must be said 'Jesus is Victor'.²⁴

¹⁷ Graham Ward, *Barth, Derrida and the Language of Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 6: 'With Barth's work a new Christological note is sounded. An historical and suprahistorical particularism is argued for.'

¹⁸ II/2, 195.

¹⁹ In contrast, Bonhoeffer's sense of 'being in Christ' is 'being in the Church' (Bonhoeffer, *Act and Being*, 108).

²⁰ II/2, 117.

²¹ *Ibid.*, emphasis added.

²² For a biblical account of the relationship between particulars and universals in salvation, see John M. G. Barclay, 'Universalism and Particularism: Twin Components of Both Judaism and Early Christianity', in Markus Bockmuehl and Michael B. Thompson (eds), *A Vision for the Church: Studies in Early Christian Ecclesiology in Honour of J. P. M. Sweet* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1997). Barclay summarizes his position thus: 'the christological particularism of the Church is not erased but made integral to the universalist expectations for the world' (217).

²³ II/2, 310.

²⁴ IV/3, 165ff. This differs, however, from the interpretation given by Berkouwer, *Triumph of Grace*. See Greggs, 'Jesus Is Victor', and Paul Glasson, *Jesus and Judas: Biblical Exegesis in Barth* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1991), esp. 135–47.

iv. Symphony

In both Barth and Origen, one is able to see a particularist approach to universalism, grounded in the second person of the Trinity's particular (or appropriate) universal work. This universal work is in the being of the Son: the person and work of Christ cannot be separated. Thus, rather than requiring a reaction on the part of humans in order to receive Christ's saving work, Barth and Origen's belief in Christ's salvific work is grounded in who He is for humans.²⁵ Christology and soteriology can never, therefore, be separated: His being Logos means that all that is truly rational cannot but participate in Him and therefore His work (for Origen); His being human means that all that is human cannot but participate in Him and His work (for Barth). It is objective participation in the second person (as *logika* in the Logos or as humans in Christ's humanity) which all humanity shares, whether one responds to it or not, and it is this that determines that both the theologies of Origen and Barth point in a universalist direction. This is not to speak of a non-particular form of universalism. The place of Christ could not be higher for either of them, and indeed has been a source of criticism for each.²⁶ Instead, the particular person of the Son brings about universal salvation. Furthermore, neither theologian could be considered to follow what might loosely be termed a 'liberal' agenda in theology: Barth's rejection of his teachers' theological liberalism is well known;²⁷ far from being willing to accept paganism as a true path, Origen desired persecution. The approach to soteriology seen in each theologian

²⁵ Bonhoeffer, *Act and Being*, 93: 'Only faith itself can say whether God "is" also outside the act of faith.' One might understand this not only epistemologically but also soteriologically: only in faith in one's own salvation in Christ can one know the salvation of others outside the act of faith.

²⁶ Barth was criticized for Christomonism, while Origen's biblical interpretation (especially of the OT) has been criticized for too Christocentric a reading.

²⁷ Albeit some think he was too influenced by it, e.g. Alister E. McGrath, *Iustia Dei: A History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification*, 2nd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 366. It is also worthy of note that Barth later in life believed himself to be more of a liberal than those who designated themselves thus. See Herbert Hartwell, 'Last Thoughts of Karl Barth', *Scottish Journal of Theology* 26, no. 2 (1973), 196; and *Testimonies*, 33. Origen, too, has been identified as some form of pluralist: Jon F. Dechow, 'Origen and Early Christian Pluralism: The Context of His Eschatology', in *Origen of Alexandria*.

cannot be considered genuinely pluralist; rather their universalism is exclusively particularist.

This universalism is grounded in a firm sense of the will and power of God to save all humanity. Indeed, so strong in each theologian is the sense of God's desire and ability to save all humanity that they even offer hope for Judas Iscariot—a character of central concern for both theologians.²⁸ Judas seems to be a test case for salvation. When faced with one whom God elects to reject Him in his betrayal of Christ, one is forced to consider why God creates a human who seems so clearly to be destined to damnation: Judas' origin and history are inextricably linked to his end. Judas becomes the archetype of universal salvation: if salvation can include even him, it can include all humanity; if salvation is the will of God, it cannot be avoided even in the present rejection of God's salvation.

In a related manner, both theologians also express concern over the relationship between Israel and the church in salvation. This concern arises from the idea of God demonstrating favouritism towards any people. Both Barth and Origen demonstrate that the Jew and the Gentile stand together. Jewish rejection of Christ is in order that there can be an election of the Gentiles, just as Judas' election to betray Christ allows for Christ's work of salvation. In both there is a chiasmic move which sees the elect reject and become the rejected in order to mediate the election of the rejected. But in neither case is there an ultimate rejection. Certainly in both Origen and Barth, there is a universalizing in Israel's rejection of Christ: it is Christ who now matters, in whom there is 'neither Jew nor Gentile'.

What one sees in this is an unwillingness to make absolute divisions between bodies of people. All humanity is seen as simultaneously elected and rejected, standing together.²⁹ The work of Christ

²⁸ See, for example, *CCel* II.11ff. for Origen's discussion (on the more positive side), although his discussion of Judas changes with the genre of the work, with a more negative view in the commentaries and homilies such as *HomLk.* 1.4; and II/2, 458–506 for Barth's reflection on Judas.

²⁹ Tillich puts this otherwise, suggesting that even the saint requires forgiveness and even the sinner is a saint insofar as she needs forgiveness. This thought is grounded in the idea that absolute judgments over finite beings are impossible, since they make the finite infinite (Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology* Vol. 3: *Life in the Spirit; History and the Kingdom of God* (Welwyn: James Nisbet & Co., 1964), 434–5). Bonhoeffer expresses a similar concern when he speaks of the whole of sinful

in salvation reaches out to the entirety of humanity in the Logos who is present in all rational creatures (in Origen), and in the humanity of God determined in the election of Jesus Christ (in Barth). This results, therefore, in bringing together the Jew and the Gentile Christian (for all the differences of their situation) within the salvific work of God, just as it brings together Judas and the other disciples (and particularly in Barth's case Saul-Paul). Humanity is not classified under types of humans—those who are inside versus those who are outside the plan of God. Instead, all humanity is united in Jesus Christ and the plan and will of God. Origen and Barth's universalism recognizes that Christ's humanity (or reason) has implications for all humans regardless, in the first instance, of their varied responses to Him. The rejected serve a larger purpose in the electing plan of God.³⁰ This means that both theologians can have an ultimately positive view of the negative wretchedness of humanity in the graciousness of God's salvation. Origen can state: 'we are not harsh to those who do not repent.'³¹ And Barth can write (in a statement pointed towards his argument with Billy Graham over the separation of the believer and the non-believer): 'We believers... must always become what we are... The others are already what they must become.'³² All of humanity is united in its variety in the person of Jesus Christ and His eternal will and act.

humanity remaining in every human being as long as sin exists in the world (Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Sanctorum Communio: A Theological Study of the Sociology of the Church*, ed. Clifford J. Green, trans. Reinhard Krauss and Nancy Lukens, vol. 1, DBW (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998), 124). Furthermore, Bonhoeffer argues that the strongest argument for *apokatastasis* must be the self awareness of Christians themselves of having brought sin into the world—a fact which binds them with the whole of sinful humanity in the world (286–7). Rahner speaks of each single human being as an 'inwardly plural being' about whom various things can be said regarding the different 'parts' of her existence (Karl Rahner, S.J., 'Purgatory', in *Theological Investigations Vol. 19: Faith and Ministry* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1984), 184). Similar points about the co-identity and complexity of sinner and saint are made regarding the exclusivist passages of scripture by the biblical scholars M. Eugene Boring, 'The Language of Universal Salvation in Paul', *Journal of Biblical Literature* 105, no. 2 (1986), esp. 278; and Christopher Rowland, 'The Lamb and the Beast, the Sheep and the Goats: "the Mystery of Salvation" in Revelation', in *A Vision for the Church*.

³⁰ This seems clear in Barth, but is also very strongly present in Origen, e.g. *De Princ.* III.1.8ff. on Pharaoh.

³¹ *Prayer* XXVIII.7.

³² Busch, *Karl Barth*, 446.

Both theologians run the danger, however, of this universal obliterating the particularity of each human being in their own existential struggle. Both at times struggle with the radical problems of existence as a result of their tendency towards universal salvation.³³ This leads to tensions in their seeming universalisms: there are elements in both Origen and Barth which do not seem universalist,³⁴ and they both clearly take rejection and sin seriously.³⁵ A tension in Barth's universalism can be further observed in terms of his carefulness that God's freedom to elect humanity does not become a prison in which God is bound:³⁶ in order to be an election in grace, the election must be a genuinely free election; God cannot be forced to elect in grace, otherwise it is not gracious election. A further tension is also present in Origen in terms of his emphasis on the punishment by God of individual

³³ Neither Barth nor Origen should be idealized here in their presentation of universalism. Both lived in difficult times for both the church and the world: for Origen, the church was suffering great persecutions at the hands of the Romans, just as for Barth the church and more particularly the Jews were persecuted during the horrors of the Nazi years. It is this which makes the universalist emphasis in both theologians all the more remarkable. Indeed, it is this which leads to the type of Christocentric universalism they both present: it is not liberal happy optimism about the progresses of humanity, but is instead starkly real.

³⁴ This is not, however, in the way in which Bettis understands the tension in Barth – that there can be no assurance for either the Christian or the non Christian (Joseph D. Bettis, 'A Critique of the Doctrine of Universal Salvation', *Religious Studies* 6 (1970), 342ff.). This simply does not accord with the tenor of Barth's work. Rather, the reality for both Origen and Barth is akin to Boring's descriptions of the simultaneous affirmations in Paul of limited and universal salvation: 'As propositions, they can only contradict each other. As pictures, they can both be held up, either alternatively or, occasionally, together, as pointers to the God whose grace and judgment both resist capture in a system, or in a single picture' (Boring, 'The Language of Universal Salvation', 292).

³⁵ See, for example, in Barth II/2, 417 18, and 422; in Origen, *CCel.* III.65ff., VIII.51 2; *De Princ.* II.10.1; *Martyrdom* IV.

³⁶ Bonhoeffer, *Act and Being*, speaks of the freedom of God as that 'which finds its strongest evidence precisely in that God freely chose to be bound to historical human beings and to be placed at the disposal of human beings' (90). God's freedom is, therefore, most strongly seen not in God's freedom from humanity but in His freedom for humanity. Robinson is, therefore, incorrect to assert (although he does go on to give his own solution): 'Either one must be prepared to show that the possibility that all are not saved is incompatible with the Divine omnipotence, or one must establish that the necessity for all to be saved involves no infringement of freedom, and therefore no denial of God's love. It is at this point that traditional orthodoxy and the doctrine of universalism diverge' (J. A. T. Robinson, 'Universalism – Is It Heretical?', *Scottish Journal of Theology* 2, no. 2 (1948), 141).

humans.³⁷ Elements that seek to deal with the particularity of each human do exist, therefore, in the universalisms of these theologians.

3 ETERNITY

i. Theme

The universalist reading of salvation offered is grounded in an emphasis on God's eternity. Both theologians recognize that the work of the second person is not a 'knee-jerk' reaction to an original foiled plan.³⁸ The second person's eternal relationship to humanity (qua human or qua *logika*) determines that, since there has been from eternity a plan for humanity, this plan will for eternity and in eternity be ultimately fulfilled. Left with a plan of salvation that would leave the vast majority damned, one might wonder why God should choose to create the world at all in the first place only to save a small part of it if from all eternity He would know that to be creation's end. However, realizing that humanity exists because of the second person of the Trinity, not the second person because of humanity, each theologian recognizes the eternal connection between the whole human race and Christ. This is a connection which cannot be broken in eternity's future because it was established in eternity's past; and to speak of a simple linear past and future in eternity is meaningless.

ii. Origen³⁹

Origen's belief in the pre-existence of human souls presents a situation in which the soul of an individual is determined by the extent

³⁷ See, for example, *CCel.* III.65ff., VIII.51 2; *De Princ.* II.10.1; *Martyr* IV.

³⁸ Daniel W. Hardy, *God's Ways with the World: Thinking and Practising Christian Faith* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1996), 114: 'the person of Jesus Christ, and the redemption of the world and man effected in him, are not latter day after actions or accidental occurrences unconnected with God's own being or with his previous or subsequent action in the world, but . . . these are integral to his being and his history with the world'.

³⁹ See above Ch. 3, §4(a).

to which it has cooled from the divine fire in which it participated. It is this differing extent of cooling which yields the diversity that exists in the world between rational creatures. All souls were originally partakers in the divine Logos, and have their present (at least potential) rationality from their origins as participators in Reason. Their return to the Logos is the purpose of this and subsequent ages, although this return does not allow for the transmigration of souls. For Origen, the soul must be restored to its original position as a full participant in the Logos. Following its descent through what seems best to be described only as boredom, it must progress through the pursuit of the godly life by following the teaching of Christ.

There have been fierce attacks on the orthodoxy of the belief in pre-existent souls,⁴⁰ and more recent attempts to establish the orthodoxy Origen's position have done so by denying that he had any real belief in pre-existent souls.⁴¹ This is a position which the present writer finds untenable, especially in the younger Origen.⁴² In many ways, concerns over this doctrine (which are understandable and—at least in the condemnation of the most Platonic readings of the doctrine—accepted) seem to rest on a misunderstanding of the meaning of 'pre-existence'. In one sense, the term 'pre-existent' is one which is utterly illogical. Something cannot exist before it exists. It may well exist in a different form to that in which it presently exists, but even this is difficult to understand logically: inasmuch as a human being pre-exists as the carbon of which it is made, the individual atoms of carbon remain as carbon, and do not pre-exist as something else; or psychologically, an adult cannot consider his

⁴⁰ This even includes Crouzel, *Origen*, 207, 217–18, 267–8. Daniélou, *Origen*, sees the foundations of the doctrine as Gnostic (198), although this is not an *a priori* reason for rejecting it: it may well be that Origen is influenced by Gnostic ideas, or rather that he is trying to make them more orthodox (just as he does with the *epinoiai* which he moves from being considered in ontological terms to being understood in economic ones). Certainly, Epiphanius attacks Origen's doctrine of the pre-existence of souls in the second charge he cites against him, albeit from the position of third and fourth century assumptions about the soul. See Dechow, 'The Heresy Charges against Origen', 113–14.

⁴¹ Edwards, *Origen against Plato*, 89ff.

⁴² The idea is at least more guarded in later works. There is also a clear difference in the approach to the doctrine in different genres of work. As a more 'speculative' doctrine, it is less prevalent in the commentaries, apologies, and homilies than in the more 'philosophical' *De Princ.* See Greggs, 'Exclusivist or Universalist?'

childhood his pre-existence for all the changes that may have taken place in the intervening time. Origen is very clear in his rejection of the transcorporation (*μετενσωμάτωση*) of souls.⁴³ His rejection in many ways follows from a concern about *creatio ex nihilo*: souls are always created, and are not eternal. The soul does not pre-exist as anything other than what it already is—a soul. Moreover, given that Origen suggests that the end will be like the beginning, and that he places such emphasis on God at the end of all things being ‘all in all’, it appears that it is as a participant in the divine that the soul exists prior to enfleshment. That is to say, it pre-exists only inasmuch as it comes from the eternal Logos. It may well be this which allows for the tension between the soul being created and pre-existing: inasmuch as it pre-exists eternally it is as a participant in the Logos; but this does not mean that it is not created, as it is dependent for its existence on the Logos. The soul pre-exists (or, better, subsists) eternally, therefore, insofar as all things created by the eternal and omniscient God pre-exist eternally in Him as a blueprint of creation. Since eternity is not simply the everlasting ongoing linear succession of time but something more akin to total temporal simultaneity, to exist in God eternally is both eternally to exist in God and eternally to have existed in God.

The role of the incarnation is, thus, for the one soul which has not fallen in union with the Logos to teach the obedience necessary for the journey of the soul back to its position as a full participant in the Logos. The obedience of the only-begotten Son is in order to teach ‘them obedience who could in no other way obtain salvation except through obedience.’⁴⁴ Through teaching humanity this obedience the Son

became obedient to the Father ‘even unto the death of the cross,’ but also at the consummation of the age, by his including in himself all those whom he subjected to the Father and who through him come to salvation, he himself with them and in them is also said to be ‘subjected’ to the Father, when ‘all things’ shall ‘subsist in him’ and he shall be the head of all things . . .⁴⁵

⁴³ E.g. *CommJoh.* VI.7 and *CommMt.* X.20, XIII.1 2.

⁴⁴ *De Princ.* III.5.6. See also Torjesen, ‘Pedagogical Soteriology’.

⁴⁵ *De Princ.* III.5.6.

There is, therefore, an incorporation and participation involved in Christ's work of salvation.⁴⁶ It is who Christ is primarily that is His saving work, and what He does both determines and is determined by His eternal being: His functional and ontological existence cannot be separated. All things are restored to subsisting in Him, by whom they were created.⁴⁷ This brings creation together with eschatology, with the idea that God ultimately recovers those whom He created.⁴⁸

iii. Barth⁴⁹

One may note a similar movement in Barth.⁵⁰ This is in terms of his sense of both the eternal humanity of Christ and his anthropology. Surprising as this may sound, for Barth, humankind does pre-exist. As the soul pre-exists in the Logos for Origen, humanity pre-exists in Jesus Christ for Barth:⁵¹

there is a real pre existence of man as the one who is summoned by God . . . namely, a pre existence in the counsel of God, and to that extent, in God Himself, i.e., in the Son of God, in so far as the Son is the uncreated prototype of the humanity which is to be linked with God,

⁴⁶ One must not think that this is a system identical to poor representations of Irenaeus, as seen in the likes of John Hick, *Evil and the God of Love* (London: MacMillan, 1966), especially chapters on 'Irenaean Type Theodicy'. Origen (like Irenaeus) still sees sin as very serious, requiring Christ to become or make propitiation or expiation. E.g. *CommRom.* 5.1.32; 3.8.1 3, 10 14; 3.9.2 cf. 5.2.14. It is also worthy of note that Origen is not as dualistic as Irenaeus in his approach to salvation. See Ludlow, *Universal Salvation*, 30 2.

⁴⁷ The image of restoration is very clear in Origen with regards to salvation more generally, in terms of health (*CommRom.* 6.6.7); life (*CommRom.* 7.6.7); the church (*CommRom.* 8.5.2); correction of the soul (*CCel.* VIII.72); the good (*CommSong.* 3.14); and the dry bones in Ezekiel (*HomLev.* 7.2.9).

⁴⁸ E.g. *HomEx.* 6.9 (although the means by which salvation takes place here is an image of ransom).

⁴⁹ See above, Ch. 2, §3(b).

⁵⁰ McCormack, *Karl Barth's Critically Realistic Dialectical Theology*, 151: 'For Barth, reconciliation was constituted in Christ above all through His obedience.'

⁵¹ This may not be as shocking as it first seems. Bockmuehl suggests that the most natural reading of Phil. 2.6, Col. 1.15 17, and I Cor. 8.6 is to associate Christ with a time prior to Adam, although he goes on to oppose this reading of Phil. 2.6 (Markus Bockmuehl, "'The Form of God'" (Phil. 2:6). Variations on a Theme of Jewish Mysticism', *Journal of Theological Studies* 48, no. 1 (1997), 10). For a critical view of

man in his unity with God, and therefore 'the firstborn of every creature' (Col. 1.15).⁵²

Again, in many ways this seems similar to Origen's understanding of the so-called pre-existence of the soul: to be created *ex nihilo* does not mean to be created *a nullo*.⁵³ As Barth makes clear, pre-existence results from election:⁵⁴ in Christ, who is electing God and elected human, humanity is elected from all eternity in God's self-determining act of election. There is, therefore, a pre-existence of humanity from all eternity with God; yet this does not in any way lead to the co-eternity of human beings with God, except in the person of Christ.⁵⁵ Nevertheless, in the person of Christ there is present all humanity.⁵⁶ Indeed, just as for Origen the soul must be restored to its primal position of participating in the Logos, so humanity for Barth must be restored to its identity with Jesus Christ's humanity as the true human. Humankind's self-understanding is clouded by sinfulness. Thus, Jesus reveals not only God to humanity but humanity to humanity: 'Who and what man is, is no less specifically and emphatically declared by the Word of God than who and what God is.'⁵⁷ It is Jesus who is the source of true anthropology.⁵⁸ Jesus' ministry is, therefore, to restore humankind to its true humanity in relation to God: 'It is not the case, however, that He must partake of humanity. On the contrary, humanity must partake of Him.'⁵⁹ Humanity must be restored to what it truly is in Christ. That restoration is a restoration to the elected nature of humanity in Christ despite humanity's rejection of God; it is a restoration from God's perspective back to relationship with God and with other humans, the covenant of which creation is the internal basis.⁶⁰ However, this restoration for

the problem of pre-existence, see James P. Mackey, *The Christian Experience of God as Trinity* (London: SCM, 1983), ch. 6; and James D. G. Dunn, *Christology in the Making: An Inquiry Into the Origins of the Doctrine of the Incarnation* (London: SCM, 1980), §15, 113ff.

⁵² III/2, 155.

⁵³ III/2, 153.

⁵⁴ III/2, 142ff.

⁵⁵ This results from Barth's understanding of time: eternity is the perfect and simultaneous possession of all time, and so the humanity of Christ is present in the pre-temporal eternity of God.

⁵⁶ E.g. III/2, 133.

⁵⁷ III/2, 13.

⁵⁸ III/2, 43.

⁵⁹ III/2, 59.

⁶⁰ See III/2, §45 cf. III/1, §41.3.

humanity is a restoration to the true humanity which lies (from the human perspective of the present) ahead in Christ, the *new Adam*.⁶¹

iv. Symphony

What one can see in each of these approaches to soteriology is the realization that creation and eschatology must be considered together.⁶² When these two are separated, the resulting image of God is one which makes Him look at best illogical and at worst unjust and irascible:⁶³ the majority of creation faced with the eternal punishment of hell would surely rather never have ever existed. If God created the world knowing that in His judgment He would have to condemn most of it, His goodness is surely brought into question. If, however, salvation's purpose is to bring restoration to creation, then there is a completeness to the plan and judgment of God. The world is created by God not only in His foreknowledge of its fall, but also in His foreknowledge of the ultimate restoration of His creation through salvation. This bringing together of creation and eschatology brings a number of positive results. It ensures that the being of God is

⁶¹ On this differentiation in perspectives, see Bonhoeffer, *Act and Being*, 157–61; Bonhoeffer, *Sanctorum Communio*, 141ff., in which Bonhoeffer asserts, 'Humanity is new in Christ, that is, from the perspective of eternity; but also becomes new in time' (144); Paul S. Fiddes, *The Promised End: Eschatology in Theology and Literature* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), 123ff. Cf. above Ch. 2, §3(c) regarding the relationship between Christ's humanity and all other humans in Barth's Christology.

⁶² This is a point made repeatedly by Pannenberg, often indeed with discussion of Barth. See Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology Vol. 2*, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1994), section III, 'Creation and Eschatology'; and on Barth, Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology Vol. 3*, 453ff. It is also made clearly by Colin Gunton, 'Atonement and the Triune God', in John Webster and George Schner (eds), *Theology after Liberalism: A Reader* (Oxford: Blackwells, 2000), 114–21. Discussed biblically, Robinson sees this unity as the essence of Eph. 1.20–2 (J. A. T. Robinson, *In the End God* (London: Collins, Fontana, 1968), 110); and Bockmuehl speaks (regarding Phil. 2.6) of 'the Lord's heavenly body as relevant not merely to Christ's pre incarnate state, but also as that which holds the key to the future existence of Christians' (Bockmuehl, 'The Form of God', 20).

⁶³ Hardy, *God's Ways with the World*, highlights the dangers of separating these two doctrines (ch. 9). However, one must also be careful to remember the distinction between these two doctrines in order that the particularity of the creature is not destroyed, as noted by Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology, Vol. 2*, 139.

not separated from His will,⁶⁴ and moreover that the will of God is not suppressed by the will of humans. There is, then, a consistency between the God who is described as ‘Love’ and the acts that He fulfils as Love.⁶⁵ God’s work of salvation is not, thus, a result of some reaction to humanity on the part of God independent of His being, but one which defines the God who is known in His saving work and results from the very nature of the God who enacts salvation. This means that God is not cajoled into saving by human belief, just as it also means His salvific work is not primarily in response to sinfulness and controlled by it. This is not to say salvation does not include a rescuing from sin and wrath for both Barth and Origen, but that God’s work of salvation is not simply as the result of some failed plan in creation caused by sin.⁶⁶ It also provides a response to the question of why God bothers to create the world at all.⁶⁷ Creation becomes a loving act, and salvation truly addresses the fallenness of creation in the restoration of creation to what it was before. Thus, creation must be seen through the lens of eschatology, just as eschatology must be seen through the lens of creation: the one God is the beginning and end. Ultimately, one must recognize the place and role of the eternity of God in the work of God—that God’s eternity cannot be flouted and mocked by the temporal activities of humanity and sin, and that what ultimately will be is His will as (for Barth) ‘the One who loves in freedom’ and (for Origen) the ‘all in all’.

In considering salvation from the perspective of eternity as restorative, there is a logical sense in which it has to be universal. To be restored

⁶⁴ Williams describes Barth as a theologian for whom there is ‘no gap conceivable between God as he acts towards us . . . and that activity in and by which God is eternally what he is’ (Rowan Williams, *Arius*, 2nd edn (London: SCM Press, 2001), 238).

⁶⁵ For a consideration of the meaning of ‘love’ as it relates to universal salvation, see Bettis, ‘A Critique of the Doctrine of Universal Salvation’; and the excellent response by Marilyn McCord Adams, ‘Universal Salvation: A Reply to Mr. Bettis’, *Religious Studies* 7 (1971).

⁶⁶ Clearly, Barth discusses salvation as a response to pride (IV/1), sloth (IV/2), and falseness (IV/3), and Origen does have a sense of propitiation and expiation. However, the view of eternity for both Origen and Barth means that God is not responding *ad hoc* to sinfulness, but that God’s salvation is part of His eternal plan.

⁶⁷ This is a question which the present writer has always considered prior to the usual question of theodicy: it seems more basic to consider why God created anything at all knowing that some of it would turn out damnable than why create those damnable things.

is to be as God intended. Furthermore, to be as God intended is truly to be, since all creation is ontologically dependent on God. This is the essence of *creatio ex nihilo*. The great positive contribution that a restorative soteriology can bring to theology in this bringing together of creation and eschatology is a removal of the dreadful sense of the dividing of humanity into saved (enjoying a perfect heavenly existence) and damned (burning forever in the fires of hell). Restoration means that God's will is fully established. However, it is now established in a way which is no longer contrary to the will of humanity. It is established in a way in which the will of humanity and His will are one—just as they were in creation before the fall in which willing to be like God humanity established its own will separate to His (symbolized in the tree of the knowledge of good and evil). Barth and Origen both establish a salvation which (in its logical conclusion at least) is for all humanity since, for both, their recognition of the importance of eternity to salvation realizes that the same God creates as judges.⁶⁸

4 HUMAN VARIETY AND PARTICIPATION⁶⁹

i. Theme

Here, a fundamental distinction between Barth and Origen emerges in terms of their starting point. This has been discussed in each case. For Barth, the starting point is the particularity of the one human Jesus Christ; for Origen, the particularity of all things in their diversity.⁷⁰ Yet both have a sense of all humanity universally participating in Jesus Christ as either human (Barth) or Logos (Origen). This is, for Barth, because all humans have their existence as the result of, and in, the

⁶⁸ Creation itself may be seen as a judgment: light is *separated* from darkness; land is *separated* from the waters etc. Furthermore, much eschatological language is the language of creation: salvation as 'new creation', 'a new heaven and a new earth', 'the lion laying down with the lamb', etc. This theme is discussed further by Fiddes, *Past Event and Present Salvation*, 17ff.

⁶⁹ See especially here Ch. 3, §4(c) above.

⁷⁰ See also, Daniélou, *Origen*, 209. For a modern theology of the plurality of creation, see Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology Vol. 2*, 61ff.

election of Jesus Christ. In Origen's theology, it is because all that is rational is such as it partakes in rationality: the *logikoi / logika* have their existence from the Logos. Both theologians are attempting in this to consider how the one Jesus Christ relates to the many of humanity. In attempting to tackle this question, both produce presentations which are not satisfactorily in accord with the New Testament: they need to be held together in order to do justice to the biblical account.

ii. Origen

Origen's system begins from an observation of the variety of the world, and as a result postulates pre-existence to explain why some humans seem more favoured than others. This diversity results from his understanding of souls.⁷¹ As rationality, the Logos is present in the individual to the extent of the individual's affection for the Logos, by which it may participate in Him.⁷² In Origen one is led to consider primarily the varied participation in Christ by humans rather than the universalizing of all humanity in Christ as in Barth. This allows for a greater emphasis on present existence and growth in faith. It also provides a reason for the variety of human identity as well as a place for Christian particularity.

Nevertheless, there are dangers with Origen's view. It could easily lead to (what can anachronistically be called) old-style moralism.⁷³ The emphasis on the individual (*vis-à-vis* the community or all humanity) returns, and Christians become clearly separated from the rest of humanity in their situation and eschatological end point.⁷⁴ What is equally

⁷¹ *De Princ.* II.8.3.

⁷² *De Princ.* II.6.3.

⁷³ This is certainly the case for Origen himself, who (according to Eusebius) castrated himself at a young age: Roy J. Deferrari (ed.), *Eusebius Ecclesiastical History* (Washington, DC: Catholic University Press of America, 1953 5), VI.8. Origen is also recorded to have been a teetotal, celibate vegetarian.

⁷⁴ Given the struggle for Christian identity in the ancient world, what has been said of Origen thus far may well for his time indicate the opposite: he seems to have been concerned with the salvation not only of the church but of the world also. That is not to say that Christians do not have a separate and particular identity, however, as can be seen in *Martyr*. In this way, Origen affirms Robinson's statement: 'There is no real need to treat seriously the objection to universalism that it is morally or

worrying is the inevitable depreciation of Jesus of Nazareth's own particularity which results in an emphasis on each human's present varied participation in Christ as Logos. The history of Jesus Christ as a human becomes less important. His particularity as a human, just as every human's particularity as a human in the end, is diminished by His eternal nature as Logos and the soul's participation in that eternal Logos.

iii. Barth

Barth states: 'In the beginning with God was this One, Jesus Christ. And that is predestination.'⁷⁵ His concern is Christ who is the beginning point from which all other reflections follow. Barth's Christocentric election seems on first glance at least so strong that at times it obliterates the individual who is subsumed in Christ.⁷⁶ This is in many ways commendable: it moves away from the evangelical preoccupation with selfishly personal salvation; it correctly establishes the church as the mediating body of election;⁷⁷ it saves theology from a God who seems wilfully to choose to save some and damn others. These positives cannot be underplayed. Yet the place for personal identity or variety is greatly reduced. The sense of being in Christ appears so strong that at times it is difficult to see the role of the diversity of creation in Barth.

iv. Symphony

Is there a way through, then, that allows for the particularity of Jesus Christ and the particularity of every human being? It is the present writer's contention that Barth and Origen on this point do not stand

spiritually debilitating. The objection rests upon a misunderstanding into which no one who makes an existential profession of belief is in any danger of falling' (Robinson, *In the End God*, 127).

⁷⁵ II/2, 145.

⁷⁶ This is a concern that is in some ways at the heart of all that is asked above concerning the humanity of Christ in Barth.

⁷⁷ This is in terms of being the middle point between the election of Christ and that of individuals, and in terms of its mission as the mediate and mediating body between Christ's and all humanity's election. See II/2, 196f.

so far apart as to be unable to be brought together. Origen's belief in the pre-existence of souls might actually help to deepen Barth's understanding of eternal election in Jesus Christ. Indeed, this may well be something at which Barth himself hints: Barth considers that in some sense all of humanity pre-exists with Christ who is the 'first-born of all creation'. He speaks in this of 'every man' which may point to each of their particularities: 'The community recognises and attests the being of man—every man—in Jesus Christ.'⁷⁸ In the particularity of Christ must exist the particularity of all human beings: God's election of the particular human Jesus Christ and in Him all humanity must mean all human beings *in their particularities*.⁷⁹

It is here where one must note the importance of guarding against the danger of the strong separation of Christ's humanity and ours.⁸⁰ There are real benefits to be gained from attending to some of Origen's thought about rationality and our varied participation in the Logos to our identity with Him through our shared humanity. We are in Christ and He in us as much as we share in humanity, just as is the case in Origen with rationality and the Logos. That is surely the point of the reconciliatory work of God's salvation—a sense that the origin and *telos* of human particularity lies with God who is the origin and *telos* of all human particularity is that which is restored to humanity. These themes have already been attended to reparatively in Barth's thought. However, one may see a further prototype of how this movement can be made towards the end of Barth's *magnum opus*. In CD IV/3 §69.2

⁷⁸ II/2, 321.

⁷⁹ For further consideration of the relationship between the Logos and each particular aspect of creation, see Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 2, 62–3. Hart also hints at the importance of the personal particularities of the story of Jesus into which our own stories are taken up and somehow transformed in a way in which particularity and universality refuse to be prised apart (Trevor Hart, 'Redemption and Fall', in *The Cambridge Companion to Christian Doctrine*, 193). Such a concern about the relation of our particularity to Jesus is also evidenced in Bonhoeffer, *Sanctorum Communio*, 288–9. Helpful here may also be Ford's idea of the importance of the face of Jesus Christ as the foundation for face to face, person to person relationships of which humans cannot have a total overview. See David F. Ford, *Self and Salvation: Being Transformed* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

⁸⁰ Cf. above, Ch. 2 §3(c). This is a danger for both Barth and Origen. In Origen this is overt. See P. A. Lieske, *Die Theologie Der Logos Mystic Bei Origenes* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1938), 103–10: the divine is the governing principle in the soul.

‘The Light of Life’,⁸¹ one is able to see how the lights of creation point towards the one true light who is Jesus Christ, and participate in His light from which their own originate. Just as those other lights in their particularity point towards the one Light, so the particularity of each human being in whom Christ’s humanity dwells and who dwells in Christ’s humanity must point (in a lesser degree) towards the restoration of humanity, in all its particularity, by God who elects the particular in electing Christ. Thus, the very particularity of the ‘universal’ of Jesus Christ determines a universalism that comes from the particular. One certainly seems to get this sense of diversity in the one Logos in the Prologue to John: ‘All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being.’⁸² The one Logos here is responsible for ‘all things’ in their diversity. There is a double particularity in the particularity of ‘all things’ and that of Christ who is the Creator of all things. Human particularity is grounded in Christ’s particularity: His particularity must establish (and not destroy) ours.

5 WHAT ABOUT EVIL?⁸³

i. Theme

Discussion of evil is expressed in terms of ‘Nothing’ by both Barth and Origen.⁸⁴ It may well be that Nothing is the way in which both

⁸¹ On §69, see Geoff Thompson, ‘Religious Diversity, Christian Doctrine and Karl Barth’, *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 8, no. 1 (2006), esp. 10–18.

⁸² Jn 1.3.

⁸³ The importance of theodicy to universal salvation cannot be underestimated: how the justice of God and the freedom of human action are to be understood is perhaps the main problematic issue for universalism. Torrance notes well the danger of ‘side stepping’ the illogicality of sin in a desire to press forward to a universalist decree (Thomas F. Torrance, ‘Universalism or Election?’, *Scottish Journal of Theology* 2, no. 3 (1949), 311). The problem of the gravity of sin to universalism is also identified by Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 3, 453.

⁸⁴ Barth recognizes Origen’s discussion of Nothing, but considers it misconceived. He even identifies the doctrine with a belief in the salvation of the devil, which is a step Origen himself never takes (III/3, 300). In what has already been stated about Nothingness in Origen’s theology in Ch. 3 and in all that follows, it is hoped that this is demonstrated to be an untenable position for Barth to hold. Like many others, Barth identifies Origen with a gnosticizing form of Origenism.

theologians can ultimately speak of a universal restoration: all that truly 'is' is that which will be restored; what will not be restored is Nothing, and therefore is not. In both theologians, this concept comprises part of their consideration of theodicy. It allows for the present 'existence' of aspects of the world which were not created *ex nihilo* by God but have dependent existence in human acts contrary to that which God wills. These problems of existence can *presently* 'exist' but *not ultimately*. This allows that there can be negative elements of the present world which will not be present in the *eschaton*: they will not be restored because ontologically they are not.

ii. Origen⁸⁵

Origen states clearly and emphatically that Nothing is everything which is not constituted by God or the Logos.⁸⁶ Not-being is identified with that which is evil, in direct contrast to the God who reveals Himself to Moses as 'I am'.⁸⁷ Nothing is not a negative side of creation: it has a dependent existence separate to the Logos, and as the result of human volition contrary to the will of God. Origen writes: 'All, therefore, who share in "being"—and the saints share in it—would properly be called "those who are." But those who have turned away from sharing in "being" have, by having deprived themselves of "being," become "those who are not."' ⁸⁸ Beings themselves *become* Not-beings by an act of will linked to the failure to pursue a moral life.

iii. Barth⁸⁹

Barth's consideration of Nothingness may be counted among his greatest contributions to theology.⁹⁰ He begins by stating that 'Only God and His creature really and properly are. But nothingness is neither God nor His creature.'⁹¹ Nothingness is grounded in the

⁸⁵ See Ch. 3, §3(d). ⁸⁶ *CommJoh.* II.7.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.* ⁸⁸ *CommJoh.* II.7 (Heine, II.98 120).

⁸⁹ See also Ch. 2, §3(b) on post temporal eternity.

⁹⁰ It is, indeed, ignoring the likes of Barth's theodicy that leads to such critiques as McGrath, *Iustia Dei*, 365; and Fiddes, *Past Event and Present Salvation*, 134.

⁹¹ III/3, 349.

electing activity of God,⁹² and is described by Barth as, ‘that which God does not will.’⁹³ Nothingness is evil, contesting God’s right to be gracious and the creature’s right to live by that grace and receive it.⁹⁴ Nothingness contests the right and honour of God before creation.⁹⁵ Nothingness will not be eternal:⁹⁶ part of Christ’s work of salvation is the battle with Nothingness as the ‘Destroyer of the destroyer.’⁹⁷ This is the purpose of God’s grace,⁹⁸ an eschatological happening,⁹⁹ but also one which is happening in the present through the obedience of the Christian.¹⁰⁰ Nothingness ‘can be viewed and interpreted only in retrospect of the fact that it has already been judged, refuted and done away by the mercy of God revealed and active in Jesus Christ.’¹⁰¹ This will be revealed generally in the coming parousia. Nothingness becomes, then, a way of identifying the existence of evil and sin within a belief in universal election. It is a way of speaking of particularity and judgment without returning to traditional categories of hell and torture. Indeed, Barth once famously remarked: ‘The dogma is that hell exists, not that people are in it.’¹⁰²

iv. Symphony

It is clear, therefore, that for both theologians in their discussion of Nothingness there is a link between eschatology and creation.¹⁰³ For both, the first discussion of Nothingness comes in creation,¹⁰⁴ and it ends with the idea of restoration.

⁹² III/3, 351.

⁹³ III/3, 352.

⁹⁴ III/3, 353.

⁹⁵ III/3, 354.

⁹⁶ III/3, 360ff.

⁹⁷ III/3, 311. Barth states that this is an often neglected aspect in western theology of Christ’s work of salvation.

⁹⁸ III/3, 361ff.

⁹⁹ III/3, 363.

¹⁰⁰ III/3, 364.

¹⁰¹ III/3, 366.

¹⁰² Busch, *Karl Barth*, 362.

¹⁰³ Indeed, Fiddes, *Past Event and Present Salvation*, helpfully reminds us that God is continually sustaining His creation, preventing it from falling into Nothing (22). Jüngel, on the other hand, sees the distinction of being from Nothing as belonging to the future (Eberhard Jüngel, *Theological Essays 1*, ed. John Webster, trans. John Webster (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1989), 116).

¹⁰⁴ For Barth, this is chaos in Genesis (III/3, 76ff. and 352 cf. III/1, 133 and 366); for Origen, this is reflection on John’s Prologue (*CommJoh.* II).

In terms of universal salvation, that which is restored will not include that which is Nothing, since this too will be what it originally was—Nothing. Since Nothing is reified by human beings, restoration will see the ultimate removal of Nothing in its dependent existence at the *eschaton*. In the present, realizing the existence (or non-existence) of Nothing allows for human involvement in the process of restoration. In not choosing Nothing, human beings return to choosing the will of God and to corresponding to that will. In relating this to Christ, one sees in Him the one who shows Nothing to have no existence, demonstrated by His crucifixion and resurrection: even death (which is reified by humanity as the ultimate Nothing) is shown to be what it is (or, better, is not) by the resurrection. In willing for existence and against Nothing, there is a reorientation of priorities that can allow for Christian particularity within the particularity of Jesus Christ in the present.

A danger that may arise through this concept is a movement from a theory of universal salvation to theories of annihilationism.¹⁰⁵ This view of eschatology leads us back to the initial problem of the fundamental distinction and separation of human beings into absolute categories. Worse still, one might imagine that those who do not believe in God's saving work actually are not. However, Nothingness need not involve humans as absolute individuals, but may well comprise part of a refining.¹⁰⁶ It is *aspects* of fallen humanity which are condemned as Nothing and Not-being, rather than individual humans in their entirety. It is believed that Origen's sense of punishment and judgment can help in this—removing the charge against Barth that everything has already been accomplished and that the present is not important. The process of refinement gives particularity to the believer, and allows for a future eschatology which provides for real hope in an *apokatastasis* that only involves that which is: God created the world and saw that it was 'good', and thus what is restored is only that which is 'good'.

The difficulty that remains, however, is whether the idea of Nothingness is suitable or rich enough to contain the horrors of

¹⁰⁵ On annihilation, see, Hunsinger, *Disruptive Grace*, 239–42.

¹⁰⁶ See below §5(c).

evil: can 'Nothing' do justice to the pain and violence of events such as the holocaust or Hiroshima? Does it remove any sense of justice? These are deep matters which deserve more discussion than the length of this book can allow. However, one might find some justification in the use of the term 'Nothingness' when one considers the connotations that it can bring. This must surely involve the idea of chaos. The chaotic carries with it a greater sense than Nothingness of the negativity that speech about evil must contain. Moreover, in discussing 'Nothing', it must be stressed, as Origen does, that the Bible adds to the philosophical idea of Nothingness the idea of evil, which helps to define Nothingness in a more particularly Christian way.¹⁰⁷ If Barth's sensitivity to the importance of rejection in his doctrine of election is also brought into consideration, 'Nothing' may receive greater substance than the term might first imply—recognizing it as a term which may touch upon the existential pain brought about by natural and moral disaster.

5 POINTS OF DISCUSSION, REFINEMENT, AND EXTENSION

(a) **The role of continued history**

An emphasis on eternity carries with it the resultant problem of the place of continued human history: if one brings together creation and eschatology, one might ask what the role and importance of the continued temporality that lies between is. Too strong an emphasis on eternity runs the risk of destroying temporality altogether, sewing up history and removing any particularity. However, for both Barth and Origen, this is not the case.

For Barth, the freedom of God means that grace can never become a principle over which one can assert a rightful claim, as would be the case in an explicitly articulated system of universal salvation. A principle cannot replace Jesus Christ, nor can Jesus Christ become

¹⁰⁷ *CommJoh.* II.7.

a principle—even the principle of grace or election.¹⁰⁸ Barth, instead, follows a dialectical approach to the question of Christian universalism: it is not a right on which one can count, since it depends on free grace, but one must remain open to it since grace is always greater than one can imagine.¹⁰⁹ It is, therefore, a hope for all humanity. The tension of universalist and exclusivist language already discussed thus exists in Barth as the result of the fear of taking grace for granted and cheapening it,¹¹⁰ and of forgetting the rejection involved in election. It is the particular person Jesus Christ (elected and rejected) whom Barth considers as the governing aspect of his soteriology—not a universal principle, nor even grace.

It is in the history and narrative of Christ's life, death, and resurrection that our election takes place in Him.¹¹¹ It is for this reason that those who reject Barth's doctrine of election and his objective soteriology cannot be justified in accusing Barth of providing no reason for the ongoing nature of history. His dialogue with Berkouwer shows this point well. The election of humanity in Christ means an election in a life, in a person. It is for this reason that Barth's chapter on 'The Command of God' follows that on election. Since election is the election of a *person*, it is the determination of a person, and therefore the question arises of human self-determination which corresponds to this determination. Election in the *person* of Jesus allows the space for human freedom which a principle never can.¹¹² It is this particularity of the person of Jesus Christ which Barth is so determined to

¹⁰⁸ One sees this articulated in Barth's discussion of Berkouwer (IV/3, 173–80). For a more detailed account of this section, see Greggs, 'Jesus Is Victor', 204–6.

¹⁰⁹ Busch, *Karl Barth*, 426. This helps, furthermore, to deal with the issue of God's freedom. By not allowing a principle to overwhelm the person in His particularity, Barth simultaneously does not allow God to be bound (however much God may bind Himself) by a principle—even grace. This counters the criticism of universalism found in Bettis, 'Is Karl Barth a Universalist?', and Bettis, 'A Critique of the Doctrine of Universal Salvation'.

¹¹⁰ On cheap grace, see Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Discipleship*, ed. Wayne Whitson Floyd, trans. Barbara Green and Reinhard Krauss, vol. 4, DBW (Mineapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), esp. 43ff.

¹¹¹ Bonhoeffer, *Sanctorum Communio*, helpfully states that it is in Christ's *history* that humanity in Adam is transformed into humanity in Christ (147).

¹¹² This has implications for the doctrine of eternity. On the relationship and unity between the eternal and the temporal decision in the Son, see Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Theodrama: Theological Dramatic Theory Vol. 3: Dramatis Personae: Persons in Christ* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1992), 199–200.

keep—a particularity which cannot be gained from a principle.¹¹³ Barth correspondingly rejects a universalism which fails to recognize this. He rejects universalism as universalism itself cannot be the victor: only Jesus is Victor.¹¹⁴ Webster is helpful here in recognizing the room for human freedom in Barth's presentation in his discussion of the ethical implications of *enhypostasis*.¹¹⁵ In Webster's words, because for Barth election is in the person of Jesus Christ 'human reality, and therefore human agency, are "*enhypostatically* real", drawing their substance from the human reality of Jesus Christ.'¹¹⁶ This is not to merge the two realities, but to recognize that our humanity exists from and in his. Barth is fierce in his defence against the charge of Christomonism.¹¹⁷ World occurrence and world history still continue after the appearance of Jesus Christ,¹¹⁸ but the contradiction and antithesis between that history and Christ will be ultimately removed in Him. It is not that reality is dissolved into a greater reality, but rather that the very particularity of the person of Jesus provides the basis for the very existence of the twofold form of world history (arising from God's action and human action), and in that way the very existence of all human particularity. Barth's discussion of 'Jesus is Victor' allows the room for this in its consideration of the particularity of Jesus and the conflict with evil.

One can see Origen facing a similar tension in universalism to ensure that the individual's spiritual growth does not take salvation for granted. He does not wish universalism to become a ruling principle that prevents people from the quest for the moral and pure life. There is the constant reminder of punishment in order to motivate 'the more simple minded and (as the multitude would say) the unsophisticated' to righteousness.¹¹⁹ Origen goes so far as to state that Paul conceals his doctrine of *apokatastasis* in order to act as a 'wise steward of the word' and to prevent people from being presumptuous with regards to their salvation and falling back into sin.¹²⁰ Origen believes himself to be

¹¹³ Barth cites his allergy to abstract metaphysics as the reason for rejecting *apokatastasis* (II/2, 417–18).

¹¹⁴ IV/3, 173.

¹¹⁵ Webster, *Barth's Moral Theology*, 88ff.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 89.

¹¹⁷ IV/3, 713.

¹¹⁸ IV/3, 714.

¹¹⁹ *CCel.* III.78; see below.

¹²⁰ *CommRom.* 5.1.7, 7n. cf. 2.2.2; 5.2.6.

doing the same as Paul—concealing his belief in *apokatastasis* in language which still reminds human beings of the threat of punishment.

Furthermore, this tension over universalism proves beneficial not only in establishing the place for continued human existence and history, but also in understanding the nature of that history. In speaking of Jesus as Victor instead of universalism, Barth begins to understand something of the problems of existence. Christ as Reconciler is not one who stands away from human existential problems. Indeed, Barth considers Christ's self-election as an election to *rejection*—not one which shies away from human difficulty. One might consider that the cross in all its particularity confronts the problems of injustice (in the crucifixion of an innocent), doubt (in the cry of dereliction), humiliation (in the mocking crowds), failure (in the results of his own ministry), and loneliness (in the desertion of friends) that each human in her particularity faces. Jesus as Victor does not move away from the problems of human existence; He confronts and reconciles them in their abject reality. A principle can never do this. Origen can also be interpreted similarly regarding sin and righteousness. Not relying on a principle of ultimate salvation makes one face the problems of sinful existence and the necessity of spiritual growth. When considered from this perspective, both theologians allow not only for temporal particularity in their understanding of ultimate salvation, but also for the present problems of existence to be recognized in human particularity.¹²¹ It is the Reconciler who is primary, not the principle of reconciliation.

For both Origen and Barth, continued history is crucial.¹²² Indeed, far from reducing history to one point and obliterating the importance of time, to read eschatology through creation fulfils quite the reverse effect: God creates time, temporality, and history, and seeks to make a new *creation*; universalism should underscore the importance of history as it underscores the importance of all creation.

¹²¹ To humans in decision, the reality of rejection etc. is still the same *as it relates to the subject*—life or death. See further Robinson, *In the End God*, 130ff.

¹²² This should also be noted in Barth's discussion of the patience of God (e.g. II/1, 406–22; II/2, 10 and 450). Origen's theory of *apokatastasis* requires continued history as the mechanism to progress to the Logos.

(b) Human Freedom?¹²³

One major criticism of a universalist approach to soteriology is that it fails to allow for human freedom and undermines the importance of the decision of faith evident in scripture.¹²⁴ However, if the particularity of Jesus Christ is emphasized and if universal salvation takes place in Him, one should be able to find a place for human freedom within Christ's own true humanity. This freedom then becomes the ground of all other human freedom and the means by which to speak of true freedom unencumbered by Enlightenment notions of what freedom is. Here, a problem arises. One danger of the universalist approach to salvation is that the will of God for salvation is so strong that it even seems to quash the will of the human in Christ. Universalism may fail to recognize the importance of the full earthly life of Christ: restoration is effected by Christ merely existing and dying. Logically, the same end of universal restoration in Christ would have been fulfilled if Herod had been successful and killed the baby Jesus in the slaughtering of the innocents.¹²⁵ Instead, one must emphasize the saving role of the life of Christ.

Origen's emphasis on growth and morality may allow room to emphasize Christ's human life, but only inasmuch as Christ is a rabbi: Jesus' life is as one who is a moral teacher. Instead, greater emphasis must be placed on the human will of Christ in overcoming temptation and in following the path to Golgotha. In the exercise of His will in line with the divine will, the pattern of human restoration is seen: Christ is both Restoring God and restoring human, and fulfils this through bringing the right kind of relationship of asymmetry between both. This is achieved by fulfilling the will of God in humanity through the exercise of human choice. It is the reason why the angel told Joseph to leave Bethlehem: the life of Jesus is important to salvation. It shows how humans are to relate to God.

¹²³ See above Ch. 2, §3(b) and Ch. 3, §4(b).

¹²⁴ E.g. Rom. 10.9ff.; Jn 3.1ff.; Deut. 30.19-20.

¹²⁵ Keith Eyons has observed in conversation that with regard to John's Gospel, Barth is extremely selective in the texts that he uses: the Prologue and death and resurrection of Christ are important, but there is almost no attention paid to the signs, for example, or to the general narrative of the life of Jesus.

In terms of Barth's understanding of election, an increased attendance to Barth's work on Christ's life would mean that God is not simply self-electing His No in the humanity of Christ, but also the Yes.¹²⁶ Both are present in the crucifixion in terms of the No to sin it represents, and of the Yes in the willingness to bear that sin; both are present in the one who is destined to crucifixion and, because of that, resurrection.¹²⁷ Seeking a fuller place for the humanity of Christ allows for a proper place for human involvement in salvation in the fulfilment of God's will,¹²⁸ enhypostatically in Christ's humanity. Barth's replacing of the *decretum absolutum* of Calvin with Jesus Christ indicates not only an ontological but also a voluntarist aspect of Christology: God wills in Jesus Christ, and the human Christ wills as God wills; the will of God and the willing of the human become one in perfect unity.¹²⁹ Jesus' perfect humanity is not, therefore, simply the lack of doing anything wrong or sinful, but more powerfully the positive choice of the will of God. Hence, election is not simply a decree but a movement with ethical consequences. Moreover, Christ's is the life which is the measure of restoration: it is humanity as humanity is meant to be in line with the will of God.

This sense of the active human restorative dimension of Christ's person should not allow for false notions of human autonomy, but it does allow for human relationship with the divine. It establishes the divine-human asymmetry as asymmetry—not simply as one or the other but both in their respective relationship to the other as seen in Christ. We are not venturing into so-called Pelagianism in this. Instead, one must see the particular role of the human will as seen *in the person of Christ*. In Christ, the autonomy of either the divine or the human is destroyed from and to all eternity: He demonstrates that humans and God are not autonomous but relational.¹³⁰ Human choice for God becomes, then, a *positive* decision (and not a decision

¹²⁶ See also above Ch. 2, §3(d).

¹²⁷ Indeed, Christ predicted both events in the Gospel accounts.

¹²⁸ This point is made by Jones, 'Karl Barth on Gethsemane', 164. However, while present in Barth, this is again a case in which there is need for greater balance in his work.

¹²⁹ See McCormack, *Karl Barth's Critically Realistic Dialectical Theology*, 365; and McCormack, 'Participation in God', 355.

¹³⁰ Clearly, on the part of God, this is a non necessary relationship: it is one of grace.

simply to avoid the tortures of hell)¹³¹ to come in line with the divine will as it has eternally existed, and in that to engage in the restoring of the divine will in the present, removing all that is contrary to it.¹³² It is in this that one begins to see the role of the Spirit in salvation.¹³³ One sees this already in Christ on whom the Spirit rests and who is led by the Spirit.¹³⁴ The Spirit working with humanity and in humanity to conform it with the will of God is attested in Rom. 8.15b-17a: ‘When we cry, “Abba! Father!” it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ’.

It is the Spirit who is at work within our humanity, conforming it with the will of God that we should call Him Father as the children we already are in Christ as the Father’s child. We participate in Christ’s humanity, and are led to recognizing the Fatherhood of God through the Spirit.

(c) Judgment and eschatological differentiation?

Discussion thus far of universal salvation through the restorative work of the Son may well reflect the *sensus plenior* of scripture. However, it has yet to involve any serious discussion of the biblical images of judgment in the apocalyptic material.¹³⁵ Here one must

¹³¹ Indeed, it may well be that such a view of human decision is no decision at all: there is not free choice in avoiding hell; no one in their right mind would choose hell positively. Freedom must, therefore, be redefined regarding God.

¹³² That is why in the temptation pericopes, Jesus recognizes the various offerings that the devil makes for what they are (Nothing) in comparison to transgressing the will of God in worshipping the devil. It is why Jesus cites scripture’s indication of the will of God in response to the devil.

¹³³ This is to be outlined more fully in Part II of this book.

¹³⁴ On the relation between the Spirit and Christ in the New Testament, see Dunn, *Christology in the Making*, 136–49. Indeed, Hanvey argues correctly that the role of the Holy Spirit in Christology must take a prominent position (Hanvey, ‘Hegel, Rahner & Karl Barth’, 320). Such an emphasis may well resolve the Christological problems identified with speaking about Christ’s humanity. To allow humanity a proper role in election through the Holy Spirit is equally to allow Christ’s humanity a full role in election: seeing Jesus as the truly Spirit filled human does not make his humanity discontinuous with all other humanity, but fuller by comparison to all other humanity.

¹³⁵ The purpose of this section is not to provide a biblical account of universalism within each scriptural discussion of judgment, but to point towards a hermeneutical

note that the sense of judgment (*κρίνειν*) in scripture is often wrongly conflated with the word for condemnation (*κατακρίνειν*).¹³⁶ To be judged is not the same as to be condemned.¹³⁷ Developing Origen's sense of punishment could add to Barth the idea that to be judged is to be refined¹³⁸—to have Nothing shown up for what it is in the process of being restored to genuine human particularity in salvation.¹³⁹ Judgment is, then, a positive element of salvation rather than a negative one.¹⁴⁰ It is the very means by which humanity is restored.¹⁴¹

Origen's sense of punishment involves purification. Judgment and punishment are positive experiences in order to progress towards salvation. He considers judgment to be restorative: 'It is my opinion, in fact, that even if someone could escape God's judgment, he ought not desire to. For not to come to God's judgment would mean not to come to correction, to the *restoration* of health and of that which heals.'¹⁴² Furthermore, this is buttressed by the idea that the

key that can be used in reading eschatological texts. For this reason, individual verses and sections of scripture are not considered. The reader is referred to Boring, 'The Language of Universal Salvation'; N. T. Wright, 'Towards a Biblical View of Universalism', *Themelios* 4, no. 2 (1979), 54–8; C. N. Tsirpanlis, 'The Concept of Universal Salvation in Saint Gregory of Nyssa', *Studia Patristica* 17, no. 3 (1982), 1131—albeit the interpretation of Origen is rejected; and John Hick, *Death and Eternal Life* (London: Collins, 1976), 243ff.

¹³⁶ On the meaning of the word *κρίνειν*, see Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 3, 425.

¹³⁷ Indeed, Moltmann, *The Coming of God*, sees judgment not as an end, but as a beginning (250–2).

¹³⁸ This is suggested by Barth: 'If the fire of His wrath scorches us, it is because it is the fire of His wrathful love and not His wrathful hate... From those to whom He wills to be all in all, he strips everything else.' (III/2, 609)

¹³⁹ For modern allusions to this idea, see Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 3, 610–20; Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 3, 424–5 and 443ff. (albeit in unhelpful terms of 'symbol' and with references to reincarnation). For more on genuine human particularity, see Ch. 5, §7 and Ch. 7, §7(e) below.

¹⁴⁰ One sees this theme also reflected in Jüngel, *Theological Essays I*, who advocates that the divine No in judgment leads the justified person to hope in nothing other than God, and in this to hope for the world (114).

¹⁴¹ Fiddes, *The Promised End*, correctly identifies the desire that the resurrected person should not wish to correspond exactly to the person of sin who presently exists (84). This, again, emphasizes the need not to separate humanity absolutely into two different camps of saved and damned.

¹⁴² *CommRom.* 2.2.2, emphasis added, cf. 5.7.8, 8.12.8; *De Princ.* II.5.3, II.10.6; *HomEz.* 1.2; *HomEx.* 8.6; *CCel.* V.15; *HomJosh.* 10.1; *HomLev.* 14.4.6. These all discuss the non absolute nature of judgment.

judgment is not absolute over individuals, dividing one individual from another: it takes place within each individual differentiating one person's actions.¹⁴³

There are a number of positive lines of thought that can be drawn from this. The universality of salvation can be retained while still allowing for the existence of both variety and a sense of justice through punishment.¹⁴⁴ For Origen, the soul is subjected to torture for purification rather than unto death: the individual continues to be purged from sin in a punishment which does not appease the wrath of God, but helps to restore the human being to the perfect creation made by God.¹⁴⁵ While this is often considered to be a purgatorial period in a physical place and time, this need not necessarily be the case: it might simply be the event which happens at death without an interlude of purgatory.¹⁴⁶ It might also be more helpfully conceived as a process of separating good from evil (or Nothing). The universality of this is demonstrated in Origen's consideration of two non-believers—one Jewish and one Greek, about whom he writes:

For it can come to pass that the one under the law does not believe in Christ on account of the common prevailing opinion, but nevertheless may accomplish what is good. He may hold fast to justice and love mercy, observe chastity and self control; he may preserve modesty and gentleness and accomplish every good work. Such a person does not have eternal life, since, though he does believe in the only true God, yet he has not believed in His Son Jesus Christ whom God sent; *nevertheless the glory of his works and his honour and peace might be imperishable.*¹⁴⁷

It seems that what exists eternally is the good actions that the one who has rejected Christ enacted. This is separated from what is not, and is

¹⁴³ *CommMt.* X.2 speaks of the bad things within the soul (rather than the soul itself) being destroyed.

¹⁴⁴ There is for Origen a clear sense of the enormous variety of punishments enacted, proportionate to the lack of obedience by humans in this world. See, for example, *De Princ.* I.6.3, III.1.17; *Martyr* IV.

¹⁴⁵ *De Princ.* II.10.5.

¹⁴⁶ Rahner, 'Purgatory', suggests that purgatory might be instantaneous and identified with death. It is noteworthy that there is no reference to the physical place, Purgatory, until the twelfth century, although ideas of purgation and prayers for the departed are clearly present earlier.

¹⁴⁷ *CommRom.* II.7.5, emphasis added.

made imperishable—as something good. There is no necessary sense of a physical place of purgatory for this. One can see the one individual simultaneously receiving positive and negative judgment. The same is true for the Christian who has repented, according to Origen, but has still been deceived by demons as a Christian:¹⁴⁸ the sin of the believer is separated and burned up in the demon who caused the sinning. The universality of this is also seen in the statement of Origen that *all* things will be judged at the end and *everyone* will receive what she deserves.¹⁴⁹ Yet he describes this time as a time when things will be ‘perfected’.¹⁵⁰ Judgment is, then, restorative for the perfection of things. It is an echo of the creation of the world in which God’s act of dividing is to separate what is good from chaos.¹⁵¹ It is absolute in that it is God’s judgment, but since it is over creatures who are not absolute but human (and therefore both good and bad),¹⁵² humanity is not separated into two absolute categories of saved and damned: each human is purged of her non-being by the refining work of God.¹⁵³ Judgment is the process by which Nothing is seen for what it truly is and is removed in order that that which is (the good creation of God) is restored. This applies to all creation—not simply to the chosen few.¹⁵⁴ The result is a universalism in which there is still room for particularity—room for judgment of that which is evil and room for treasures stored in heaven.¹⁵⁵

¹⁴⁸ *HomNum.* XXVII.8.

¹⁴⁹ *De Princ.* I.6.1.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁵¹ See further Fiddes, *Past Event and Present Salvation*, 17ff.

¹⁵² On the difficulty of absolute categories regarding humanity, see Hans Küng, *Eternal Life? Life after Death as a Medical, Philosophical and Theological Problem*, trans. Edward Quinn (London: SCM, 1984), 137–8.

¹⁵³ On the refining nature of fire, see, for example, *CommRom.* 2.4.4, 8.12.8, 9.41.6; *CCel.* IV.13, V.15; *HomEx.* 6.4; *HomLev.* 5.3.2, 9.8.1. This is not to say that all references to fire in Origen are purgative: there are some images which suggest an eternal fire (e.g. *HomLk.* 26.1.3).

¹⁵⁴ I have been very reliant on Origen in this discussion, and less so on Barth, to whom I feel Origen adds useful elements at this point. There is, however, a slight indication of such an approach in Barth. In his discussion of the Pauline idea of handing individuals over to Satan, Barth appears to consider this a limited punishment in order that individuals might learn not to blaspheme (II/2, 485–6). Here, punishment seems to be purgative and refining. Cf. Origen in *HomLev.* 14.4.6 and *CommMt.* XII.33.

¹⁵⁵ However, Origen was criticized by Jerome for not allowing eschatological differentiation: this criticism seems to refer to a period after purging when the Monad is restored.

6 CONCLUSION

Any concept of Christian universal salvation must be *Christian*. If it is to be such, it must be grounded in the very particularity of the person of Jesus Christ—Logos and Son of God. His very particularity has universal implications for all humans in their particularities. His universally restorative work of salvation is not one which destroys particularity, removing and undermining differentiation. Instead, it provides the foundation for particularity and history. This particularity is not, however, in the terms of a simple binary of saved-damned, heaven-hell. It is a particularity which recognizes full human particularity in all its complexity and variety—a complex and full humanity in an asymmetrical relationship to God seen in the very particular life of Christ Himself as the basis of each of ours.

Barth and Origen offer the hope of salvation to all humans, and seek to understand God's purpose for all creation rather than limiting God only to those we recognize as within God's plan and consequently devaluing and dehumanizing all others. This is not to validate all paths, or to suggest religion of any variety is simply different expressions of the same *Geist* or psychological need. Instead, it is to recognize the particularity of Christianity as a faith which offers salvation in its Saviour Jesus Christ to all humans whether they are aware of it or not. Salvation must not for the church become *Gnostic*: it is not simply for those who profess the secret knowledge of sacraments or substitutionary atonement or the likes. Christ is the Saviour of all the world—all the world which was created through Him and will be brought to an end in Him. Salvation belongs to God—not to Christians.

What, then, the point of faith is must be further explored beyond the eschatological (and any eschatological differentiation it might offer even if not in terms of the simple heaven-hell binary) in the particularity of the present. If all people will find ultimate salvation in the Son, there is a need to consider the place of faith and the specifically Christian today—the place for the church and profession of Christ. It is to this theme it is now necessary to turn in a consideration of the dynamics of the economy of the Holy Spirit in relation to the economy of the Son.

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Part II

Particularity through the Holy Spirit

This part seeks further to underscore the place for particularity in a universalist soteriology by looking to the particular economy of the Holy Spirit. It seeks to establish a non-binary way of speaking about Christianity and the world, which allows for the particularity of each without undermining the salvation of the non-Christian or the faith of the Christian. It does this through examining and bringing into dialogue the economy of the Holy Spirit in Barth and Origen.

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The Present work of God: Subjectivity and the Spirit (Barth)

1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter concerns the economy of God's mode of being as Holy Spirit.¹ It seeks to redress the accusation (connected to the accusation of universalism) of Christomonism in Barth.² It will argue that the Spirit brings the newness of Christian particularity in the universal

¹ This chapter is not directly concerned with the appropriateness of the term *Seinsweise* rather than *Person* in Barth's language about the Trinity and especially the Holy Spirit. For a consideration of this, the reader is referred to Torrance, *Persons in Communion*, which criticizes Barth's use of 'mode of being', seeing it as inconsistent with his other theological appropriations of language and as obscuring the 'communion' aspect of the Trinity (which has been sidelined for the 'communicative'). While the present writer agrees with much that Torrance states on this, it would appear that Barth's flaw (as so often) lies not in the *exclusion* of the likes of communion and worship but rather in the lack of emphasis he applies to such concepts. This is exacerbated in Torrance's reading by the focus on *CD I*, to the exclusion at times of other important elements of Barth's work. One must also note Barth's own belief that prayer must come before exegesis, which demonstrates the foundational role of worship to Barth's dogmatics (*I/2*, 695). Even in volume *I/1*, Barth notes from the creed that the Spirit is the one 'who with the Father and Son together is worshipped and glorified' (487), observing the necessity of worship and glorification being brought into relation within the personality of God who is not an 'It' but 'He' (488). Barth, indeed, concludes this section in prayer (489). Torrance's lack of focus on the Spirit in his work may account for aspects of his reading, and a re examination of pneumatology in Barth may render Torrance's own suggested improvements superfluous.

² This chapter engages in quiet dialogue with many interpreters of Barth who do not recognize the central importance of the Holy Spirit in Barth's work. See Williams, 'Barth on the Triune God', 170–2; Hanvey, 'Hegel, Rahner & Karl Barth', pp. vi, 107ff., 311; Gunton, 'No Other Foundation', 78; Rogers Jr., 'Supplementing Barth', 45; and Eugene F. Rogers Jr., 'The Eclipse of the Spirit in Karl Barth', in *Conversing with Barth*, ed. John C. McDowell and Mike Higton (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004).

eternal salvation in Christ that Barth's *CD* presents:³ the economy of the Holy Spirit is the operation of God which allows for the place of faith and Christian existence within a universalist soteriology based strongly on the objective work of Christ; the Spirit allows this objective reality to reach the community and the individual. Later in his life, Barth dreamed of a theology which was not viewed, as his own had been, from the dominant perspective of Christology but from pneumatology.⁴ The foundations Barth laid for this will be outlined, and how our active participation in the person and work of Christ is a work of the Holy Spirit,⁵ a work which is not a second act of God but a part of the one act of salvation accomplished by Him, will be expressed. This chapter seeks to uncover the direction Barth sets for pneumatology, considering as much what Barth points towards as what he directly states.⁶

This chapter will begin with discussion of the temporal 'remit' of the Spirit in the present. This will then be expounded in terms of the role of the Spirit in the reception of revelation, and Barth's theology will be assessed as to whether he allows enough human participation in this. The role of the Holy Spirit in establishing Christian particularity and identity within a universalist soteriology will then be considered. The nature of this identity is grounded in Barth's concept of correspondence (*Entsprechung*), and the characteristics of this identity will be discussed. It will be argued that the Spirit is not only the divine mode of being who establishes *Christian* identity and particularity, but also the person who establishes *human* identity and particularity. From here, the role of the Spirit in eschatology will be

³ Although Barth himself rejected any overt statement that his soteriology was universalist, it has already been argued that the eternal sense of election in Christ points strongly in this direction. As Jüngel records him saying: 'I did not teach it, but I also did not not teach it' (Eberhard Jüngel, *Karl Barth, a Theological Legacy*, trans. Garrett E. Paul (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1986), 44). For the sake of concision, Barth's soteriology in this chapter will be referred to as 'universalist' and the reader is directed back to Chs 2 and 4 for a more detailed discussion of this issue. See also Greggs, 'Jesus Is Victor'.

⁴ Busch, *Karl Barth*, 494.

⁵ II/1, 157.

⁶ This is a move which is undertaken by James J. Buckley, 'A Field of Living Fire: Karl Barth on the Spirit and the Church', *Modern Theology* 10, no. 1 (1994), 83. Buckley considers what Barth 'shows' as much as what Barth 'states' in building a constructive theology from Barth.

considered for Barth. The chapter will conclude with a discussion of the broadening inwardness of the Spirit. Throughout the chapter, it is hoped the theme of the Spirit who leads the particular Christian into ever new participation with Christ and, therefore, outwards to the world is maintained.

2 THE SPIRIT'S TIME: THE PRESENT

While it is clear that the Spirit is the eternal Spirit for Barth,⁷ the Spirit's particular role in eternity is in every present moment.⁸ The Spirit is, therefore, the ever new aspect of God's eternity in time.⁹ Barth summarizes this well: 'Holy Scripture speaks only of the temporal presence of the eternally present when it speaks of the outpouring and gift, of the work of the Holy Spirit to and in us'.¹⁰ Indeed, the work of the Holy Spirit is considered by Barth to be the 'unity of the Father and Son in the form of time'.¹¹ The Spirit's 'remit' is the present: it concerns our being with God in His eternal reign of glory, which Christians have in promise through the Spirit as we are orientated in an eschatological direction.¹² The people of God, therefore, are gathered where the Holy Spirit is, as He brings the

⁷ I/1, 466ff.

⁸ A good summary of this is provided by Timothy Bradshaw, 'Karl Barth on the Trinity: A Family Resemblance', *Scottish Journal of Theology* 39, no. 2 (1986). Bradshaw speaks of the Spirit in Barth as the 'historicity of God' (149ff.). He suggests that Barth allows for 'contingency' in God's event of self revelation (150). Bradshaw states that the Spirit is 'the ever new, dynamic *encounter* of freedom [which He identifies with the Father] with form [which He identifies with the Son], and their *participation*' (151). He admits, however, Barth's work on the Spirit is 'condensed' (150).

⁹ Indeed, McCormack, *Karl Barth's Critically Realistic Dialectical Theology*, records this as present in *GD* (357). Sauter recognizes the importance of the ever present work of the Holy Spirit in Romans (II): Sauter, 'Why Is Karl Barth's Church Dogmatics Not a "Theology of Hope"?', 408.

¹⁰ II/1, 158.

¹¹ *Ibid.* Here, it is interesting to note Hunsinger's description of the Trinitarian logics of Barth's understanding of eternity (George Hunsinger, '*Mysterium Trinitatis*: Barth's Conception of Eternity', in *For the Sake of the World*, 172 cf. 177-8).

¹² I/1, 463.

temporal and present form of the eternal truth in the gathering of the church.¹³

This special 'remit' of the Spirit in the present arises from the inner connection between Easter and Pentecost.¹⁴ Pentecost is the Holy Spirit bridging the gulf between Jesus' past and the present.¹⁵ One looks back to Christ's coming on earth and forward to His coming in glory, but He is known in the present through the Holy Spirit:¹⁶ the Spirit is Christ's *geschichtliche Selbstmitteilung*. This is how Christ is present to us ever anew after the ascension.¹⁷ Jesus is remote from the

¹³ II/1, 160. Philip J. Rosato, *The Spirit as Lord. The Pneumatology of Karl Barth* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1981), 63–4: 'As the Spirit creates eternal community between the Father and the Son, He also creates temporal community between God and man'.

¹⁴ This is at times perhaps stated too strongly by Barth, with the result that Pentecost is subsumed into the resurrection. For example, under Barth's discussion of 'The Promise of the Holy Spirit', he states that the Holy Spirit is 'Jesus Christ Himself in the power of the resurrection' (IV/3, 352). Rogers Jr, 'The Eclipse of the Spirit', observes that in this section it takes Barth 20 pages to mention the Spirit, which he then abandons for a further 50 pages, resulting in his discussing the title topic for only 18 of the 93 pages of the section. At times, the Spirit is brought so closely into relation with Christ that He is 'eclipsed' by Him (174). One sees a similar criticism in Richard H. Roberts, 'Spirit, Structure and Truth', *Modern Theology* 3, no. 1 (1986). Roberts claims that Barth massively subordinates the Spirit to the central encounter with the Word of God, simply completing the circle of revelation so it does not become alienated in isolation (80). While Barth does establish the immanent particularity of the Spirit, the power of his Christological statements and his emphasis on unity in Trinity before Trinity in unity often leads to the sense that the Spirit is subsumed. This may well be as a result of the influence of Calvin's *Institutes* III and a desire to use the Reformers' Christological definition of the Spirit as a way of rescuing pneumatology from the theologians of immanence such as Schleiermacher or Hegel (John Webster, *Barth, Outstanding Christian Thinkers* (London: Continuum, 2000), 138). In a work as grand as *CD*, it is not a question of exclusion of aspects of Christian theology, but rather a question of weight and emphasis. Perhaps Barth does not emphasize the Spirit enough, but that does not mean he ignores the Spirit or entirely eclipses Him. Investigating pneumatology does require more searching of *CD* than an investigation into the person of Christ does, but this is not to deny the presence of very fruitful and engaging theology on the Holy Spirit. As Webster, *Barth*, states with regard to Barth's pneumatology: 'It may be that Barth is not so much deficient as simply different – less committed to a pluralist Trinitarian theology, less anxious to identify the demarcations between the actions of Christ and Spirit in the world' (138–9). It is certainly the case that there is a great deal of emphasis on Christ in sections reputedly on the Spirit; but it is also true that there is a great deal of emphasis on the Spirit in sections on Christ.

¹⁵ III/2, 470.

¹⁶ John Webster, 'Barth and Postmodern Theology: A Fruitful Confrontation?', in *Karl Barth: A Future for Post Modern Theology*, 47: 'the transition from Christ's time to ours is the Spirit's work'.

¹⁷ IV/1, 342.

earthly community in the present, being hidden from it in God. However, He ‘overcomes the abyss in the Holy Spirit, operating here from that exalted status, working in time’.¹⁸ It is in this way that the Spirit is the ‘guarantee’ (to use Pauline language)¹⁹ for the church, and binds together the past work of God with the future fulfilment:

And it is the One Day already anticipated in the Then and Now which will then reveal and fulfil what is implied by the Then and Now, namely, that in the resurrection of Jesus Christ God was already mighty, holy, merciful and glorious, *and that in the power of His Holy Spirit He is so to day in this time of ours which is the time between and the last time.*²⁰

The work of the Spirit is, therefore, to be ever new in every present moment with the power to make Christ present in the time between his ascension and *parousia*.²¹ The Spirit is given people as the ‘pledge of the living Jesus Christ’ for the future.²² However, Barth does not believe that one can entirely separate the ultimate and penultimate:²³ those who have the ‘pledge’ of the Spirit are those who have the promise of the eternal kingdom and eternal life ‘not only with the fulfilment, but *already here and now*’.²⁴ This present glorious work is the work of God in the time between the resurrection and the end of time in which the Holy Spirit acts and operates as the speaking Witness of the Word.²⁵ In this way, God is contemporary to humans in every age and every now.²⁶

¹⁸ IV/2, 652.

¹⁹ ἀπαβών: II Cor. 1.22, 5.5; Eph. 1.13f. This helps to answer Torrance’s concern that ‘eschatological tension must be perceived within the perspective of the present lack of fully realised communion with God’ (Torrance, *Persons in Communion*, 39).

²⁰ IV/3, 911, emphasis added.

²¹ It must be noted, however, that this ever newness must never be understood in terms of boring repetition: the repetition of newness is a repetition of *God’s* newness.

²² IV/3, 351 2.

²³ *Ibid.* This may be a move he has taken from Bonhoeffer’s discussion of the relationship between the ultimate and the penultimate. See Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Ethics*, ed. Wayne Whitson Floyd, trans. Reinhard Krauss, Charles C. West, and Douglas Stott, vol. 6, DBW (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005), 146–70.

²⁴ IV/3, 352.

²⁵ IV/3, 420. It is in this act that the church is kept from falling back into nothing – an ecclesiology which Schepers is concerned is too ‘dynamic’ (Maurice B. Schepers, ‘The Work of the Holy Spirit: Karl Barth on the Nature of the Church’, *Theological Studies* 23 (1962), 663–4), a fear not echoed in this book.

²⁶ IV/3, 504.

3 THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE PRESENT RECEPTION OF REVELATION

For Barth, God's work in the present as Holy Spirit is to ensure that God is responsible for the subjective reception (as well as the objective nature) of revelation.²⁷ The Spirit ensures that God Himself is free to be present to the creature without in any way being less than God.²⁸ The Spirit maintains the uniqueness of revelation as the only possibility of humanity being open to God, such that, for Barth, the presence of God comes not only from above but also from *within* the human.²⁹ This means that, through the Spirit, 'man is also there for God'.³⁰ Theological discourse on the Holy Spirit concerns God's Word both revealed *and believed*, as God is Lord of both.³¹ Consideration of the conditions for hearing the Word of God is not, therefore, a matter of anthropology, but of pneumatology:³² the very 'knowability' of God is the work of the Spirit.³³ Put otherwise, the ontological presence of grace in Christ is made noetically present in Christian faith through the Holy Spirit.

The purpose of this work of the Spirit in subjective revelation is in order that there can be no division of the objective nature of revelation from its subjective reception.³⁴ Subjective reality can never, therefore, be an independent theme:³⁵ all that is said about the human appropriation of revelation can only be said because of the work of the Spirit.³⁶ This preserves the hiddenness of God: in His

²⁷ I/1, 449. ²⁸ I/1, 450.

²⁹ I/1, 451. See Hart, *Regarding Barth*, 9; Graham, *Representation and Substitution*, 316.

³⁰ I/1, 480.

³¹ I/1, 182.

³² I/1, 183.

³³ I/1, 185.

³⁴ I/2, 239. Cf. 'For the Holy Spirit is not a dialectician' (I/2, 246).

³⁵ Rosato describes the polemical mode of this movement against Schleiermacher (and neo Protestantism and Pietism), Bultmann, and Roman Catholicism (Rosato, *The Spirit as Lord*, 3 17). Rosato explains clearly that, for Barth, the only *Vermittlungsprinzip* (mediating principle for theological methodology) between *die Offenbarung Gottes* and *der Glaube des Menschen* is *Die Tat des Heiligen Geistes* (18 19).

³⁶ I/2, 240.

revelation in Jesus, God is apprehensible only indirectly, through the condescension actualized in God's Word *and by the Holy Spirit*:³⁷ *both* are required. There is, therefore, a twofold movement in God's work of revelation for Barth: 'objectively, proceeding from God by His Word; and subjectively, moving towards man by His Holy Spirit.'³⁸

In this way Barth guards against the over-objectification of his theology. While Barth does want to stress the objectivity of salvation in the event of incarnation, he recognizes the necessity of this objective reality becoming a subjective reality also.³⁹ It not only happens for people, but must happen 'to them and in them.'⁴⁰ The Word must not only speak, for Barth, but be heard through the Spirit. Indeed, Barth even praises Pietists for being right inasmuch as they speak of real revelation only when revelation is real *to us*.⁴¹ Barth recognizes the need to be people 'for whom He [Jesus] is present and active not merely in fact and objectively, but who also know Him as the One He is, who know His presence and work in subjective correspondence with His objective reality.'⁴² It is the work of the Spirit that fulfils this: the Spirit makes people 'recipients, bearers and possessors of the promise.'⁴³

One may question, however, here as elsewhere in Barth's theology, whether there is enough room for human involvement in this reception of revelation.⁴⁴ Certainly, there is much worth in Barth's

³⁷ II/1, 199–200. ³⁸ III/3, 142.

³⁹ III/4, 577. Barth's own emphasis on theological ethics surely emphasizes this point. On the central importance of the reception of faith for Barth, see Colwell, 'The Contemporaneity of Divine Decision' and Colwell, *Actuality and Provisionality: Eternity and Election in the Theology of Karl Barth* – albeit Colwell's anti-universalist elements have been rejected elsewhere; Hart, *Regarding Barth*, 64; McDowell, *Hope in Barth's Eschatology*, 160ff.

⁴⁰ III/4, 577.

⁴¹ I/2, 237. On the young Barth and Pietism, see Eberhard Busch, *Karl Barth & the Pietists: The Young Karl Barth's Critique of Pietism and Its Response*, trans. Daniel W. Bloesch (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2004), esp. 286–316.

⁴² IV/3, 352.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ This is a criticism levelled at Barth by Quash, *Theology and the Drama of History*, 122. For a response to such views, see Webster, *Barth's Moral Theology*, esp. 88ff.; and John Webster, *Barth's Ethics of Reconciliation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 33. See also Hart, *Regarding Barth*, ch. 1.

emphasis on the prerogative of God to set the conditions for hearing as well as speaking His Word. Barth is correct in asserting that the doctrine of Holy Spirit demonstrates how humanity is present at the revelation of God—only in the same way that the slave or servant is present at his master’s work, following, obeying, and so on.⁴⁵ Such statements still allow for some human freedom in choosing to follow, obey, and be an obedient slave or servant. However, Barth goes further than this. He states that revealedness is achieved for us by the Holy Spirit,⁴⁶ and that humanity’s freedom to receive revelation is ultimately only God’s freedom.⁴⁷ He advocates that in the event of the Holy Spirit in which ‘God became man’ is actualized the statement ‘man has God’. The Holy Spirit brings humans to Christ as a partner, but as a partner *from whom they cannot flee*.⁴⁸ Human freedom seems to be removed once again.⁴⁹ However, even here there is a refusal to work within a simple binary. The modernist idea of freedom is clearly denied by Barth, but *in the Holy Spirit* one understands that freedom is genuinely found in not fleeing: one cannot flee because the Holy Spirit energizes free adherence to God in which true freedom (freedom for God) is to be found.⁵⁰

Part of the reason for this reinterpretation of freedom can be seen in Barth’s polemic against neo-Protestantism, in which he criticizes that movement for becoming so interested in the freedom of humanity that it forgot the divinity of the Holy Spirit.⁵¹ However, perhaps as the result of this, Barth seems to want overly to objectify the subjective apprehension of God’s Word. Barth breaks the question up into two issues: objectively, how revelation comes from God to humanity; subjectively, how it comes into humans.⁵² It is in this discussion that Barth works out his understanding of signs (*sacramentum*). The activity of these signs is by grace directly the activity of God, and it is

⁴⁵ I/1, 468.

⁴⁶ I/2, 204.

⁴⁷ I/2, 205.

⁴⁸ I/2, 270.

⁴⁹ This requires, however, a definition of human freedom. For Barth, human freedom is to be free for God, never to be free from God (I/2, §16). For a positive assessment of Barth’s understanding of freedom, see McDowell, *Hope in Barth’s Eschatology*, 137ff. Barth’s sense of freedom is underscored in J. A. Barter, ‘A Theology of Liberation in Barth’s *Church Dogmatics* 4/3’, *Scottish Journal of Theology* 53, no. 2 (2000).

⁵⁰ Hence, one should note the use of ‘Freedom’ in §§53–6 as Barth discusses the ethical implications of his doctrine of creation.

⁵¹ I/2, 209.

⁵² I/2, 222.

in this that the objective part of subjectivity exists.⁵³ These signs of revelation are always *made* new, as much as because they extend to the church that lives in time as because they are God's act. But they are not new signs, as there is no new revelation.⁵⁴ Thus, humanity is reached by the Holy Spirit through objective signs. This is necessary as Barth does not believe humans capable of receiving the Word of God separate to God's own intervention: humans are not free for the Word of God, and to acknowledge the Word of God is to acknowledge that fact:⁵⁵ the only power for receiving the word of God is the Holy Spirit.⁵⁶ While this may seem to remove the involvement of humanity, it does not prevent humanity responding to this event of the Word of God: 'What God does in Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit is exclusively His action. Similarly, what man can and should do in face of the divine action is wholly his own human action.'⁵⁷ God determines the reception of His Word, but in this does not remove humanity's freedom; rather, God frees humanity for God.

4 CHRISTIAN PARTICULARITY THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT

The place provided for Christianity in Barth's dogmatics is found in the person of the Holy Spirit. Within a universalist soteriology, the importance of this cannot be underestimated.⁵⁸ In order that Christian faith is not subsumed under the objective reality of God's work of salvation in the person of Christ, Christian particularity in the Spirit deserves full attention: it provides the reason for being a Christian if the objective reality of God's eternal work in salvation affects all humanity.⁵⁹

⁵³ I/2, 224.

⁵⁴ I/2, 228.

⁵⁵ I/2, 257 8.

⁵⁶ I/2, 260.

⁵⁷ IV/4, 72.

⁵⁸ The work of the Holy Spirit provides a resolution to the tension Berkouwer, *Triumph of Grace*, suggests in Barth's doctrine of election between universal election and human decision (288).

⁵⁹ Buckley, 'A Field of Living Fire', summarizes this well when he states that the work of the Spirit is to universalize what is particular to Christ and to particularize the universality of Christ in a community of differences (92 3).

Barth summarizes the economic dynamics of Spirit and Son thus:

The being of man reconciled with God in Jesus Christ is reflected in the existence of the Christian. That is something we cannot say of others. *It is not that they lack Jesus Christ and in Him the being of man reconciled to God. What they lack is obedience to His Holy Spirit, eyes and ears and hearts which are open to Him, experience and knowledge of the conversion of man to God which took place in Him, the new direction which must correspond to the new being given to them in Him, life in and with His community, a part in its ministry, the confession of Him and witness to Him as its Lord and as the Head of all men.*⁶⁰

Non-Christians do not lack ‘Christ and in Him the being of man reconciled to God’; the defining characteristic for the Christian is the Holy Spirit and obedience to Him. While the eternal nature of salvation in Christ determines humanity’s origin and future with God, it is in the present temporal sphere that Christians can be distinguished and as such are representatives of the rest of humanity.⁶¹ Barth does not wish to divide humans into binary categories of saved or lost, elect or damned, but categorizes humans as Christians or non-Christians based upon the activity of the Holy Spirit in a believer—not their salvific end. Christian particularity stems from the Spirit who demonstrates how humans are related to God and how Christians are related to all humanity:

He [the Spirit] makes them Christians. He divides them from non Christians. But He also unites them with non Christians. He is the promise which is given them, and He sets them in the position of hope. He gives them the power to wait daily for the revelation of what they already are, of what they became on the day of Golgotha.⁶²

This provides the identity of the Christian with the world as those in whom this promise is yet to be completely fulfilled, but it also provides particularity as those who have the promise and are given hope. This hope is not discussed in binary or exclusive categories but in it the Christian is united with the non-Christian by the Spirit who blows wherever He wills, changing the non-Christian into the Christian, and offering the pledge of a hope for all humanity.⁶³

⁶⁰ IV/1, 92 3, emphasis added.

⁶¹ IV/1, 120.

⁶² IV/2, 330.

⁶³ McDowell expresses this unity for Barth in terms of a ‘practical hope’ which in contrast to Marxist critiques is less concerned with the believer’s own individual

One sees this in the pneumatology of Barth's doctrine of election.⁶⁴ Through the Holy Spirit, Christians know their calling to the 'objectively necessary expression of their election.'⁶⁵ The Spirit distinguishes them from all others,⁶⁶ while there exists solidarity between the Christian and the non-Christian in the one Lord Jesus Christ, in terms of recollection for the Christian and expectation for the non-Christian.⁶⁷ In the Spirit is found the particularity of the elect whose lives are part of the *movement* of God towards humanity in the event of Christ's election—a movement to which humans are called to respond.⁶⁸ Thus, the knowledge of their election through the Holy Spirit becomes the defining point of the elect's existence.⁶⁹ He is the means by which 'their election is accomplished in their life [*zur Vollstreckung ihrer Erwählung im ihrem Leben*].'⁷⁰ The Spirit summons Christians to witness to their election in a life of service in response to the kindness of God in the election of Jesus Christ.⁷¹ This is a theme that Barth builds upon in *CD IV*. It is the Spirit who enables humans to recognize the work of atonement, and allows them to be 'touched' by God and live in response to this.⁷² For Barth, therefore, 'There is no such thing as a Christian who is not a "pneumatic."⁷³ For him, it is always rather the case that: 'A living Christian is a Christian who receives the witness of the Holy Spirit

redemption, and more concerned with the *telos* of all (McDowell, *Hope in Barth's Eschatology*, 188ff.). Rogers helpfully sees how Barth's doctrine of election should lead the Christian to the question of that to which the Holy Spirit calls her, grounded in a unity with the non Christian (Rogers Jr, 'Supplementing Barth', 66 7).

⁶⁴ Colwell, 'The Contemporaneity of Divine Decision', 158 9: 'The work of the Holy Spirit is no more an addendum to the completed work of the Son than the work of the Son is an addendum to the eternal decision of the Father.' See also Rogers Jr, 'Supplementing Barth', 57ff.

⁶⁵ II/2, 345. It is important to note that knowing in Barth comprises acknowledging (*anerkennen*), recognizing (*erkennen*), and confessing (*bekennen*). See, for example, IV/1, 740ff. See also McDowell, *Hope in Barth's Eschatology*, 216 17.

⁶⁶ II/2, 346.

⁶⁷ II/2, 346 7.

⁶⁸ Rosato, *The Spirit as Lord*, states there is an 'ontological connection' (*ein ontologischer Zusammenhang*) independent of the human's noetic understanding of it, but it is only through the Spirit that the human can accept her 'ontic belonging' (*die seinsmässige Zugehörigkeit*), 123.

⁶⁹ II/2, 348 9.

⁷⁰ II/2, 348 cf. *KD* II/2, 383.

⁷¹ II/2, 414.

⁷² IV/1, 148.

⁷³ IV/2, 321.

and conforms and is faithful to it.⁷⁴ This manifests itself in obedience to Christ, in whom humans are elected and who is Himself the example of all election.⁷⁵ Necessarily, therefore, it brings with it an ethical command.⁷⁶

In this way, the Spirit has a twofold role and movement. He leads the Christian into the work of Christ, and in so doing makes her look outwards:⁷⁷ 'It is as he [the Christian] participates in Jesus Christ in faith that the Christian participates in the divine providence and universal lordship. The same Holy Spirit who first led him into the narrower and central sphere now leads him out over its periphery into the wider circle.'⁷⁸ As the Spirit leads the Christian into acknowledgement and recognition of God's work of salvation, so too she is led in obedience to participate in Christ's work, which involves the whole world over which He is Lord. Barth is emphatic that the discipleship that this involves is possible only by the Holy Spirit.⁷⁹ Christian obedience proceeds 'from the election and call which constitutes a Christian; from participation in Jesus Christ; from the gift and operation of the Holy Spirit.'⁸⁰ The gift of this Holy Spirit is that He brings obedience to the Christian in her own environment from without.⁸¹ The Spirit provides for the particularity of the Christian within the world, making her part of the community of grace within the history of the world: 'the work of His Holy Spirit is to make us participants in the history of the covenant of grace, as fellow-citizens, house-fellows and contemporaries with the patriarchs and prophets, the apostles and evangelists. Life in the Spirit, and under His guidance, consists quite simply in participation in this history.'⁸² This two-directional movement of the Spirit provides that the Spirit's role, while particular, is not restrictive. Barth criticizes Calvin's understanding of double election for its restriction of the Spirit to the elect: since, for Calvin, the elect are only those who are Christian and the Spirit calls and illuminates them to their election,

⁷⁴ IV/2, 127.

⁷⁵ II/2, 605.

⁷⁶ Hence II/2, ch. VIII: 'The Command of God'.

⁷⁷ In this way, Roberts, 'Spirit, Structure and Truth', is incorrect to see the Holy Spirit in Barth as merely the completion of a 'divine circle' (80). Instead, the Spirit additionally directs the Christian outwards to the world.

⁷⁸ III/3, 248.

⁷⁹ III/3, 258.

⁸⁰ III/3, 261.

⁸¹ III/3, 264.

⁸² III/3, 516.

the Spirit has no role in the salvation of the reprobate.⁸³ For Barth, this is not so: the Spirit leads humanity into the work of witness and participation in the universal Lordship of Christ. Although *de facto* sanctification in Christ is for the saint, there exists *de iure* sanctification in Christ for all humanity.⁸⁴ The Spirit is, then, the one who brings the reality of the promise of salvation to the Christian, but in this calls her to the *outward* ministry of witness.⁸⁵ There is a line of continuity and a break with Calvin in this. Barth wants to affirm the particularity of the Christian in the Holy Spirit, but this does not limit the ministry of the Holy Spirit: His work is simultaneously an inward ministry into participation with Christ and—because of that—an outward ministry. This is further illustrated in Barth's discussion of vocation. Vocation is an event which takes place 'in its singularity', but because it is an event of the Holy Spirit, this singularity is neither accidental nor capricious.⁸⁶ It is, instead, an event which confronts all people, in their particularity, through the inward and outward work of the Spirit. Barth wishes to guard against a merely private understanding of the work of the Spirit as found in older Protestant theology.⁸⁷ The very experience of the Spirit leads to an outward orientation. This seems logically necessary: if the Spirit establishes particularity, it must surely be a particularity in comparison to another, and thereby the more inward, the more outward.

However, one must also consider what the place of the Spirit is with regards to the *individual* Christian for Barth.⁸⁸ It is the Spirit through whom Jesus Christ calls an individual sinful person to the community of the Christian faith.⁸⁹ The Spirit is thus the one who leads a person to conversion.⁹⁰ Barth discusses this theme in his

⁸³ IV/2, 520.

⁸⁴ IV/2, 521.

⁸⁵ IV/2, 522.

⁸⁶ IV/3, 492.

⁸⁷ IV/1, 149–50.

⁸⁸ In some ways, this question should come later in this chapter. For Barth, the individual always exists for the sake of the community, and not vice versa. He deals, therefore, with the community first before the question of the individual. However, in order to trace the directions on Barth's thinking on the Holy Spirit, this chapter seeks first to establish the work of the Spirit in establishing particularity in the present through reception of revelation before moving to the form of this particularity in terms of Christian identity. It is, therefore, reserved to §5 to consider the community in the Holy Spirit.

⁸⁹ See IV/1, §63.

⁹⁰ IV/2, 593.

incomplete IV/4, in which he considers how it can happen in time that the one off event of Jesus Christ can become for certain people a renewing event.⁹¹ Barth concludes that this is a work of the Spirit who allows for the 'here and now' of each individual person.⁹² This work is such that it 'does not entail the paralysing dismissal or absence of the human spirit, mind, knowledge and will', but is a work in which the Spirit of God bears witness to the human spirit (as in Rom. 8.16).⁹³ The Spirit reaches out to the specificity and particularity of each individual human.⁹⁴

5 CHRISTIAN IDENTITY: PARTICULARITY THROUGH THE SPIRIT IN THE COMMUNITY OF CHRISTIANS

Not only, for Barth, does the Spirit establish the particularity of the Christian, He also establishes the identity of the community.⁹⁵ The Spirit provides the reality of the Christian's speech about God and of the Christian faith. Barth even goes as far in his critique of religion to state that 'true religion' is an event of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.⁹⁶ The Spirit works, therefore, as the 'awakening power' of the community, building it up.⁹⁷ To this community, the Spirit as the 'Guarantor of the truth of the atonement' gives identity, ordaining it to be sent out into the world and for the world.⁹⁸ At Pentecost, the relationship between Christ and the Christian community is established, but this is simultaneous to the relationship that results therein between the Christian and human-kind in general.⁹⁹ Because of this, the Spirit not only establishes the identity of the community from within, but does so in order to lead the church to an identity which is outward-looking. Barth is concerned with the upbuilding of the church for its proclamation, with the inner life of the church and its 'attitude to the world',¹⁰⁰

⁹¹ IV/4, 26.

⁹² IV/4, 27.

⁹³ IV/4, 28.

⁹⁴ IV/4, 29.

⁹⁵ Despite fierce (and unjustified) critique on the part of Schepers, 'The Work of the Holy Spirit'.

⁹⁶ I/2, 344.

⁹⁷ IV/1, 151.

⁹⁸ IV/1, 152.

⁹⁹ IV/1, 650.

¹⁰⁰ IV/2, 129-30.

Thus, in Barth's theology, God establishes the *communio sanctorum* to exist for others. Barth writes in his thesis for §67 'The Holy Spirit and the Upbuilding of the Christian Community':

The Holy Spirit is the quickening power with which Jesus the Lord builds up Christianity in the world as His body, i.e., as the earthly historical form of His own existence, causing it to grow, sustaining and ordering it as the communion of His saints, and *thus fitting it to give a provisional representation of the sanctification of all humanity and human life as it has taken place in Him*.¹⁰¹

There is a representative aspect to the Spirit's upbuilding of the community. It is an identity which indicates the present work of God to the world, an identity with the likeness of Christ whom it confesses.¹⁰² Although it is not identical with Christ, it is 'the body, as the earthly-historical form of existence, of Jesus Christ, it is His likeness, and may and should recognise that this is so.'¹⁰³ It is the Holy Spirit who establishes this identity which is simultaneously both the inner establishment of the church and the outer work of the church in reflecting Christ: 'As the self-attestation of Jesus the Holy Spirit achieves the *communio sanctorum* and causes it to grow (intensively and extensively).'¹⁰⁴ There is both an 'intensive' and 'extensive' work of the Spirit in establishing the communion of saints through His attestation of Jesus.¹⁰⁵ As the Spirit establishes the intensive identity of the church, so too He establishes its extensive work as Christ's likeness in the present.

This identity is seen in terms of Barth's understanding of correspondence (*Entsprechung*).¹⁰⁶ The particularity of the Christian's identity is a particularity in correspondence with the particularity of the work of God in Jesus Christ. It is through the Holy Spirit that the correspondence of human faith to the divine act of revelation takes place.¹⁰⁷ It is baptism by the Holy Spirit which is the 'origin, beginning and initiation of the faithfulness of man which replies and corresponds

¹⁰¹ IV/2, 614. ¹⁰² IV/3, 792 3.

¹⁰³ IV/3, 793. ¹⁰⁴ IV/2, 652.

¹⁰⁵ On 'intensity' and 'extensity', see Daniel W. Hardy, *Finding the Church* (London: SCM, 2001).

¹⁰⁶ On 'correspondence', see McDowell, *Hope in Barth's Eschatology*, 198 9; Webster, *Barth's Moral Theology*, 90 1; and Nimmo, *Being in Action*, 11 12.

¹⁰⁷ I/2, 206 7.

to the faithfulness of God.¹⁰⁸ When a person becomes a Christian through baptism by the Holy Spirit, they are enabled to participate not only passively but also actively in God's grace.¹⁰⁹ In correspondence to the grace of God in the power of the Holy Spirit, the Christian is able to become one for whom it is possible to be faithful to God.

The identity which the Holy Spirit empowers can be expressed *in concreto*. Barth discusses several aspects of the reality of this new identity:

(a) Identity in love

For Barth, the possibility of the human ability to love is found in Jesus Christ.¹¹⁰ Yet the actual founding of love in the human is a miracle of the Holy Spirit.¹¹¹ Even in this love, there is only ever a correspondence to the love of God in Christ: love begins with God's unique love for us, and it is only through this that one is able to measure the concept of love.¹¹² Human loving must, therefore, be understood as an answer to the love of God for us. Under his section 'The Holy Spirit and Christian Love',¹¹³ Barth notes:

By the Holy Spirit the individual becomes free for existence in an active relationship with the other in which he is loved and finds that he may love in return. The one who is most deeply filled with the Holy Spirit is the one who is richest in love, and the one who is devoid of love necessarily betrays the fact that he is empty of the Spirit.¹¹⁴

Thus, the Spirit provides the condition for the Christian to love, establishing the freedom to know that she is loved by Christ and may love, therefore, in return. Moreover, it is necessary first to know this love, which is revealed, rather than to make Christian love fit a preconceived category of love:¹¹⁵ true love is known only through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.¹¹⁶ Again, one sees here the dual direction of the Spirit's movement: He establishes the church in the identity of love; but this very identity calls for the other in order to love.

¹⁰⁸ IV/4, 3.

¹⁰⁹ IV/4, 6.

¹¹⁰ I/2, 374.

¹¹¹ I/2, 374 5.

¹¹² I/2, 376.

¹¹³ IV/2, §68.

¹¹⁴ IV/2, 818.

¹¹⁵ I/2, 380.

¹¹⁶ I/2, 381.

(b) Identity in confessing Jesus Christ

For Barth, it is the Spirit who leads Christians to confess Jesus Christ. As Barth notes when discussing the Holy Spirit, the church has its identity in temporal reality as those who cohere in confessing God in Christ.¹¹⁷ Indeed, the very essence of the *sancti* in the *communio sanctorum* stems from the *sancta*, which are confessional fellowship, thankfulness and thanksgiving, fellowship of prayer, relationship and fellowship of service.¹¹⁸ It is for the confession of Christ, states Barth, that the church exists: it is empowered to confess Jesus Christ as its distinctive action.¹¹⁹ Christian participation in the prophetic office of Christ is seen in this way. As Barth states in his thesis for §72 ‘The Holy Spirit and the Sending of the Christian Community’:

The Holy Spirit is the enlightening power of the living Lord Jesus Christ in which He confesses the community called by Him as His body, i.e., as His own earthly historical form of existence, by entrusting to it the ministry of His prophetic Word and therefore the provisional representation of the calling of all humanity and indeed of all creatures as it has taken place in Him. He does this by sending it among the peoples as His own people, ordained for its part to confess Him before all men, to call them to Him and thus to make known to the whole world that the covenant between God and man concluded in Him is the first and final meaning of its history, and that His future manifestation is already here and now its great, effective and living hope.¹²⁰

Again, one sees in this the dual movement of the Spirit in calling the body of Christ (His church): in establishing their identity as those who confess Jesus Christ, the Spirit performs a simultaneous extensive work of God for all humanity, of whom Christians are representative. Confession not only establishes the identity of a Christian, it establishes the identity of a Christian to another to whom Christ is confessed. To establish the particularity of the church is, therefore, an outward work of God in correspondence to the event of His grace.

¹¹⁷ I/2, 219 20.

¹¹⁸ IV/2, 643.

¹¹⁹ IV/3, 790.

¹²⁰ IV/3, 681.

(c) Identity in the reception of revelation

In line with Barth's general concern with particularism in revelation, he is emphatic that revelation never encounters the human in a general way.¹²¹ In the time between Christ's resurrection and His final parousia, God encounters His people in the form of the outpouring of His Spirit found in the church. It is in the church that God adopts the Christian through His Spirit and makes her ready to receive His Word.¹²² Thus, as the place where God calls humans to be recipients of His revelation, Christians are bound to the church.¹²³ It is belonging to the church which gives the Christian her identity, as the church is the place where the Spirit is poured out, the place of 'the subjective reality of revelation'.¹²⁴ Therefore, the Christian's identity as one who receives the revelation of God is found in her existence inside the church. In that way, Barth can state: *extra ecclesiam nulla salus*.¹²⁵ The church is thus the corresponding factor to the revelation of God: it exists because the Word of God has been spoken, and in correspondence to that fact in the Word heard and received; it does not exist because of the humans who are a part of it.

(d) Identity in prayer

For Barth, the Holy Spirit also establishes Christian particularity in terms of prayer. Barth writes:

The man who really prays, and therefore prays with this assurance of being heard, belongs to the 'we,' to the body whose head is Jesus Christ. But in 'Christ,' in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit and therefore in fellowship with Him, the praying man is not separated from God nor God from him. Rather, in Jesus Christ man is from eternity bound up with God, and God is from eternity bound up with man.¹²⁶

This fellowship of the Holy Spirit in prayer makes the Christian definitively a part of the 'we' of the church, and binds humans to Christ eternally. Again, this is life in correspondence to and cooperation with Christ. Elsewhere, Barth states:

¹²¹ I/2, 209. Barth goes on to assert that in the Hebrew Bible, God chooses a people who belong to a nation, while in the New Testament, he chooses a people who belong to the church.

¹²² I/2, 221.

¹²³ I/2, 211.

¹²⁴ I/2, 215.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

¹²⁶ III/4, 107-8.

Christian prayer is life in and with the community of Jesus Christ; life primarily and basically out of and in the fullness of the Spirit and the hope which Jesus Christ imparted and continually imparts to them in His Word and in baptism and the Lord's Supper; and then only, and on this basis, co-operation with Him in the service to which it is commissioned. Christian prayer is the preservation of the existence of the Christian as a member of the body of Christ . . . ¹²⁷

Prayer is, therefore, part of the identity of the Body of Christ which is established by the Holy Spirit. This is 'primarily and basically' a life which stems from the Holy Spirit as the Guarantor of the future hope of Jesus Christ.

(e) Identity in holiness

A further aspect of Christian identity through the Holy Spirit for Barth is holiness. The holiness established in the church is a holiness from Christ as a work of the *Holy* Spirit, and the individual participates in this holiness as she participates in the community.¹²⁸ The church requires the Holy Spirit to make it holy.¹²⁹ In this, the Spirit establishes the community as a separate community. This, indeed, is the meaning of holiness: to be holy is to be separate.¹³⁰ It is this which gives the identity of the community its boundary. Through the Holy Spirit, the community is made separate from the world, but this is not in some absolute sense which marks the church off from the world and all other societies;¹³¹ rather it is in a way which again reflects the dual movement of the Spirit in which the church's separate identity is established *for* all other humans.

(f) Identity in hope

As the Guarantor of future salvation, the Holy Spirit for Barth provides the Christian with an identity which establishes them as hopeful.¹³² Barth's thesis on 'The Holy Spirit and Christian Hope' (§ 73) states:

¹²⁷ III/3, 282.

¹²⁸ IV/1, 687.

¹²⁹ IV/1, 694.

¹³⁰ IV/2, 322.

¹³¹ IV/1, 693.

¹³² On this theme, see McDowell, 'Learning Where to Place One's Hope'. Note also the provisos in Sauter, 'Why Is Karl Barth's Church Dogmatics Not a "Theology of Hope"?'.¹³²

The Holy Spirit is the enlightening power in which Jesus Christ, overcoming the falsehood and condemnation of sinful man, causes him as a member of His community to become one who may move towards his final and yet also his immediate future in hope in Him, i.e., in confident, patient and cheerful expectation of His new coming to consummate the revelation of the will of God fulfilled in Him.¹³³

As the present one, the Holy Spirit gives the Christian a future-orientated life. The Spirit enables the Christian to live a life marked by hope in the future fulfilment of Christ's work of salvation. However, while this hope is a particularly Christian attribute for members of the church, it is still—by its very nature as hope—an aspect of Christian identity which is simultaneously inward-looking in terms of the church and outward-looking in terms of the world. Hope is directed at the future coming of Christ in the consummation and fulfilment of the revelation of His will for *all* humanity.

It is important to note in closing this section on Christian identity that, for Barth, Christian identity is not spoken of in terms of salvation (being saved rather than damned), but rather in terms of possession of the Holy Spirit. This seems a fitting move in line with scripture: Pentecost establishes the church;¹³⁴ the gifts and offices of the Spirit maintain the church; and the fruits of the Spirit identify members of the church. The Christian's existence in the present is, therefore, one differentiated by its 'immediate' hope in Jesus Christ—a hope which is 'confident, patient and cheerful'.¹³⁵ This is a hope in direct opposition to falsehood, and therefore a true hope. It is a hope for the future which brings a reality for the present. This reality in the present is the very thing that those outside of the church lack. For them, there is no present salvation in the church because they have no hope in the future: regardless of the objective reality of salvation, for them it is no salvation as it is yet to be known as salvation.

¹³³ IV/3, 902.

¹³⁴ It may seem that at Pentecost the Holy Spirit is a more extensive presence than this. However, one sees in the work of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost an inward and outward dynamic: the Spirit rests on the disciples who then speak in different tongues (witnessing outwards); the Spirit rests on Peter and gives to him the power to preach (again focusing outwards); and those who are baptized will receive the Holy Spirit—a promise that is for all regardless of how spatially or temporally distant they may be.

¹³⁵ IV/3, 902.

6 IS THERE ENOUGH PARTICULARITY IN CHRISTIAN IDENTITY?

While Barth clearly establishes the particularity of Christian identity through the Holy Spirit, there does remain the issue of whether this particular identity is too universal in its approach: is there enough room for a particular individual Christian's identity within the Christian identity towards which Barth points?¹³⁶ One theme above all needs discussion in order to allow for a fuller sense of the particularity gained through the doctrine of the Holy Spirit—vocation.

Barth discusses vocation in *CD IV/3* § 71, and he uses calling as a means of discussing Christian particularity. The Christian's calling is to be a Christian and witness to this;¹³⁷ that is what distinguishes the Christian from the 'all' who are elected in Christ: 'In the light of the universalistic passages of the Bible, we can say that man in every time and place stands already in the light of life. But this has no reference to the event of his vocation.'¹³⁸ Barth continues by stating that no human exists who is not confronted with her vocation, so the doctrine of vocation cannot simply collide with Luther's consideration of the third article of the creed.¹³⁹ Nevertheless, Barth goes on to state that vocation is a particular work of the Holy Spirit.¹⁴⁰

In his work on vocation, one sees the problematic way in which the Spirit is at times dissolved into the Son. Barth's emphasis on *perichoresis* in his teaching on the triunity of God does seem to fit some of the biblical complexities over the persons of the Trinity.¹⁴¹ However, at times this comes at the expense of the particularity of each of the *Seinsweisen* which, as Barth also realizes, must be guarded carefully.¹⁴² This is especially the case in his discussion of vocation. Barth writes that Christ lives '[i]n his *parousia* in the form of the Holy Spirit' and continues by stating 'as the One He is there He is

¹³⁶ This perhaps results from Barth's prioritizing of the community over the individual, which arises out of his awareness of the dangers of overly individualized evangelicalism. This is seen in both Pietism and neo Protestantism, in which objectivism in Christian faith is crushed under an oppressive subjectivism.

¹³⁷ See, for example, *IV/3*, 481, 491, and 521.

¹³⁸ *IV/3*, 491.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁰ *IV/3*, 491 2.

¹⁴¹ E.g. *I/1*, 349, 370, and 449ff.

¹⁴² *I/1*, §§10 12.

also on earth among us as the Contemporary of man in every age'.¹⁴³ The co-temporal work of God through the Spirit should be noted, but here the Spirit is not the co-temporal work of God but of Christ. While there are many ways in which this might amount to the same thing, it does seem to narrow the Godhead to Jesus Christ alone. In earlier work in IV/3, Barth even states that the Holy Spirit is 'Jesus Christ Himself in the power of the resurrection'.¹⁴⁴ The particularity of the Spirit seems to be dissolved. This leads to neglecting the particular calling of particular people through the Holy Spirit.¹⁴⁵ Since vocation is singularly to witness to Jesus Christ, particularity is seen only in terms of those who witness to Christ (Christians) compared to those who do not. This is a useful counterbalance to earlier work that seems to point towards universalism, and allows for the reason for the continued existence of the church and history, but it fails to appreciate the full breadth of particularity and diversity evident both in the world and in scripture: the particularity is itself rather universalized.¹⁴⁶ Individual callings are ignored, and individual gifts are not reflected on, which is insufficient.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴³ IV/3, 504.

¹⁴⁴ IV/3, 352.

¹⁴⁵ Thrall also criticizes Barth for failing to account for the similar sense of vocation felt by those concerned with social responsibility who are not Christians (M. Thrall, 'Christian Vocation Today', *Theology* 79 (1976), 86). While this misunderstands Barth's very specific sense of vocation and the focus of the Spirit's work on the Christian, it nevertheless raises the criticism of the Spirit's work of calling in Barth's theology: his understanding of vocation is too limited even within its focused Christian sense. However, IV/4, 38, does hint at a more varied approach to the issue of Christian vocation.

¹⁴⁶ The scriptural basis for this is significant and thorough justice cannot be given to it here. Passages that might be recalled include the temptation in which the Spirit led Jesus, which indicates not only that the Spirit does the work of Christ but that Christ also does the work of the Spirit (Mt. 4.1 and parallels). On the level of particularity within callings, the gifts of the Spirit indicate the role of the Spirit in the particularity and diversity of Christian calling (1 Cor. 12). The role of the Spirit in calling many of the prophetic figures in the OT should also be noted, along with His guiding power in particular circumstances.

¹⁴⁷ This further connects with the doctrine of election: the elect are called to certain roles. Relating vocation to election, Barth states: 'prior to its actualisation in his own history it [vocation] has its basis, as we must say first and supremely, in his election in Jesus Christ "before the foundation of the world" (Eph. 1.4)' (IV/3, 483). While Barth emphasizes the Trinitarian nature of vocation, he states that vocation exists 'primarily in Himself [Christ], in His pre temporal, supra temporal and

7 THE HOLY SPIRIT: THE ESTABLISHER OF HUMAN IDENTITY AND PARTICULARITY

While it has been argued that the Holy Spirit is the dynamic action of God in establishing Christian particularity and identity, one of the more interesting features of Barth's theology is that the Spirit is the one who establishes *human* identity and particularity.¹⁴⁸ Not only does God remain free in the outpouring of His Spirit, but the creature who receives the Holy Spirit does not in any way lose its creaturely nature:¹⁴⁹ the Spirit is the economic action of God that protects both the Creator as Creator and the creature as creature. In the outpouring of the Spirit, a person is not engaged in the work of God as if she were in a vacuum or had no responsibility or control.¹⁵⁰ The Spirit is God allowing human involvement in His work of revelation.¹⁵¹ The Spirit provides for the removal of the contradiction between a possibility which is only God's possibility and human experience and action.¹⁵² That is to say that the Spirit provides for the ability of the creature *in her particularity and identity as creature* to receive the Word of God. It is through the Holy Spirit that humans as humans are made accessible to God as God, and God as God allows Himself to be considered and conceived by humans as humans.¹⁵³ To be a Christian does not involve any sense of ceasing to be human.

What is more, it is in this fact that humans find their identity *vis-à-vis* all other creatures. Barth quotes Bonhoeffer: 'Man is distinguished

post temporal eternity' (IV/3, 484). Here, the continued emphasis on eternity in election, along with the relating of the concept of election to vocation, is clear to see. This relation seems justified: the forward looking sense of *προορίσας* and the choosing sense of *ἐξελέξατο* (both used in Eph. 1.4–5) seem consistent with the choice of someone in the present to do something, found also in the future aspect of *κληρώω* and *κλησις* (which concurs with Rom. 8.30).

¹⁴⁸ This is in no way to collapse God and the world as in Hegel's *Geist*. Cf. Hanvey, 'Hegel, Rahner & Karl Barth', 232–3.

¹⁴⁹ I/1, 462.

¹⁵⁰ I/2, 267.

¹⁵¹ With all of the provisos this involves. See §4 above.

¹⁵² I/2, 270.

¹⁵³ II/1, 10. Indeed, Barth relates this to the act of incarnation and the virgin birth in which Jesus is 'conceived of the Holy Spirit'. See I/2, 235–6 and 374.

from other creatures by the fact that God Himself is in him, that he is the image of God in which the free Creator sees Himself reflected . . . It is in the free creature that the Holy Spirit calls upon the Creator; uncreated freedom is worshiped by created freedom.¹⁵⁴ That humanity may be indwelt by Holy Spirit, through whom it may call on God, is the defining characteristic of human identity. Barth expands this in §46 'Man as Soul and Body' in which he proposes: 'Through the Spirit of God, man is the subject, form and life of a substantial organism, the soul of his body'.¹⁵⁵ The operation of the Spirit is the work of God which makes a human into the soul of His body:¹⁵⁶ He is the work of God which makes a human human. In establishing the identity of the human, the Spirit also establishes the identity particular to humanity in contrast to the rest of creation and to God Himself:

Man has Spirit, and through the Spirit is the soul of his body. This means at least that, by reason of his creaturely being, he is capable of meeting God, of being a person for and in relation to Him, and of being one as God is one. He is capable of being aware of himself as different both from God and from the rest of the created world, yet also bound up with God and the rest of the created world.¹⁵⁷

Furthermore, it is through the Spirit that the human discovers her nature as a rational being.¹⁵⁸ Yet this rationality is not enough to discover the nature of human identity: this is only known in revelation through the Spirit.¹⁵⁹ It is through the Spirit that the creature recognizes who she is as creature.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁴ III/1, 195. Barth records the quotation as being from Bonhoeffer, *Schöpfung und Fall*, 1933, 29–30.

¹⁵⁵ III/2, 325.

¹⁵⁶ In speaking of humans having Spirit (which Barth does not speak of as 'human' spirit in his anthropology), Barth states four things: first that God is there for the human, coming as Spirit from without; second, that it is Spirit who makes human existence as 'soul of his body' possible; third, Spirit is certainly in humans in the soul and through body; fourth, Spirit stands in special and direct relationship to the soul element of human reality and only indirect to the bodily (III/2, 362–6).

¹⁵⁷ III/2, 395.

¹⁵⁸ III/2, 419.

¹⁵⁹ III/4, 327ff.

¹⁶⁰ Biggar even considers this something which points towards Barth indicating a version of natural law: 'That the Spirit's call is to fulfil the structure of creaturely being clearly implies that, contrary to its popular reputation, Barth's ethics does in fact espouse what could reasonably be called a version of natural law' (Nigel Biggar,

Moreover, the Holy Spirit reveals to humans the association of their humanity with Christ's humanity.¹⁶¹ He comes to individual humans to reveal their identity as children of God through their association with Jesus Christ, their 'elder brother'.¹⁶² This seems to be a very satisfactory expansion of the words of Paul in Rom. 8.14–17a: the Spirit leads people to recognize their identity as creatures of the Creator, as unique creatures who (through Him) can meet God, as His adopted children united in Christ.

It is in this way that one can see how Barth's suggestion of the Spirit's creating true human identity and particularity is not at odds with the work of the Spirit in creating Christian identity: through the Holy Spirit, humans are freed to be *truly* human. Since the Spirit rests intensely on the Christian, it is the Christian who possesses true human identity. Rosato describes this well when he states: 'the Christian discovers that he lives the life of a real man, since the Spirit of the one ontologically real man, Jesus Christ, awakes in the Christian the possibility of being what he is meant to be.'¹⁶³ The discovery of the possibility (through the Holy Spirit) of true humanity in Christ leads the Christian more clearly to recognize her creatureliness, and thereby simultaneously to recognize the Creator who exalts her creatureliness in Christ, in whom there is no distance between humanity and God. This is a work of grace and sanctification in Christ, but it is the Holy Spirit who allows humanity to participate actively in this reality. As humanity is recreated in the image of the 'true man' Jesus, it is the Spirit who teaches what true humanity is. In discussing this, under §45 'Man in his Determination as the Covenant-partner of God', Barth defines the humanity of the human Jesus as being the 'man for God'—something His humanity is enabled to be through the Holy Spirit. It is this humanity of which present humanity is called to partake.¹⁶⁴ As God is free through His Holy Spirit to reflect Himself in humanity, so too (through the same Spirit) humanity is made free to be the likeness of God.¹⁶⁵ This process may never be fully realized in our time, but the eternal Spirit enables it to progress: 'Regarded in the light of its

The Hastening That Waits: Karl Barth's Ethics (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 164). Albeit, Nimmo, *Being in Action*, has given a fierce rebuttal to this point (52, n.92).

¹⁶¹ IV/2, 128.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*

¹⁶³ Rosato, *The Spirit as Lord*, 93.

¹⁶⁴ III/2, 59.

¹⁶⁵ Rosato, *The Spirit as Lord*, 87.

beginning, our life in our allotted time is tolerable because at this point it does not hang lost and helpless over an abyss but is reliably held and supported, secured and guaranteed. Indeed, it stands under a promise. Its progress and even its end are set in the light of its beginning.¹⁶⁶ It is the Spirit of God who guides humanity in time as it progresses to the end which must be seen in light of its beginning.¹⁶⁷

8 ESCHATOLOGY AND THE SPIRIT

Barth is clear in his belief that everything that is said about the human who receives the Holy Spirit is an eschatological statement—that is, one in relation to the *eschaton*, the eternal reality of the divine fulfilment and consummation.¹⁶⁸ This time is the time of the community established by the Spirit: ‘To that extent it is not yet the fulfilment of His *parousia* and presence and salvation in the world reconciled by Him.’¹⁶⁹ It is the time of the Spirit who is the Guarantor of the future coming of Christ. As the Guarantor, He is not divorced from the future coming, but instead—as eternal God for whom there is no eschatology—the one who orientates the church eschatologically.¹⁷⁰ The Spirit is the one engaged in ‘founding’ and ‘quickenings’ the community.¹⁷¹ He establishes that the community comes from God and moves towards the coming Kingdom. But this is not yet a realized eschatology: the Spirit is the one who directs the Kingdom, who is engaged in the ‘realizing’ *eschaton* not the ‘realized’ *eschaton*.¹⁷²

¹⁶⁶ III/2, 577.

¹⁶⁷ Indeed, Torrance’s own interpretation of the *imago Dei* may well have its foundation in Barth’s interpretation of the Holy Spirit: ‘To affirm humanity’s creation in the image of God is thus to speak first of the one true Adam. It is then that we can affirm that “in and through him”, as restored humanity, we creatures are (become) persons in the image of the triune God . . . we remain “on the way” to becoming fully and in truth “images” or “reflections” of the Being of God and the communion of the triune life in ourselves; thus we remain “on the way” to full subjective participation in the One in whom alone this ontological corresponding is realised’ (Torrance, *Persons in Communion*, 368–9).

¹⁶⁸ I/1, 464.

¹⁶⁹ IV/1, 319.

¹⁷⁰ IV/2, 656.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁷² See Graham, *Representation and Substitution*, 330ff.

He is the content of a promise which is given to the Christian, but is yet to be fulfilled.¹⁷³ Indeed, this eschatological promise and orientation gives the Christian a further identity in the present: the promise of the ultimate future brings a promise to human existence in time with regard to our immediate future.¹⁷⁴ Moreover, this eschatological dimension determines that the Spirit's work is not a closed work. The 'not yet' aspect of the Spirit's fulfilled promise provides that Christians cannot make absolute judgments about their own identity compared to the rest of humanity:

He [the non Christian], too, is reconciled to God. Jesus Christ died for him. And He rose again for him. In the power of His resurrection He is his Lord and Saviour. This means, however, that the Spirit and His ultimate and penultimate pledge with all its indwelling power are promised to him. It cannot be simply said that he is not the recipient, bearer and possessor. It must be said that he is not yet these things, because he does not yet know Jesus Christ.¹⁷⁵

The Spirit reminds the believer of the simultaneous extensity of the ultimate work of God's salvation with the intensity of His present work: as the Promise and Guarantor He orientates the Christian beyond the present towards the future, and guards her from associating the church too closely with the Kingdom of God.

9 CONCLUSION: THE BROADENING INWARDNESS OF THE SPIRIT

The work of the Spirit in Barth's theology is an ever new movement which takes the Christian in two directions.¹⁷⁶ The Spirit is the particular mode of God's being who takes the Christian deeply into

¹⁷³ IV/3, 353.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁵ IV/3, 355.

¹⁷⁶ This may seem a peculiar interpretation of Barth who, in his doctrine of reconciliation, seems to suggest a threefold manner of understanding the Spirit in each of the part volumes. However, the twofold movement is clearly there more deeply in the structure of each of those three sections, as each discussion of the Spirit in IV/1 3 involves two paragraphs which correspond to the inwards outwards dynamic of Barth's doctrine of the Spirit.

faith yet simultaneously outwards as she participates in the life and ministry of Christ for the world. This is a subjective mirror image of the particularity of Christ which has an objectively universal effect: as the Spirit leads the Christian inwards into the particularity of the church and the Christian life, so too the Spirit leads the Christian to look outwards to the world by that very movement; just as the inwards movement of God to the particularity of the historical human Jesus leads to an outward effect for all the world. The further inwards the work of God's Spirit goes, the broader it becomes. The Holy Spirit creates and fits the church 'to give a provisional representation of the sanctification of all humanity and human life as it has taken place in Him.'¹⁷⁷ Certainly this is 'provisional': the work of the Spirit is a particular work of God's eternity in the present, and in that way points to an eschatological future. But it is this very nature of the work of the Spirit which pushes the community of God at each moment out into the world: 'The enlightening power of the Holy Spirit draws and impels and presses beyond its being as such, beyond all the reception and experience of its members, beyond all that is promised to them personally.'¹⁷⁸ The Holy Spirit creates a community which presses beyond itself because He draws the community into Christ's universal work of salvation,¹⁷⁹ which is not one which comprises a dominating universal which suppresses all particularity but rather a universal which arises from all particulars. As Barth puts it: 'The Holy Spirit does not enforce a flat uniformity.'¹⁸⁰ The Spirit who deals with individuals and individual communities, drawing them into active participation in Christ, ensures the particularity of the individuals and the individual communities.¹⁸¹ He leads them in their temporality to acknowledge subjectively the reality of their creatureliness as those who are objectively the children of God by adoption in Jesus Christ. *His Spirit* bears witness to *our spirits*, which do not lose their particularity, but are united in calling God afresh 'Abba'.

¹⁷⁷ IV/2, 620.

¹⁸⁰ IV/3, 855.

¹⁷⁸ IV/3, 764.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁹ IV/1, 665 6.

Spiritual growth: The work of the Spirit in the saints of God (Origen)

1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter advocates that Origen achieves a place for Christian faith and practice through the person of the Holy Spirit within a theology which points towards universalism. As a pre-Nicene theologian, it is notable how Trinitarian Origen's theology is,¹ with the economic dynamics of the Spirit and the Son working together to bring salvation through the restoration of all things. The Spirit provides for the place of growth towards God in salvation, and for human involvement in God's saving act. While for Origen the end may well be as the beginning, the Spirit is the Trinitarian person who, after Christ has ascended to the Father, works between creation and the eschaton, bringing them together.

This chapter will consider the relationship between Spirit and Son in Origen's Trinitarian theology. It will then move to discuss the role of the Spirit in bringing Christ to humans, and in establishing faith in Christ. The economic 'remit' of the Spirit will further be considered with regard to sanctification in the present, in which it will be

¹ A point made well in Charles Kannengiesser, 'Divine Trinity and the Structure of *Peri Archon*', in *Origen of Alexandria*. Berkley similarly states that Origen's most significant contribution to theology is his Trinitarian thought (*HomLev.*, 10). Trigg also recognizes in Origen (and especially in his pneumatology) a 'significant step in the development of trinitarian thought' (Trigg, 'The Angel of Great Counsel', 39). However, other scholars wrongly suggest, in a way that it is hoped this chapter demonstrates to be false, that Origen was uninterested in the Holy Spirit and the Trinity. A survey of such thought is found in McDonnell, 'Does Origen Have a Trinitarian Doctrine of the Holy Spirit?', 8ff.

advocated that the Spirit establishes Christian particularity. The chapter will conclude with a discussion of the role of human involvement in the economy of God's salvation.

2 ORIGEN'S TRINITARIAN THEOLOGY: THE SPIRIT AND THE SON²

Study of Origen's pneumatology may seem somewhat strange. The doctrine of the Holy Spirit only became a burning issue in the early church with the *Pneumatomachi* long after Origen's death.³ Moreover, a first reading of Origen's Trinitarian theology suggests a strong subordinationism⁴ (albeit this must be read within the context of his own times).⁵ Origen suggests, for example, that there is nothing in existence to which invisible God is visible, perhaps not even the Spirit and the Son. Indeed, Jerome records that Origen stated: 'For as it is incongruous to say that the Son can see the Father, so it is unbecoming to believe that the Spirit can see the Son.'⁶ Here, there is a strong

² A caveat must be borne in mind here. One cannot interpret Origen anachronistically, and understand each 'person' of the Trinity in the later sense of a 'person'. For Origen, the Spirit is 'one of three distinct, individual, subsisting realities' (McDonnell, 'Does Origen Have a Trinitarian Doctrine of the Holy Spirit?', 34).

³ Crouzel, *Origen*, 198. On the early history of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, see Prestige, *God in Patristic Thought*, 80ff. However, McDonnell notes that Origen is 'the first in history to develop pneumatology in a systematic way' (McDonnell, 'Does Origen Have a Trinitarian Doctrine of the Holy Spirit?', 25). Although this may not be a fully systematized and developed doctrine of the Spirit, 'Origen is a blazer of trails, erecting rough structures, as befits a pioneer' (33). See also Kilian McDonnell, 'A Trinitarian Theology of the Holy Spirit', *Theological Studies* 46 (1985), 196.

⁴ E.g. Prestige, *God in Patristic Thought*, 131ff.

⁵ Wherever Trinitarian theology was found in the pre Nicene church, it tended to be subordinationist. Indeed, Edwards argues that Pamphilus was to defend Origen against the *reverse* charge to making the Son a creature, that of making the Son ingenerate (*innatus*) which leads to two ingenerates or unbegottens (Edwards, 'Did Origen Apply the Word *Homoousios* to the Son?', 662-3). This demonstrates that all understandings of orthodoxy and heterodoxy must be understood in light of the contemporary understandings of orthodoxy, not by anachronistically reading the orthodoxy of a later period onto an earlier period.

⁶ This sentence from Jerome is inserted by Koetschau at *De Princ.* I.1.8. One must, therefore, be aware of the provenance of this verse, since the Latin may be open to

subordination of the Son to the Father: the Son cannot even see the Father who is alone unbegotten (ἀγέννητος) and to whom alone belongs the title ὁ θεός.⁷ Moreover, the Spirit is in a similar manner subordinate to the Son: just as it is inappropriate to believe that the Son can see the Father (indicating a strong taxonomy), so too it is ‘unbefitting’ to consider that the Spirit can see the Son.⁸

Origen asserts that the Spirit is made through the Son.⁹ He even states that the Spirit has the characteristics He has through ‘participation’ in the Son through whom the Spirit was made by the Father as the first of all creation:

there are three hypostases [ὑποστάσεις], the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, and we believe that only the Father is unbegotten. We admit as more pious and as true that the *Holy Spirit is the most honoured of all things made through the Word, and that he is [first] in rank above all things which have been made by the Father through Christ.* [τὸ Πάντων διὰ τοῦ λόγου γενομένων τὸ ἅγιον πνεῦμα πάντων εἶναι τιμιώτερον, καὶ τάξει πρῶτον πάντων τῶν ὑπὸ τοῦ πατρὸς διὰ Χριστοῦ γεγενημένων]. Perhaps this is the reason the Spirit is not called Son of God, since the Only begotten alone is by nature a son from the beginning. *The Holy Spirit seems to have need of the Son ministering to his hypostasis* [τὸ ἅγιον πνεῦμα διακονούντος αὐτοῦ τῇ ὑποστάσει], not only for it to exist, but also for it to be wise, and rational and just, and all whatever other thing we ought to understand it to be by participation in the aspect of Christ which we mentioned previously.¹⁰

suspicion if Jerome sought to find a position from which to suggest Origen’s heterodoxy. As with lives of Jesus, however, one must take care with the veracity of statements attributed to Origen: the danger exists that one constructs the Origen one wants in one’s own image, with statements that agree with one’s own presentation of Origen being classified authentic, and those others as inauthentic.

⁷ *De Princ.* I.1.1 3.

⁸ While Williams, ‘The Son’s Knowledge of the Father’, discusses the accusation against Origen that the Son does not know the Father as the Father knows Himself, he does not discuss the Son’s relationship to the Spirit.

⁹ *CommJoh.* II.6. This may well be as a result of the genre of Origen’s work. In writing a commentary, he is attempting to comment on John’s belief rather than to set out his own ‘systematics’. John is a gospel that seems to present subordinationism (see C. K. Barrett, *Essays on John* (London: SPCK, 1982), 19–36), and Origen’s commentary reflects this. Given the number of commentaries that Origen wrote, and the variety of voices in scripture, it is hardly surprising that there are differences of opinion within Origen’s corpus.

¹⁰ *CommJoh.*II.6 (Heine, II.76 7, 114), emphasis added.

Here, the Holy Spirit ‘needs’ the Son both for His own existence and for His own character. The subordinationism is clear.¹¹ Origen even states that the Spirit is sent as Christ’s ‘deputy’ (*vicarium*), indicating a subordinate role also in the economy.¹²

As is often the case, however, Origen is not as systematic as one might wish with regard to the Son’s relationship to the Spirit. In Origen’s direct discussion of the Spirit in *De Principiis*, he suggests that there may be a greater majesty of the Spirit compared to the Son, based on the fact that blasphemy against the Spirit is unforgivable while whoever speaks against the Son still has the hope of forgiveness.¹³ Furthermore, Origen states that he can find no statement in scripture to suggest that the Spirit is created,¹⁴ and identifies the Holy Spirit with the Spirit who moved on the face of the waters in Genesis.¹⁵ Origen certainly appears to see continuity in the use of the word ‘Spirit’ between Old and New Testaments: the Spirit without the qualifying adjective in the Old Testament is the Holy Spirit.¹⁶ Origen is emphatic that the Spirit has always existed and ‘transcend[s] all idea of time’,¹⁷ and states that the Spirit is considered to be at

¹¹ See Crouzel, *Origen*, 202, for more detail.

¹² *HomLk.* 22.1.

¹³ *De Princ.* I.3.2. Cf. *CommJoh.* II.6 where this point is once again suggested.

¹⁴ One must note, however, that to say that the Spirit is not ‘created’ is to follow a post Nicene meaning of the word; for Origen to speak of the Spirit as *κτίσμα* means that the Spirit takes His being from the Father – not that He is a finite creature (McDonnell, ‘Does Origen Have a Trinitarian Doctrine of the Holy Spirit?’, 14; Crouzel, *Origen*, 186–7). It is worthy of noting that, for Origen, the Spirit is still clearly to be worshipped, surely an indication that He is not a creature in the later sense of the word.

¹⁵ *De Princ.* I.3.3. There is here, however, a difference in the Latin compared to the Greek. The Greek states that ‘Following the same reasoning we believe that everything whatever except the Father and God of the universe is created’, which suggests the subordinationism already noted – at least of the Son and the Spirit *vis à vis* the Father. This may well indicate Rufinus translating Origen in light of later Trinitarian theology, while Origen originally worked with a stronger presupposition of subordinationism.

¹⁶ *De Princ.* I.3.4. Even in the remaining Greek fragment of this section, there is a sense of continuity between the Old and New Testaments in terms of the Spirit: for example, Origen states a tradition he has learned from his Hebrew master that the seraphim of Isa. 6 are the Son and the Holy Spirit.

¹⁷ *Ibid.* See also *De Princ.* II.2.1, in which Origen asserts that there is no anteriority or posteriority in the Trinity. In *CommRom.* 7.6.7, Origen even states that the Spirit does wonderful works of God without the need for Christ to become incarnate.

work in the Old Testament before the advent of Christ.¹⁸ Origen is convinced that the whole of the Trinity is necessary for salvation: 'But more, nothing in the Trinity can be called greater or less, for there is but one fount of deity, who upholds the universe by his reason'.¹⁹ He goes on to state: 'there is no separation [*discretio*] in the Trinity'.²⁰

That the Son does not send the Spirit, but that both the Son and the Spirit are sent only by the Father, is perhaps indicative of a greater sense of equality between the Spirit and Son in Origen, or at least of a co-subordination to the Father.²¹ Indeed, Origen even considers the question of whether the Spirit may be involved in the sending of the Son, speculating (although he ultimately rejects the idea) on whether the Spirit may have priority over the Son as one who—with the Father—sends the Son.²² Although in this discussion Origen clearly sides with the idea the Father sends both Christ and the Spirit, that he is prepared to consider that the Spirit may have been involved in the sending of Christ is indicative of the fact that one must not jump necessarily to consider the Spirit as automatically and unduly subordinate to the Son.²³ Origen emphasizes that both the Spirit and the Son are sent from God (the

¹⁸ *De Princ.* II.7.1. However, epiphanies of Christ in the Old Testament are also a feature of Origen's theology, as is the case in Origen's interpretation of Isa. 6 (*De Princ.* I.3.4), while the Spirit for Origen comes 'principally' after the ascension of Christ (*De Princ.* II.7.2).

¹⁹ *De Princ.* I.3.7. This is a bold claim for the time. However, similar caveats about reading later Trinitarian theology into the translation of Origen into Latin apply here as before.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ *CCel.* I.46.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ Although the considerations above clearly concern the economic Trinity, and one must be careful of drawing conclusions about the immanent Trinity from this in the pre Nicene period, two matters must be further considered. Firstly, this book concerns the economic dynamics of Spirit and Son, and so considerations of immanent Trinitarian thought are less pressing: the desire of the present work is more to demonstrate the central importance of the Spirit to Origen's soteriology, and this section seeks merely to demonstrate the divinity of the Spirit who works with the Son in God's economy of salvation. Secondly, that one person is sent by another does imply a form of subordinationism at least in order: the subject of the sending surely takes some form of precedence over the one sent. It is best, therefore, to agree with Crouzel that subordinationism does not necessarily affect the identity of nature and power in the Godhead. There is a sense in which the Spirit (and the Son) are subordinate and equal: subordination is linked closely to the roles and missions of the persons. While it is there, it is there principally economically. Crouzel, *Origen*, 188.

Father), and indeed compares this view to the view that the Son was sent by both the Spirit and the Father (in discussion of Matthew's Gospel).²⁴ That Origen even considers this gives some credence to the view that the Son may be subordinate to the Spirit, and in any event further emphasizes the co-equality of Spirit and Son in the Trinity.

There is certainly a close identification of the Spirit and the Son in Origen's theology. Dealing with some of the complexity in the New Testament concerning the Holy Spirit and the Spirit of Christ, Origen writes: 'So, then, the Spirit of God is the same as the Spirit of Christ, who is himself the same as the Holy Spirit. Moreover, the Spirit of adoption seems to be called the same [Spirit], as the Apostle's current passage declares.'²⁵ There remains, however, a reciprocity in this which does not mean that Christ is simply the ruling person over the Holy Spirit: 'For what the Spirit does, Christ also does; and the things that are Christ's the Spirit does. For as those whom the Spirit sanctifies Christ sanctifies, so also those whom the Spirit of life sets free Christ also sets free.'²⁶ The Spirit does what Christ does, but equally the opposite is true: Christ does that which the Spirit does. Neither rules over the other clearly, but both are closely identified.

Origen considers the work of the Spirit in the Son's life on earth. He discusses how Christ's humanity, having been washed in baptism, receives the Spirit in the form of the dove. The Spirit is bound to the humanity of Christ and cannot ever fly away from it.²⁷ He also discusses how it was appropriate for Christ to be led by the Spirit.²⁸ In discussing the image of the Spirit as a dove, Origen suggests that the dove indicates to all that the Holy Spirit has come to rest upon Christ for His public ministry.²⁹ Thus, reflecting the complexity of the biblical material before later Trinitarian formulations, Origen is able to recognize the work of the Spirit in the Son's earthly ministry, just as he is able to note the Spirit's origin with the Son within the context of both being sent by the Father.

Although it is difficult to bring Origen's understanding of the Spirit to any systematic conclusion,³⁰ it does seem that the role of

²⁴ *CommMt.* XIII.18.

²⁵ *CommRom.* 7.1.2.

²⁶ *CommRom.* 6.11.3.

²⁷ *CommJoh.* VI.25.

²⁸ *HomLk.* 29.2.

²⁹ *HomSong.* 2.12.

³⁰ Especially given the difficulties of the translation and interpretations of Origen in Latin. Furthermore, one must surely agree with Haykin who observes that Origen's

the Spirit in salvation is no less than that of the Son, and that the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit and the Spirit of God are all considered to be the Holy Spirit. The variety of views on the Spirit's relationship to the Son probably arises from the form of Origen's theology: his writing of commentaries means that Origen's work reflects some of the difficulties and diversity of scripture regarding the Spirit. Furthermore, Origen's own two-tiered sense of doctrines (those upon which one might speculate and those upon which one might not)³¹ demonstrates a willingness to be a more experimental theologian—a type of theologian who would nevertheless not be seen as heterodox until the fourth-century drive for propositional truths interpreted his speculations as stated systems.

3 THE SPIRIT'S ROLE IN BRINGING THE SON TO HUMANS

A major element of the role of the Holy Spirit in Origen's theology is that He brings the Son to human beings. The Spirit does not only fulfil this function through scripture.³² He is also needed to apprehend Christ: the believer may come to Christ through the gifts of the Spirit—wisdom, knowledge, or faith.³³ It is only through the Holy Spirit that Christ's blessings can be known;³⁴ and it is by the Spirit that the Word of God

primary concern is not related to the divinity of the Spirit but to the way the Spirit illuminates obscure passages of scripture (Michael A. G. Haykin, "The Spirit of God": the Exegesis of I Cor. 2.10–12 by Origen and Athanasius, *Scottish Journal of Theology* 35, no. 6 (1982), esp. 516ff. and 526).

³¹ *De Princ.* I.Pref.3.

³² *De Princ.* I.3.1. On Origen's interpretation of the Holy Spirit's inspiration of scripture, see Young, *Biblical Exegesis*, 184–7; Hanson, *Allegory and Event*, 187ff. On the work of the Spirit in illuminating scripture, see Haykin, 'The Spirit of God', 516.

³³ *De Princ.* II.7.3. This is linked to the doctrine of *epinoiai*: to those to whom the gift of wisdom is given by the Spirit, Christ is known that way etc. Here, the identity of the Holy Spirit with the Spirit of Christ and the Spirit of God is important (cf. *CommRom.* 7.1.2). He goes on to state that the many descriptive titles of the Holy Spirit (adoptive Spirit etc.) are still descriptions of the Holy Spirit.

³⁴ *CommRom.* 10.14.10. Regarding the abundance of Christ's blessings, Origen writes 'he promises by no other means except through the Holy Spirit and through the grace of prophecy.'

reaches human hearts. In *HomGen.*, Origen writes: ‘the Word and Son of God . . . [who is] received in the inn of our heart, who comes from his Father and wills to make his dwelling with us is the Holy Spirit whose temple we ought to be first of all by our holiness.’³⁵ It is the Spirit who gives Christ’s word of wisdom and knowledge to humans.³⁶

This work of the Spirit is performed, furthermore, through the individual Christian. The Spirit works with individual Christians in specific and various ways in Origen’s thought. He writes, for example,

Moreover, each person shall be tested to see if he has the Spirit of Christ within him. Christ is wisdom; if he is wise according to Christ and sets his mind on the things of Christ, he has the Spirit of Christ in himself through wisdom. Christ is righteousness; if anyone has Christ’s righteousness in himself, through righteousness he possesses the Spirit of Christ in himself. Christ is peace; if anyone possesses the peace of Christ in himself, through the Spirit of peace he has the Spirit of Christ in himself. So also love, so also sanctification, so also each particular thing that Christ is said to be. It must be believed that the one who possesses these qualities has the Spirit of Christ in himself and hopes that his own mortal body will be made alive because of the Spirit of Christ that dwells within him.³⁷

Given the identity of the Spirit of Christ with the Holy Spirit, there is variety in the way in which the Spirit establishes Christ *within the individual*—in wisdom, righteousness, peace, love, sanctification, and so on. This does not lessen Christ’s work, but functions to relate it to the believer. Furthermore, through the presence of Christ in the individual one might know if a person has the Spirit in a way comparable to the biblical discussion of the fruits of the Spirit: the one who displays these qualities demonstrates she has the Spirit within her.

4 THE SPIRIT AND THE SUBJECTIVE ASPECT OF FAITH IN CHRIST

Connected to the above, it is the Spirit for Origen who establishes the subjective element of faith in Christ. It is the Spirit through whom

³⁵ *HomGen.* 1.17.

³⁶ *CommMt.* XIV.6.

³⁷ *CommRom.* 6.13.9.

the reality of faith in Christ reaches the individual Christian, and brings the reality of God's saving work into the 'hearts' of the individual person:³⁸ 'the love of God shall have begun to be shed abroad *in the hearts* of everyone through the Holy Spirit'.³⁹ Similarly, the Spirit reveals the deep things of God to those whom He wills, bringing revelation to the Christian.⁴⁰ In this work, the Holy Spirit finds individual souls which are considered worthy to be those in whom Wisdom will dwell.⁴¹

The Spirit also fulfils a subjective role in bringing assurance of the eschatological future to the present:⁴² 'We should believe with equal confidence in the resurrection, and in the promises of the Kingdom of Heaven, which will be fulfilled. *The Holy Spirit promises these to us each day*.'⁴³ His work here is as the promise or Guarantor of the future reality of resurrection.⁴⁴ This brings the reality of Origen's belief in the universal restoration of all things to the present experience of the Christian. There is something ever new about the work of the Spirit which brings promises 'each day'. Indeed, this may well be the realization in time of the reality that already exists in eternity: the Spirit becomes the presence of the eternal God (whose beginning and end are the same) in time. One can see this played out in the example of the woman who had lost the drachma. Origen interprets the story in light of the words 'the Kingdom of God is within you'. He believes that it is important that the woman finds the drachma within her own house and not outside of it. He states regarding the detail of her

³⁸ Young speaks of the transformation of the idea of the cult in Origen from a traditional understanding of cult to a spiritual one, understood subjectively through the work of the Spirit in Christians (Young, *The Use of Sacrificial Ideas*, 97-8).

³⁹ *CommRom.* 5.10.16, emphasis added.

⁴⁰ *CommRom.* 8.11.7.

⁴¹ *CommSong.* 3.13.

⁴² Daley advocates that the resurrection in Origen's thought is not exclusively future but anticipated in part in the lives of baptized Christians (whom this book asserts are those who possess the Holy Spirit): Daley, *The Hope of the Early Church*, 54-5. Drewery hints at this idea in his defence of the ethical implications of Origen's universalism. He points to the importance of the two advents of Christ for Origen, suggesting that Origen's thought is akin to twentieth century 'inaugurated eschatology' as described by the likes of Dodd (Drewery, *Origen and the Doctrine of Grace*, 156-7). However, Drewery fails to recognize the importance of the Holy Spirit as the one who guides the Christian *between* the two comings of Christ.

⁴³ *HomLk.* 10.7, emphasis added.

⁴⁴ ἀρραβών: see II Cor. 1.22, 5.5; Eph. 1.13-14.

lighting her lamp and searching the house: ‘And, therefore, if you should light a lamp, if you should devote your attention to the illumination of the Holy Spirit and “see the light in his light,” you will discover a drachma within you. For the image of the heavenly king has been placed within you.’⁴⁵ The Spirit, then, is the one who brings illumination to the individual, and this enables the person to see the salvation which she already possesses within herself. This is the realization of the reality of the Kingdom of God which human beings already have, and the Spirit enables the individual to recognize subjectively in the present the already extant objective salvation available to that person.

The Spirit relates salvation to people, establishing the subjective possibility of God’s work of salvation in Christ: ‘the grace of God poured with measureless abundance from Him to men through that minister of unsurpassed grace to us, Jesus Christ, and through that fellow worker with the will of God, the Spirit, these realities have become possible for us.’⁴⁶ The Spirit relates the work of Christ to humanity: He makes the realities of salvation a human possibility. Only through the Holy Spirit can humans know anything of the thoughts of God.⁴⁷ Moreover, the Spirit is necessary for *any* speech about God. Commenting on the interpretation of I Cor. 14.15 through Rom. 8.26, Origen writes:

For our mind would not even be able to pray unless the Spirit prayed for it [the mind] as if obeying it, so that we cannot even sing and hymn the Father in Christ with proper rhythm, melody, measure, and harmony unless the Spirit who searches everything, even the depths of God (1 Cor. 2:10), first praises and hymns Him whose depths He has searched out and has understood as far as He is able.⁴⁸

There is a sharing and participatory aspect to the work of the Spirit, who brings humans to the Father in Christ. The Spirit makes known with groans the way in which a Christian should pray by simultaneously searching the very depths of God and humanity. The Spirit relates these two, bringing the human to share in His prayer, enabling the human to pray and speak of God, and establishing the subjective

⁴⁵ *HomGen.* 13.4.

⁴⁶ *Prayer Pref.* 1.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ *Prayer Pref.* 2.4.

aspect of God's economy in the individual: 'For all the knowledge of the Father, when the Son reveals him, *is made known to us through the Holy Spirit*.'⁴⁹

5 THE ECONOMIC 'REMIT' OF THE SPIRIT

The principal work of the Spirit concerns the Christian.⁵⁰ It is the saints who partake of the 'sanctifying power' of the Holy Spirit.⁵¹ Origen states: 'the Son, being less than the Father, is superior to rational creatures alone (for he is second to the Father); the Holy Spirit is still less, and dwells with the saints alone.'⁵² The remit of the Spirit is, therefore, those who can be considered Christians.⁵³ However, this is not to isolate the role of the Spirit. Origen stresses that the activity of all three members of the Trinity is necessary for someone to gain salvation: one needs 'Father, Son and Holy Spirit and will not obtain salvation apart from the entire Trinity, and why it is impossible to become partaker of the Father or the Son without the Holy Spirit.'⁵⁴ While the Spirit's work is particularly with the saints, one requires the Holy Spirit in order to become a saint and participate in the Father and the Son. It is in this sense that one should understand the more universal passages about the nature of the Spirit's work:⁵⁵ the Spirit is available to all in order that they might

⁴⁹ *De Princ.* I.3.4, emphasis added.

⁵⁰ This is noted by several commentators with reference to Origen's doctrine of baptism, and the particular work of the Holy Spirit in that. See Drewery, *Origen and the Doctrine of Grace*, 172–3; Crouzel, *Origen*, 223–4; McDonnell, 'Does Origen Have a Trinitarian Doctrine of the Holy Spirit?', 20–1.

⁵¹ *De Princ.* I.1.3.

⁵² *De Princ.* I.3.5. On this, see Norman Russell, *The Doctrine of Deification in the Greek Patristic Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 148–9 and 152.

⁵³ This is also exemplified in *De Princ.* I.3.7: 'the working of the power of God the Father and God the Son is spread indiscriminately over all created beings, but a share in the Holy Spirit is possessed, we find, by saints alone.'

⁵⁴ *De Princ.* I.3.5.

⁵⁵ These passages and the importance of the Spirit's particular work within the universal work of God are missed by those who accuse Origen of having 'too churchy' a doctrine of the Spirit. McDonnell, 'Does Origen Have a Trinitarian Doctrine of the Holy Spirit?', 34; Drewery, *Origen and the Doctrine of Grace*, 191ff.

become partakers actively in the other Trinitarian persons, and is thus particular to the Christian and the prophets.⁵⁶

This does not in any way *necessarily or unduly* subordinate the Spirit's role in the Trinity. Although His remit seems the narrowest, it may well be the highest or most honourable. If one considers Origen's related discussion of the interpretation of scripture, it is the spiritual sense which is considered the higher, and the more broadly available and obvious meaning is considered the lower.⁵⁷ When one considers this in light of the passages on the Spirit's economic work, one might see something similar. If one envisages the economic Trinity as concentric circles, with the Spirit as the inner circle and the Father as the outer, the role of the Spirit as the less general may indeed be the higher, as all creation (the work of the Father) is led to the rational (the work of the Son), and deeper into that which is sanctified (the work of the Spirit). The Spirit, who searches the very depths (I Cor. 2.10), effects the 'deeper' work of God in His Trinitarian economy. He marks the highest point of salvation:

Through the Lord and Saviour repentance and conversion from evil to good are preached and the remission of sins is given to all who believe and all things are completed that seem conducive to the perfection of the age. Nevertheless, *the perfection and summit* of all good things consist in this: whether anyone, after all these things, deserves to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. None of these things will be considered perfect in anyone for whom is lacking the Holy Spirit, through whom the mystery of the blessed Trinity is *fulfilled*.⁵⁸

Here, the Spirit performs the pinnacle of God's saving work, not a subordinate extra.

⁵⁶ See, for example, *De Princ.* I.3.4: 'every one who walks upon the earth, that is to say, every earthly and corporeal being, is a partaker in the Holy Spirit, which he received from God.' Or *De Princ.* II.7.2: 'Now we are of opinion that every rational creature receives without any difference a share in the Holy Spirit just as in the wisdom of God and the word of God.'

⁵⁷ E.g. *De Princ.* IV.2.4.

⁵⁸ *HomJosh.* 3.2, emphasis added, although the Trinitarian emphasis here may indicate an interpretative move in Rufinus's translation.

6 THE HOLY SPIRIT AND GROWTH TOWARDS GOD: SANCTIFICATION

Part of the present role of the Spirit in Origen's theology is the sanctification of the Christian, enabling the Christian to grow towards God. This can hardly be overestimated in its importance to Origen.⁵⁹ While there is a future *apokatastasis* in which all things will participate in God who will be 'all in all',⁶⁰ through the Holy Spirit the Christian can move towards God in the present. The Spirit makes people holy by allowing them to participate in the grace that the Spirit offers: 'there is also available the grace of the Holy Spirit, that those beings who are not holy in essence may be made holy by participating in this grace.'⁶¹ This is the special operation of the Spirit: compared to Christ who makes humans rational and wise by participation, the Spirit makes people holy and spiritual by their participation in Him.⁶² Origen gives a biblical outworking of this. He considers that the little child called by Jesus in the Gospel, whom the disciples are encouraged to emulate, is the Holy Spirit. This Spirit is considered to be perfect and leads humans to their perfection.⁶³ In this process, it is the Spirit who brings purification.⁶⁴ Seemingly, the effect of this is exponential: the more one is purified, the more one receives the Spirit. Thus, for Origen, 'the purer the soul is returned, the more generously the Spirit is poured into it.'⁶⁵ The Spirit cleanses and brings remission of sins, and in this transforms the Christian

⁵⁹ Daniélou, *Origen*: 'In Origen's view, Christianity is not so much a set of doctrines as a divine force for changing men's hearts' (103). Hadot sees this as the purpose of all ancient philosophy. He writes: 'The philosophical notion of spiritual progress constitutes the very backbone of Christian education and teaching. As ancient philosophical discourse was for the philosophical way of life, so Christian philosophical discourse was a means of realizing the Christian way of life' (Pierre Hadot, *What Is Ancient Philosophy?*, trans. Michael Chase (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2004), 240). Crouzel sees this progress as a growth from being after the image to becoming the likeness of God, comparing Gen. 1.26 to 1.27 (Crouzel, *Origen*, 97). According to Crouzel, this is a work of the Spirit whose power brings the seed to fruition. He bases this on Origen's *FragEph.* III on Eph. 1.5 (98).

⁶⁰ *De Princ.* I.7.5.

⁶¹ *De Princ.* I.3.8.

⁶² *De Princ.* IV.4.5.

⁶³ *CommMt.* XIII.18.

⁶⁴ *CommRom.* 2.13.32.

⁶⁵ *CommRom.* 6.13.7, emphasis added.

into the sweet scent of Christ.⁶⁶ It is the Spirit who brings identity to the Christian as He displays His fruits in the life of the Christian.⁶⁷ The Spirit brings about all of the sanctifying work of God: ‘all sanctification, both in our hearts and in our words and deeds... come from the Holy Spirit in Christ Jesus.’⁶⁸ Thus, sanctification comes to particular Christians from the Holy Spirit.⁶⁹

Although this particular work of the Spirit is a work in the present, this present marks a movement towards the Father, towards the *eschaton*.⁷⁰ The present work of the Spirit is to sanctify the church to bring it to future perfection in heaven.⁷¹ It is the Spirit who teaches men to cry, ‘Abba, Father,’ as they are restored to Him.⁷² In the *process* of this restoration, Christians receive Christ and the Spirit as the deposit of their future salvation: ‘Likewise, I add the fact that we received Christ, the Lord, as “a deposit” and we have the Holy Spirit as a “deposit.” We must watch, therefore, lest we use this holy deposit sacrilegiously and, when sins move us into their assent, we swear that we have not received “the deposit.”’⁷³ This deposit must be recognized through the purity of the faithful, indicating the movement towards God in which they are engaged.

7 CHRISTIAN PARTICULARITY AND IDENTITY AND THE HOLY SPIRIT

This sanctification marks a crucial aspect of Christian particularity and identity. Particularity is an aspect of Origen’s theology which must be considered important given his universalism: it gives a reason for his continual emphasis on Christian growth, and allows

⁶⁶ *HomLev.* 2.2.5.

⁶⁷ *HomLk.* f.112.

⁶⁸ *HomLk.* 26.6.

⁶⁹ For example, the Spirit comes to John the Baptist and Elizabeth to sanctify them (*Hom.Lk.* 7.3).

⁷⁰ Williams understands this eschatological work of the Spirit in noting that in Origen one grows into ‘spirit’ which is not a pre determined identity. He goes on to note that Origen rejects Heracleon’s idea that the Logos gives to the *pneumatikoi* a primordial ‘form’ at birth/creation on the grounds that human beings *become pneuma tikoi* and so cannot be thus initially. Williams, ‘The Son’s Knowledge of the Father’, 4. 8.

⁷¹ *CommRom.* 8.5.2.

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ *HomLev.* 4.3.2.

a place for spiritual growth and human temporality. While all may well ultimately participate in the universal restoration, the Spirit demarcates those in the present who already participate in God's holiness.⁷⁴ The Spirit also enables Christians to participate already in the present in the process of purification and perfection which awaits all creation.⁷⁵ The Spirit works with the human spirit in order to enable it to gain mastery over the flesh.⁷⁶ Although God works as Trinity in salvation, it is the Spirit who has the primary active role in the individual, cleansing her and making her holy.⁷⁷ This particularity from the Holy Spirit extends even to giving the believer power to enable her to speak to the angels,⁷⁸ and forgive sins.⁷⁹

The particularity the Spirit gives is seen especially in the following ways in Origen's theology:

(a) Particularity with reference to Judaism

For one who wrote in the third century CE, one of the most important aspects of particularity for Origen is Christian particularity in comparison to Judaism. Origen is by no means a Marcionite. Quite the contrary, it is for Origen the same Spirit who inspired the Old Testament prophets who is known in the New Testament as the Holy Spirit.⁸⁰ That there have been no prophets among the Jews since the coming of Christ, however, Origen takes as an indication that the Holy Spirit has abandoned them. It is now the Christians who are the spiritual Israel—'Jews inwardly' or 'Jew[s] in secret'.⁸¹

⁷⁴ And indeed in the future, in terms of whether they are a part of the first or second resurrection (see Edwards, 'Origen's Two Resurrections', 513).

⁷⁵ *CommMt.* XIV.3.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.* On the human spirit, see Crouzel, *Origen*, 88. He notes the importance of distinguishing this from the Holy Spirit, as does Edwards, 'Origen's Two Resurrections', 505.

⁷⁷ *CommRom.* 10.9.2.

⁷⁸ *HomLk.* 23.7.

⁷⁹ *Prayer* XXVIII.9.

⁸⁰ E.g. *CCel.* VII.4; also *Hom.Lev.* 13.4.2, in which Origen describes the Holy Spirit as the unity between the Old Testament and the New Testament. In this way, Drewery's criticism that Origen fails to account for the Spirit in the history of Israel is simply unfounded (Drewery, *Origen and the Doctrine of Grace*, 191–2).

⁸¹ *CommJoh.* I.1 and *CommRom.* 3.2.8.

The Christian serves the Law in the newness of Spirit rather than in the old ways of the letter.⁸² This is part of the broadening and universalizing of the work of God in Christ: the Gentiles become acceptable to God through the Holy Spirit rather than through observance of the Law as had been the case:⁸³ 'For the grace of the Holy Spirit has been transferred to the nations.'⁸⁴ The Holy Spirit has moved from the particular people of Israel to include the Gentiles.

(b) Particularity with reference to all other rational beings

The rationality of all creation comes from Jesus Christ as the Logos of God, but Christian particularity exists in the Holy Spirit. All rational beings share a part in the Logos, but the Spirit is available only to those who are open to becoming worthy through Him.⁸⁵ This sharing in the Spirit and the fullness of God's Trinitarian economy is that which allows for the importance of spiritual growth within a belief in *apokatastasis*. Faith and discipleship are not, in the first instance, for the salvation of the individual (albeit they may lessen the purgatorial punishment humans may face eschatologically), but to enable her to participate more fully in God, with salvation brought about in an ancillary way through growth and participation.

(c) Particularity and judgment

Related to this, the Spirit brings particularity in judgment. The work of the Spirit in sanctifying brings the soul to righteousness and enables there to be no division in judgment, as the soul has already progressed and become obedient:⁸⁶ for those who do not partake in this, there is a separation of the soul from the spirit in judgment.⁸⁷ That part of the person which does not partake in sanctification is assigned to its place with the unbelievers:

⁸² *CommRom.* 6.7.6.

⁸³ *CommRom.* 10.11.4.

⁸⁴ *HomJosh.* 26.3.

⁸⁵ *CommJn.* II.6; *De Princ.* I.3.7.

⁸⁶ *CommRom.* 2.9.4.

⁸⁷ Indeed, the word *κρίνειν* (to judge) means 'to separate'. On the separation of the soul from the spirit, see Crouzel, *Origen*, 91 2. However, his distinction between the saved and damned is not maintained.

In accordance with what we have said above, namely that the spirit is divided and separated from the sinful soul, with the result that it takes its place with the unbelievers, it is likewise possible to apply to this discussion that which is written, 'There will be two in the field; one will be taken and one will be left.'⁸⁸

The work of the Spirit in the present, therefore, has eschatological implications.

(d) Particularity among believers

Particularity through the Holy Spirit extends beyond the particularity of the Christian over and against the unbeliever to the particularity that exists among believers. Referring to the passage on the difference between the Spirit being seen as a turtle dove or a dove,⁸⁹ Origen seems to suggest that the more spiritually advanced will recognize the Spirit as a turtle dove rather than simply a dove. For those who have achieved union with Christ, the Spirit is the turtle dove compared to those who have yet to achieve this fully for whom He is only the dove:⁹⁰ the Spirit establishes more and less advanced Christians. Origen notes that believers receive varying amounts of the Spirit: 'there is a difference in those who are deemed worthy of the Holy Spirit, as believers receive more or less of the Holy Spirit.'⁹¹ Origen also indicates this particularity in his discussion of the gifts of the Spirit.⁹² There is a diversity of gifts from the same Spirit, and the Spirit brings these gifts to the saints who participate in Him.

Varied participation is also emphasized in Origen's frequent discussions of the Holy Spirit's connection with individuals. He is considered to be at work in the individual prophets:⁹³ for example, he rests on Elijah⁹⁴ and Elisha.⁹⁵ He is also the operating power of God who rests on John the Baptist,⁹⁶ Zechariah,⁹⁷ and Simeon.⁹⁸ The Spirit thus performs the will of God in and through individual people. Yet,

⁸⁸ *CommRom.* 2.9.4. ⁸⁹ *HomSong.* 2.12.

⁹⁰ This point is made by Lawson in *HomSong.* 2.n.102.

⁹¹ *CommMt.* XIII.18.

⁹² *CommJoh* II.6.

⁹³ *HomLk.* 23.1, in which the Holy Spirit speaks through a prophet.

⁹⁴ *CommMt.* XIII.2; *HomLk.* 4.5. ⁹⁵ *CommMt.* XIII.2.

⁹⁶ *CommMt.* XIII.2; *HomLk.* 4.4 5. ⁹⁷ *HomLk.* 10.1 2.

⁹⁸ *HomLk.* 15.2 3.

this is not at the expense of the community: the Spirit unites individuals as well, as it is through the unity of the Spirit that all creation (with all its variety and difference) is recalled to one end.⁹⁹

8 THE SPIRIT AND HUMAN INVOLVEMENT IN SALVATION

One of the interesting features of Origen's theology is the room he allows for human involvement and participation in salvation.¹⁰⁰ This is a space which is created by the Holy Spirit. Elements of this have already been noted in the discussion of the role of sanctification and spiritual growth in Origen. It is not simply that the Spirit takes over the human, nullifying her humanity and choice, but rather that the human participates in the Spirit through her own searching and inquiry. Origen writes: 'the man who is capable of being taught might by "searching out" and devoting himself to the "deep things" revealed in the spiritual meaning of the words become [a] partaker of all the doctrines of the Spirit's counsel.'¹⁰¹ This partaking requires the Christian to be engaged in active searching and purification in order to know the deep things of God.

Rather than simply being arbitrary, possession of the Spirit is connected to merit.¹⁰² Origen illustrates this with regard to the 'men' who appeared to Lot and Abraham: 'See if, in the dispensation of the Holy Spirit, these events did not occur *as each man deserved*. For Lot was far inferior to Abraham. For if he had not been inferior, he would not have been separate from Abraham.'¹⁰³ The dispensation of the Spirit is dependent on the worth of the individual involved: since Abraham possessed more merit, he possessed more of the Spirit. The worth of the individual contributes to the presence of the Spirit.¹⁰⁴ To receive the Spirit the individual needs to be holy in

⁹⁹ *De Princ.* I.6.2.

¹⁰⁰ Indeed, Sheck asserts that there is in Origen the 'necessity of human co operation in salvation, a co operation that extends to all that pertains to salvation' (*CommRom.*, 26).

¹⁰¹ *De Princ.* IV.2.7.

¹⁰² *CommRom.* 6.13.7 cf. 9.3.4.

¹⁰³ *HomGen.* 4.1, emphasis added.

¹⁰⁴ *HomJosh.* 3.2 speaks of those who 'deserve' the Holy Spirit.

the first instance: 'If you are holy, you will be baptised with the Holy Spirit.'¹⁰⁵ The Spirit comes to those who are willing to engage in His work, not passively but actively.¹⁰⁶

This is not to say, however, that Origen believes that human beings are capable of salvation without the primary work of God, nor that they have the ability to be entirely without sin at all points in their lives. Rather, it is to say that the human can join in the work of the Spirit without contradiction between the economy of salvation and human action: humans can be free for God in the Spirit. In receiving the Spirit, the human is not left alone, but is helped by the Spirit: 'But when the Spirit of God sees our spirit exerting itself in the struggle against the flesh and cleaving to him, he lends a hand and helps its weakness.'¹⁰⁷ The Spirit helps the human struggle against the flesh, just as Origen also records that the Spirit helps a person to pray.¹⁰⁸ The work of the Spirit is, then, one in which humanity can truly participate in God's work as humanity, without the ontological distinction between Creator and creature being dissolved.¹⁰⁹ The Spirit's work is not a work in which humans are either left to their own devices and works, nor one in which their particularity and freedom are suppressed by the overpowering work of God.

9 CONCLUSION

For Origen, the principal work of the Spirit is with the saints. This in no way marks a strong sense of subordination of the Spirit to the Son, but rather a close relationship economically between the two. The

¹⁰⁵ *HomLk.* 26.3.

¹⁰⁶ This is strongly connected to the importance of freedom in Origen's thought: the Spirit makes people free for God, allowing them to collaborate with Him in a state of super freedom as they are inspired by Him. Crouzel, *Origen*, 72 cf. 96.

¹⁰⁷ *CommRom.* 7.6.4.

¹⁰⁸ *CommRom.* 7.6.5 and *HomJosh.* 9.2.

¹⁰⁹ While one might say that this is also the case for the unity of the Logos with the flesh of Jesus in incarnation, the uniqueness and particularity of the incarnation in history differentiates the work of the Logos here from that of the Holy Spirit.

Spirit establishes the subjective reality of faith in Christ within the Christian. In this way, He enables growth towards God as He sanctifies the believer. Through this sanctification, the particularity of the Christian is established within a soteriology which points in a universalist direction. Moreover, the Spirit allows for human involvement in the work of salvation. In many ways, there is less need for the doctrine of the Spirit in Origen to establish the place for variety and diversity within human particularity as his work on the Logos is already successful in this. Nevertheless, Origen advances the role of the Spirit in Christian theology. Rather than an 'added extra,' the Spirit is integral to God's economy and establishes the particularity of the saints of God.

Dialogue: Restoring particularity through the Holy Spirit

1 INTRODUCTION

Reading Barth and Origen, one is presented with something of a difficulty. Both theologians present theologies which tend in a universalist direction. However, both are determinedly *church* theologians. In both, there is a strong concern for the faith of Christians and the proclamation of the Christian church.¹ In many ways this seems contradictory: the logic of universalism would at a superficial level lead one to ask why there is any need for faith. If everyone is to be saved, why bother to practice obedience?

It is proposed in this chapter that the way through this seeming contradiction is to consider the problem from the perspective of pneumatology. This additionally helps to avoid speaking of salvation in simple binary oppositions of saved-damned, insider-outsider, or saint-sinner. The Spirit cuts through these binaries, adding a third which will not allow such oppositions, and allowing a deeper complementarity to inform them while still not removing the particularity of each side of the binary.² The Holy Spirit allows for the continued

¹ This can be seen in the extent to which both are involved in preaching. Further more, Barth's dogmatics is a *church* dogmatics, as is clearly reflected in the thesis of I/1, 3, while Origen's surviving corpus contains many volumes of homilies.

² On binaries and thirds, see Peter Ochs, *Peirce, Pragmatism and the Logic of Scripture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), esp. ch. 8. Ochs's argument is complex and grounded in logic and mathematics. He applies a rereading of pragmatism to scriptural hermeneutics. Building from Peirce, he advocates that 'apparent contraries may prove to be signs of as yet unidentified complementarities' and goes on to discuss 'how to identify the missing third something that would serve

particularity of the Christian and the non-Christian while retaining the possibility of universal salvation. Through the establishment of the church and the Christian by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, the Christian and the non-Christian are enabled to be united in Christ precisely *as Christian and non-Christian*. Just as the particularity of Jesus has eternal and universal implications for the salvation for all humanity, so the universality of the Holy Spirit in time and locality has a particularizing work in history. The Spirit particularizes the universal love of God in the contingent ambiguities of human life and faith in the present—allowing for human and Christian particularity without limiting God's work of salvation, and ever deepening God's love for humanity in the church and the individual lives of Christians without in any way detracting from the love of God for all creation.

The present chapter will seek to discuss this theme further, building upon the theologies of Origen and Barth, in the belief that they are united by an inner logic which sees the work of the Holy Spirit with the Christian within a universalist soteriology. Indeed, it may only be from the perspective of the Holy Spirit that Origen and Barth, as two opponents of natural theology, may be understood. Without the possibility of a subjective dimension to the objective reality of salvation, their theologies seem strange. Without the indwelling of the Spirit and, therefore, outside of the church, the theologies of Barth and Origen must seem peculiar: the foundation for theological reflection is for both the reception of the Holy Spirit. In that sense, at least, Cyprian's maxim is true: *extra ecclesiam nulla salus*. To understand the nature of their pneumatologies is, therefore, crucial to understanding any aspect of their theologies.

This chapter will begin by discussing the particular economic dynamic of the Holy Spirit in the theologies of Barth and Origen.³ It will thereafter consider what the work of the Spirit is in terms of His deep and intense work in establishing the subjective aspects of faith and revelation. This leads to a discussion of the particular work of the Holy

as a rule of complementarity' (251). The present writer seeks to employ similar logic in the question of salvation and to do so using Trinitarian categories.

³ This is an interesting dynamic to note. The Son's particularity as the historical Jesus Christ brings universal salvation, while the Spirit's universality brings the reality of this salvation to the particular human, relating her in the present and in her particularity to the person of the Son. In this way, the Spirit and the Son work together to fulfil the economy of God.

Spirit in eternity, relating the eternal work of God to each new present. It will be argued that the Holy Spirit is the person of the Trinity who establishes particularity within the universal work of God's salvation. A reason for this particularity is suggested in terms of the call to the church and Christians to witness the universal work of salvation to the non-Christian, and, therefore, to all creation: this marks the universal work of the Spirit. The chapter will discuss some implications of this particularity through the Holy Spirit, pointing to the removal of unhelpful binaries, a transformation of preaching, the room found for a correct understanding of freedom, the simultaneous work of restoration and transformation, and the effect of this on understandings of *theosis*. The chapter ends by posing questions to so 'neat' and systematic a way of understanding the economic dynamics of the Spirit.

As in Chapter 4, this chapter will build on the foundations laid in the preceding chapters, in order to bring Barth and Origen into a creative dialogue to explore further the possibility of a genuinely *Christian and particularist* universalism. It will do this by identifying themes in their writings (already addressed in their own language in the chapters on each of them separately); presenting a creative reading of each of them; and forming from them a symphony (which does not seek falsely to destroy their individual variation).

2 THE DYNAMIC INTENSITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT⁴

i. Theme

In speaking of how the Holy Spirit provides particularity in a universalist soteriology, two intimately connected conceptions of the Spirit's economic dynamics must be dismissed.⁵ The first is a belief

⁴ The language of 'intensity' (and later 'extensity') is borrowed from Hardy, *Finding the Church*.

⁵ In the following discussion of pneumatology (even those of forms to be rejected), emphasis is placed upon the Spirit's work with humanity. This is not out of a failure to recognize the Spirit at work in creation, or an unawareness of the dangers of an overly anthropocentric theology. Rather, it is a result of the focus of this book which is human salvation. Issues concerning the environmental implications of this soteriology must be left for another time.

in a certain sort of general spirit. One sees this view of the Spirit in a variety of settings: it finds its philosophical roots in Hegel's understanding of *Geist*;⁶ Tillich speaks of the Spirit of God as 'not a separated being';⁷ Welker has elements of this view underlying his pneumatology;⁸ and it is evident in Hodgson.⁹ This understanding of the Spirit can also be perceived in certain liberation theologies and other culture-based theologies in which the spirit of the age and the Holy Spirit are held in too close proximity. Such views point to such biblical texts as the work of the Spirit in creation moving over the face of the waters, or the universal presence of the Spirit alluded to in such scriptural texts as the Psalms.¹⁰ In this understanding, the Spirit is already present in the world in a way which is inseparable from creation itself.¹¹ Such views of the Holy Spirit fail, however, to grasp that the third person of the Trinity is the *Holy Spirit*: the divinity and particularity of the Holy Spirit compared to all forms of human spirit is not given the proper emphasis. The second conception is the belief that it is through this universally present Spirit that one is led to Christ. Pannenberg may even betray such a view of the dynamics of Spirit and Son: it is the Spirit 'by whom believers are "in Christ"'.¹² The universal Spirit brings the individual into the particular work of the Son. His is the extensive work, while Christ's is the intensive.

Contrary to theologies of the Spirit which prioritize the universal dynamics of the Spirit as in the two above conceptions, both Barth

⁶ Barth states: 'Hegel's living God – he saw God's aliveness well, and saw it better than many theologians – is actually the living man', *RtoR*, 303. Barth sees Schleiermacher as heavily influenced by Hegel in this matter (340).

⁷ Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 3, 115.

⁸ Michael Welker, *God the Spirit*, trans. John F. Hoffmeyer (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994). Welker's desire to see the work of the Spirit in a set of activities from social justice to truth telling to community building is underscored by his view of the Spirit of God as the one who gives rise to 'a multiplace force field' (22).

⁹ Peter Hodgson, *Winds of the Spirit* (London: SCM, 1994), ch. 17.

¹⁰ See for example Gen.1 (in which the Spirit moves over the waters) and Ps. 139 (in which the Spirit is inescapable). Such theologies often stem from a confusion of the Holy Spirit with the spirit of life that is used to describe human existence as a gift from God in the Old Testament (e.g. Gen. 6.3).

¹¹ This idea in a more acceptable form is even present in Pannenberg, who understands the Spirit not only at work in redemption, but 'already in creation as God's mighty breath, the origin and movement of all life' (Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 3, 1 cf. Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 2, 32ff.).

¹² Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 3, 202.

and Origen see the economic work of the Spirit as focused upon the church and the individual Christian. In the dynamics of their economic Trinitarian theology, humanity finds itself eternally connected to the second person of the Trinity: being already in Christ or participating in the Logos in God's eternity, it is the Spirit who comes to indwell the human in time. In many ways, this is a reversal of other theologies in which the Spirit brings one to Christ, and in which the Spirit's economy is a 'broader' work than that of the Son—leading the world to the salvation the Son offers to those who accept Him. However, for these two theologians the reverse is true: already destined or elected eternally to be with God because of the second person, it is into a life filled with the Spirit that those of faith are led.

ii. Origen

In Origen, one sees the Trinity pictured almost as a set of concentric rings: the Father as the outside ring, as the Creator of all things; the Son as the middle ring, as the one through whom all rational beings have their existence; the Spirit as the inner ring, as the one at work in those who are 'worthy' (*digni*).¹³ Origen articulates this focused work of the Holy Spirit clearly in the following: 'the working of the power of God the Father and God the Son is spread indiscriminately over all created beings, but a share in the Holy Spirit is possessed, we find, by saints alone [*spiritus vero sancti participationem a sanctis tantummodo haberi invenimus*].'¹⁴ Thus, only the saint participates in the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. This is not, however, in place of participation in the economy of the Father or the Son; rather, participating in the Holy Spirit enables one to participate in the innermost and thereby fullest aspect of God. Already in existence, and, therefore, already participating in the work of the Father, and already rational, and, therefore, participating in the work of the Son,¹⁵ humans are already involved in the economy of the first two persons of the Trinity. However, the Holy Spirit is the member of the Trinity whose holiness is brought within the person of faith alone.

This is how to understand the spatial categories in which Origen speaks of the Spirit. They are not exclusive or demarcated simply in

¹³ *De Princ.* I.3.7.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *De Princ.* I.3.6.

terms of insider-outsider. The Trinity works as one,¹⁶ but the special work of the Spirit concerns the saints. It is the Spirit who makes the saint *holy*. He works ‘that those beings who are not holy in essence may be made holy by participating in this grace [*ut ea quae substantialiter sancta non sunt, participatione ipsius sancta efficiantur*].’¹⁷ It is the Spirit who brings about the holiness of the believer. This is something more than rationality: the rational person is ‘saved’ in her participation in the Logos; the spiritual person is made holy through the work of the Spirit. Therefore, if Origen’s work is universalist, it is not universalist in such a way as to fail to recognize the place for holiness and faith within that universalist soteriology. There remains room for the deep things of God. It is perhaps, therefore, better to consider the image of the work of the Trinity in Origen as concentric rings stretched into three dimensions, rather than two.¹⁸ When the work of God is pictured conically, one can better interpret Origen’s speech about the work of the Spirit in terms of depth and fullness. It is not that humans are led into spatial areas which the Spirit occupies, rather than into other areas which He does not; instead, this image refers to the work of the three persons in their dynamic activities regarding humanity’s salvation. The image he employs is an image of the economy of God—not an image of some kind of journey in which the individual engages to find faith. If one builds on Origen’s foundations, one might consider that humanity is already present in the work of the Father¹⁹ and the Son,²⁰ and the Spirit dynamically intensifies the universal work of the Son in the lives of the holy as the *Holy Spirit*. The Spirit’s work is, therefore, a work of bringing fullness and depth: it is a *holy* work. In continuing the conical image of Trinitarian dynamism, one might picture this as a cone which never reaches its end, but always allows for deepening and intensifying, in much the same way as Gregory of Nyssa pictured

¹⁶ *De Princ.* I.3.7.

¹⁷ *De Princ.* I.3.8.

¹⁸ Given the discussion of the role of the Holy Spirit in time, one should properly imagine the Spirit’s work as four dimensional. This fourth dimension is discussed in §4 of this chapter.

¹⁹ In creation, for example. See Gen. 1.

²⁰ In the conception, baptism, and resurrection, etc. On the Jesus’ relation to the Spirit in scripture, see Dunn, *Christology in the Making*, 136–49; and Ralph Del Colle, ‘The Triune God’, in *The Cambridge Companion to Christian Doctrine*, 126.

heaven.²¹ The Spirit's work is to bring the ever-deepening fullness of God to the believer in whom He dwells.

iii. Barth

In very different language, one sees a similar movement in Barth's Trinitarian dynamics. The eternal election of humanity in Jesus Christ means that in some sense our humanity is already in Christ's humanity.²² Barth's understanding of eternity means that humanity is elect in Christ in the *Urgeschichte* and, therefore, it has an ultimate hope in Him in post-temporal eternity. The objective nature of incarnation and salvation determines that humans are already awaiting salvation. Christ's work of salvation is for *all* humanity. This is a work of the *Verbum incarnandum*. In Jesus Christ, the primal decision and self-determination of God, humanity has eternally existed.²³ However, it is the Spirit who makes this reality present in the church and the individual, and makes humanity a child of God.²⁴ It is the Spirit who is responsible for the building of the Christian community of Jesus Christ in its historical reality.²⁵ As in Origen's theology, the work of the Spirit does not exclude the work of the other Trinitarian persons.²⁶ However, as *CD* unfolds, one is increasingly aware of the special significance of the work of the Spirit with believers. He is the basis for the community:²⁷ 'In the work of the Holy Spirit it takes place that Jesus Christ is present and received in the life of His community of this or that century, land or place.'²⁸ This is not to limit the universal work of Christ: 'The enlightening

²¹ This is a reference to Gregory of Nyssa's belief in *epektasis* – the idea that heaven would eternally stretch out towards God. Daley sees this idea as latent in Origen (Daley, *The Hope of the Early Church*, 50). Russell also speaks in similar terms (Russell, *The Doctrine of Deification*, 142–3). Rather than seeing a stretching out towards God, this book advocates that the Holy Spirit brings an ever-deepening fullness to the lives of the faithful.

²² Albeit one should note the above criticism of Barth that there is in his theology simultaneously a connection and a lack of connection between Christ's humanity and our humanity. See Ch. 2, §3(c).

²³ See Ch. 2 above.

²⁴ I/1, 456–7.

²⁵ IV/1, 151.

²⁶ See Barth's discussion of appropriations, I/1, 373ff.

²⁷ IV/3, 760.

²⁸ IV/3, 761.

power of the Holy Spirit draws and impels and presses beyond its being as such, beyond all the reception and experience of its members, beyond all that is promised to them personally. And only as it follows this drawing and impelling is it the real community of Jesus Christ.²⁹ The work of the Spirit concerns the deeper work of God's relation to a special people—'His own community within humanity.'³⁰ Although Barth cites a belief that all ecclesiology has its basis in Christology,³¹ he goes on to articulate this in terms of pneumatology.³² The Spirit establishes the particular community of believers to witness to the universal work of Christ, and it is baptism by the Holy Spirit that establishes the new Christian as part of the one new society of believers.³³ This baptism is subjectively seen in baptism by water. However, for Barth, this should never lead to 'greater separation between Christians and non-Christians, Church and world, etc.'³⁴ It is not the case that there is a spatial area in which the Spirit exists into which the Christian is led. Rather, the Holy Spirit brings fullness of life, as He realizes the reality of Jesus Christ for the community of believers in whom He dwells.³⁵

iv. Symphony

Thus, one can see the dynamic intensity of the work of the Spirit in Barth and Origen. For Barth, this is more strongly the case than for Origen. Two reasons account for this. The first is historical: the doctrine of the Holy Spirit was (like all doctrine in the early church) still evolving. Origen's work on the Spirit marks a monumental step forward in Christian pneumatology.³⁶ However, the person of the Holy Spirit is the most underdeveloped of his early Trinitarian speculations. The second reason is more positive: Origen's doctrine

²⁹ IV/3, 764.

³⁰ IV/3, 682.

³¹ IV/3, 786.

³² IV/3, 786 95.

³³ IV/4, 3 40.

³⁴ IV/4, 192.

³⁵ On this point more generally, see David F. Ford, 'Holy Spirit and Christian Spirituality', in *The Cambridge Companion to Postmodern Theology*, ed. Kevin J. Vanhoozer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003). The criticism of Barth by Williams, which Ford records (270), is considered unfair, and it is hoped that this chapter and Ch. 5 go some way to rectifying this. For Williams's critique, see Rowan Williams, *On Christian Theology* (Oxford: Blackwells, 2000), 116ff.

³⁶ Trigg, 'The Angel of Great Counsel', 39.

of the Logos and *logika / logikoi* provides such room for particularity within his universalism that it is less pressing for the third person of the Trinity to fulfil that function. Nevertheless, for both Barth and Origen the special work of the Spirit is within the church and believers. This is a helpful balance to their universalist tendencies. It makes sense of the continued existence and relevance of the church even if salvation is offered to all people: participating fully in God's economy is not identical with the issue of ultimate salvation; the believer is able to participate in the Holy Spirit's indwelling presence in the present time in an intense and deep way to which the rest of humanity is not yet privileged. In Johannine language, while all ultimately have 'life', only the Christian (as the one who participates in the Holy Spirit) has 'life more abundantly'.³⁷

In many ways, this conception of the remit of the Holy Spirit is biblical and traditional.³⁸ The Creed states: '*Credo in Spiritum Sanctum, Sanctam Ecclesiam Catholicam, Sanctorum Communionem.*' It is the Holy Spirit who precedes the statement about belief in the church.³⁹ Biblically, there are grounds for this in the account of Pentecost in which the church is established through the giving of the Holy Spirit to the apostles.⁴⁰ The work of the Holy Spirit is the deeply intensive work of God with particular people;⁴¹ He is not simply the extensive work of God that leads people into Jesus Christ.⁴²

³⁷ Jn 10.10b.

³⁸ Butterworth cites the catechism during his translation of Origen: 'First I learn to believe in God the Father, who hath made me and all the world; secondly in God the Son, who hath redeemed me and *all mankind*; and thirdly in God the Holy Ghost, who sanctifieth me and *all the elect people of God.*' *De Princ.* I.3.5n.

³⁹ This underlies Barth's discussion in chapters XIV and XV of *Credo*.

⁴⁰ While this causes Peter to preach so that people might believe, this is in order that they might receive the Holy Spirit: 'Peter said to them, "Repent, and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; *and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*"' (Acts 2.38). Notably, eternal life is not mentioned. Furthermore, the result of the converts' believing is that they form community.

⁴¹ Extremely rare as such occasions are in scripture, even when the Spirit works on those who are not believers this is either for the sake of a believer or to bring the person to be a believer. One sees this in the story of Balaam, on whom the Spirit of God rests (Num. 24.2) despite the fact he is not an Israelite: he is a spiritual, if not physical, member of God's special people.

⁴² This matter is further complicated dynamically, since Jesus Christ was the historical person in whom the Spirit dwelt most intensely of all. One must be careful not to separate the two persons in alienating ways, and must always remember the mutual indwelling of each of the members of the Trinity.

3 ESTABLISHING THE SUBJECTIVITY OF FAITH AND REVELATION⁴³

i. Theme

The Spirit works with the particular people of God in the church in establishing the subjective aspect of revelation in faith within the believer.⁴⁴ It is the person of the Holy Spirit who works within the believer and the community of believers to allow them to receive knowledge of God's work of salvation. This is not merely epistemological, but concerns the fullness of a human life lived in response to the reality of salvation. Although God worked in Jesus Christ in the past and will perform His eternal restoration of humanity in the future, it is the Spirit who reaches out to the present to provide knowledge of God's economy. God is not only responsible for His work of salvation; He makes Himself responsible for knowledge of that work and response to it. To ensure that revelation does not just happen at some distant point far removed from those to whom it is revealed, the Holy Spirit moves and is at work in providing the conditions for the subjective appropriation of the revelation of God's economy.

ii. Origen

In Origen's theology, this happens in two particular and independent ways. The first of these is the role of the Holy Spirit in bringing people to the Son. This is not, however, in the sense already rejected above:⁴⁵ the Spirit is not the Trinitarian person in whom people already find themselves as they are led into a different spatial area

⁴³ This language is clearly borrowed directly from Barth, but it is believed that the forthcoming discussion again shows the appropriateness of the word for the inner logics of Origen's pneumatology. Cf. Ch. 6, §4 above.

⁴⁴ It is the work of the Spirit in the lives of individual Christians that Pannenberg sees as the Spirit's basic saving work (Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 3, ch. 13.2, esp. 135ff.).

⁴⁵ See above §2.i.

occupied by the Son; rather, the Spirit is the person who ‘relates’ the other Trinitarian persons to the individual person. Indeed, Origen suggests that the Spirit is the indwelling work of Christ *in* the believer.⁴⁶ While humanity already finds itself in some sense participating in Christ in the Logos, the work of Christ *in the believer* is the work of the Holy Spirit. This is connected to the second way in which the Spirit establishes the subjectivity of revelation in faith—the recognition or acknowledgement of the already existent reality of God’s ultimate work of salvation.⁴⁷ The one who provides illumination is the Holy Spirit. The universal work of God is related in a special way to His particular people—those who know and recognize that work within themselves.⁴⁸

This recognition of God’s salvation is seen in terms of a growth in holiness in this world.⁴⁹ The universal restoration that Origen pictures is one in which all of creation moves towards God either in this life or in the world to come.⁵⁰ His theory of punishment for education and the purging of people’s sinfulness and irrationality means that for those who have already been purged by baptism, no further such purification is required. This is because the Holy Spirit has already begun to cleanse the believer of her sins, beginning to transform her from within in the present.⁵¹ One might take from this the sense that the Spirit in some way ‘realizes’ the salvation and sanctification accomplished by the Logos in the believer, thereby realizing also the purification and transformation awaiting the rest of humanity after death. The believer is already through the indwelling of the Spirit

⁴⁶ See *HomGen.* 1.17.

⁴⁷ This is seen in the story of the woman who finds a drachma in her own house (*Hom.Gen.* 13.4).

⁴⁸ This responds well to the kinds of criticisms which claim that there is little or no point to faith or decision if one subscribes to a universalist soteriology, e.g. Torrance, ‘Universalism or Election?’. It also deepens the presentations of universalism which fail to recognize the work of the Spirit in salvation, e.g. Hick, *Death and Eternal Life*; and Robinson, *In the End God*. It further avoids the arrogance of believing that, as Christians, we can define what other people are better than they can themselves and assure them that they are just like us only ‘anonymously’ so, as is the case in Rahner, ‘Anonymous Christians’.

⁴⁹ *De Princ.* 1.3.8.

⁵⁰ This is reflected in Origen’s understanding of the two resurrections in *CommMt.* X.3. See Edwards, ‘Origen’s Two Resurrections’, esp. 512–13.

⁵¹ *HomJer.* 2.3 cf. *HomLev.* 2.2.5.

enabled to begin to engage in the eschatological reality awaiting all creation.⁵²

iii. Barth

A similar approach is taken by Barth. In his theology, the subjective role of the Spirit is more overtly articulated than it is in Origen.⁵³ The special work of the Holy Spirit is to establish the aspect of revelation that brings about the subjective reception of the objective event of the revelation of the eternal God.⁵⁴ He is God's freedom to be with the creature without removing any of the integrity of His divinity, and yet He is still *within* the creature:⁵⁵ 'By the Holy Spirit whom He has given us, we know that the Word, that is Christ, abides with us, and so becomes ours and we His.'⁵⁶ The Spirit performs the role of relating the revelation of God *to us and in us*: the Spirit is both the subjective reality and the subjective possibility of revelation.⁵⁷ In this way, the Spirit answers the two questions of how revelation comes from Christ to humanity, and of how it comes into humans.⁵⁸ This is not a second work of God apart from His work in Jesus Christ.⁵⁹ Instead, through the Holy Spirit, the objective reality of God's revelation reaches and enters humanity. This reality is then 'acknowledged' (*anerkennen*) and 'recognized' (*erkennen*) and 'confessed' (*bekennen*).⁶⁰ While for Barth this is not in terms of a growth towards

⁵² One sees a similar thought pattern in ethical thinking in Bonhoeffer, *Ethics*. Bonhoeffer considers the concept of reality, and advocates that the relation of reality to realization is one of the Son to the Holy Spirit (see 161ff., esp. 163). Ecclesiological, Bonhoeffer speaks of the work of the Spirit in terms of the actualization of the church: 'Christ did not merely make the church possible, but rather realised it for eternity. If this is so, then the significance of Christ must be made the focal point in the temporal actualization of the church. *This is accomplished by the Spirit impelled word of the crucified and risen Lord of the church*' (Bonhoeffer, *Sanctorum Communio*, 157, emphasis added).

⁵³ Barth even claimed that future theology could begin with the subjective aspect of revelation in the Holy Spirit. See *TT*, 27–8.

⁵⁴ I/1, 449.

⁵⁵ I/1, 450–1.

⁵⁶ I/2, 242.

⁵⁷ On subjective reality, see *CD* §16.1; on subjective possibility, see *CD* §16.2.

⁵⁸ I/2, 222.

⁵⁹ I/2, 238.

⁶⁰ IV/1, 740ff.

God as it is in Origen,⁶¹ it does involve an act on the part of humans in correspondence (*Entsprechung*) to the objective work of God in Jesus Christ: that is, it is not merely epistemologically based but involves worship and ethics. The determination of the elect, in Barth's theology, is to stand in this service and commission of God, summoned by the Holy Spirit. As this happens, 'The gracious good pleasure of God is not merely achieved in him but through him, and it is in this way that it is effectively achieved in him.'⁶² The work of the Holy Spirit allows humans to be co-workers with God, not in a way separate from God's own work, but in a way in which God is free to work through and in humans as Holy Spirit.⁶³ The Holy Spirit is thus the means by which a believer's election is accomplished in her life.⁶⁴ It is a personal intensification of the universal work of God's love and salvation in the particularity of the believer and her community.

iv. Symphony

God is not only responsible for revelation and salvation; He is also responsible for the appropriation of revelation and salvation within the believer. He imparts His work outside of humanity *in humanity*, relating the universal work of His salvation to the community and the individual as Holy Spirit. In this person, God bridges the distance between God and humanity after the ascension, allowing humans to

⁶¹ See Susannah Ticciati, *Job and the Disruption of Identity: Reading Beyond Barth* (London and New York: T. & T. Clark, 2005). Ticciati claims (particularly chs 1 and 2) that Barth does not do justice to the human complexities of texts which allow for response and obedience in encounter with God. The criticism of Barth's use of individual texts (such as the whirlwind speeches and the story of the rich young man) is accepted. However, it is hoped that examination of the work of the Holy Spirit in the particularities of individual believers helps to provide a place which might be developed in Barth's theology in keeping with his own desires for 'provisional and penultimate kind of repentance' (43) and 'the full human complexity of...obedience' (161). See, for example, below on Barth's belief in the necessity of growth in faith.

⁶² II/2, 414.

⁶³ Indeed, Barth said that, were he a Roman Catholic, he should write theology from the perspective of Mariology as this reveals the relationship between the work of God and the work of humanity in salvation: humanity must only ever say, 'I am the handmaiden of the Lord.' See *TT*, 43.

⁶⁴ II/2, 348.

know the salvation of God and to respond to the revelation of that salvation, as the Spirit works in an ever deepening way to make present the eternal depths of God's love. It is this feature of their pneumatologies which leads to the occasional conflation of Son and Spirit in the theologies of both Origen and Barth.⁶⁵ In imparting the Word of God or Logos in humanity, the Spirit seems at moments to lose His own identity. However, this may in truth reflect the biblical record. The New Testament repeatedly identifies the Spirit and the Son.⁶⁶ However, there remains a differentiation in terms of the overall broad brush strokes with which both Origen and Barth paint their Christologies compared to their pneumatologies. For both, there is a sense in which humanity is in Christ while the Spirit is in humanity.⁶⁷ The differentiation and identity of persons appears apposite to scripture, and reflects the complexity of the biblical witness to what was

⁶⁵ For Origen, this is the result of certain historical issues connected with the evolution of Trinitarian theology and the role and work of the third person in particular.

⁶⁶ E.g. 2 Cor. 3.16–17; Rom. 8.9; 1 Cor. 15.45; and Phil. 1.19. Congar goes to great lengths to indicate the close identification of Son and Spirit in terms of what he sees to be the indiscriminate use of the formulae 'in Christ' and 'in the Spirit' to express the effects of both. They are as follows: in terms of righteousness (2 Cor. 5.21 compared to Rom. 14.17); justification (Gal. 2.17 compared to 1 Cor. 6.11); being indwelt (Rom. 8.1 and 10 compared to Rom. 8.9); the love of God (Rom. 8.39 compared to Col. 1.8); the role of peace (Phil. 4.7 compared to Rom. 14.17); sanctification (1 Cor. 1.2 and 30 compared to Rom. 15.16); speaking (2 Cor. 2.17 compared to 1 Cor. 12.3); and being the dwelling place (Eph. 2.21 compared to 2.22). Yves Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit, Vol. 1. The Holy Spirit in the 'Economy': Revelation and Experience of the Spirit*, trans. David Smith (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1983), 37–40.

⁶⁷ Moule mounts a strong case against Congar's reading. He argues: 'It is characteristic of Paul to speak of believers as in Christ but less characteristic to speak of Christ as in a believer, almost the reverse is true of Pauline phrases concerning the Spirit' (C. F. D. Moule, *The Origin of Christology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 58). Moule suggests that where *ἐν πνεύματι* occurs it is in other than a clearly corporate sense (such as in Rom. 8.9a and 14.17 in which the phrase possibly refers to the realm or sphere or level of the Spirit, or as in 1 Cor. 12.9 and Col. 1.8 in which the *ἐν* is used instrumentally). He further asserts that phrases indicating that the Spirit is in a believer are frequent: e.g. 2 Cor. 1.22 and 5.5; Gal. 3.5; Phil. 1.19; and Rom. 5.5. Certainly, there are exceptions to this rule (most obviously Gal. 2.20 and 2.17 and 1 Cor. 1.2), but in general there is a distinction between the believer being in Christ and the Spirit being in the believer: the indwelling agent is the Spirit whereas the one in whom is dwelt is the Son. There appears worth in both Congar's and Moule's arguments, therefore.

later termed the doctrine of the Trinity. This is a complexity which reflects the relating of the objective work of God in Jesus Christ to the human individual through the subjective (but entirely inseparable) work of the Holy Spirit.

4 TIME OF THE SPIRIT⁶⁸

i. Theme

The theme of the Holy Spirit establishing the subjective side of revelation is connected strongly to the understanding of time and eternity for both Origen and Barth. For both theologians, there is a sense in which the Spirit relates the eternal work of God to the present.⁶⁹ While in Christ the past and future are brought together, the Holy Spirit is the presence of God in the world in each and every now. In this way, the Holy Spirit relates the past of Christ to each new present,⁷⁰ and guides humanity through to the future of Christ at His return.⁷¹ The eternity of God does not stand in simple opposition to time, but His eternity relates to human time through the incarnation of the Son and the work of the Spirit. The relation of the Spirit to the present accounts for the continued existence of humanity in time following the ascension of Christ; it is the reason for the delay in His return. God has made time for creation in all of its particularity, and is present to it in the indwelling of His Holy Spirit within believers.

⁶⁸ The reader is referred back to earlier work on eternity. See above Ch. 2, §3(b); Ch. 3, §4(a); and Ch. 4, §3.

⁶⁹ One can see this also reflected in Bonhoeffer, *Sanctorum Communio*, 157ff.; and in Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 2, 84–102 (which reflects not only on time but also on space).

⁷⁰ Fiddes, *Past Event and Present Salvation*, 29: 'A proper doctrine of the Holy Spirit will help us to speak of the personality of Jesus as a present reality, with an influence which is more than historical recollection.'

⁷¹ Yves Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, Vol. 2. *Lord and Giver of Life*, trans. David Smith (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1983), 34: 'The Holy Spirit makes the Easter event of Christ present with the eschatological destiny of creation in mind.'

ii. Origen

In Origen's thought this ongoing temporality occurs in the bringing of humanity to God through progress. The universal restoration of humanity does not take place independent of temporality, but through a process of restoration. This involves growth and purification brought about in baptism and a holy life, or brought about after death in a future purging.⁷² While all that has its origins in the Logos will ultimately be restored in the Logos, in the present this occurs through the purification of the Holy Spirit. Moreover, the Holy Spirit relates this ultimate future to the present. Humanity is promised confidence in the resurrection and the promises of the Kingdom of Heaven 'each day' by the Holy Spirit.⁷³ The Spirit, therefore, works as the Guarantor of the future reality of God, relating an ultimate hope to the present.⁷⁴ The economic 'remit' of the Spirit within the church and believers means that it is the church in every generation in which the Spirit works, purifying the church and purging the believer in the present to avoid the need for further such purging in the future.⁷⁵ The Spirit is, then, the presence of the eternal God (whose beginning and end are the same) in the present 'each day'.

iii. Barth

As one might imagine, Barth's work on time is far more developed than that of Origen. For Barth, the eternity of Jesus Christ offers salvation for all peoples from all times: 'It is in this history—the history which is inseparable from his temporality—that the man Jesus lives and is the eternal salvation of all men in their different times.'⁷⁶ It is, however, the Holy Spirit who brings this eternity to the temporality of the post-ascension church.⁷⁷ Jesus is really but

⁷² E.g. *CommMt.* X.3.

⁷³ *HomLk.* 10.7.

⁷⁴ As is the case in Pauline theology. See II Cor. 1.22, 5.5; Eph. 1.13–14.

⁷⁵ Albeit Origen does suggest at one stage that the future purging may take place 'in the twinkling of an eye'. See *CommMt.* XIV.9. One sees a similar understanding of purgatory in Rahner, 'Purgatory', 181–93.

⁷⁶ III/2, 441.

⁷⁷ Bradshaw, 'Karl Barth on the Trinity', helpfully speaks of the Holy Spirit as the place for 'contingency' in God's self-revelation (151).

transcendently present unlike any of His other contemporaries,⁷⁸ as the result of the inner connection of Easter and Pentecost. The Spirit makes the eternity of Jesus temporal today.⁷⁹ Pentecost marks, therefore, the Holy Spirit bridging the ‘gulf between His [Christ’s] past and their present.’⁸⁰ The work of the Spirit is to be the ‘temporal presence of the eternally present’ and the unity of God in the form of temporality.⁸¹ This temporality is attested in the gathering of the particular community of the church.⁸² This is a community which is eschatologically directed by the Spirit in the present.⁸³ In this way, eschatology for Barth is not realized, but it is, through the Spirit, *realizable*: He is the one who provides the promise of God’s kingdom and eternal life not simply at some future stage ‘but *already here and now*’.⁸⁴

iv. Symphony

While considerable differences exist between Barth and Origen on this point, most notably with regard to the role of progress in bringing people towards salvation as a work of the Spirit, there are significant similarities. Both theologians are concerned to speak of the Holy Spirit in such a way as to demonstrate that He is the present guarantee of the future event of salvation. The Spirit realizes (or begins to realize) that event of salvation in the present—allowing for the subjective side of salvation in the here and now.⁸⁵ Salvation

⁷⁸ III/2, 467. Barth writes: ‘The yesterday of Jesus is also to day... It is Jesus who becomes and is their contemporary.’

⁷⁹ One sees a similar point made by Eberhard Jüngel, *Theological Essays 2*, ed. John Webster, trans. John Webster and Arnold Neufeldt Fast (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1995). For Jüngel, the Spirit is related to the ever ‘new’ works of God (56–8).

⁸⁰ III/2, 470.

⁸¹ II/1, 158.

⁸² II/1, 160.

⁸³ I/1, 463.

⁸⁴ IV/3, 352.

⁸⁵ One sees this idea in the following: ‘The gift of the Spirit has a soteriological function as an anticipation of the eschatological outpouring of the Spirit and is defined as a gift by the fact that Jesus Christ has given him to believers, the eschatological future of salvation having dawned already in his own person and history’ (Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 3, 7).

becomes, therefore, not something which takes place behind us in Christ and ahead of us in the *eschaton*, but something which is real in the present through the Spirit who is ever present in the believer between those two events. This is biblical: in Paul, it is the Spirit who provides the guarantee of future salvation in the present, which has the effect of altering the present.⁸⁶ This can be seen in Paul's discussion of the fruits of the Holy Spirit, in which the person who is guided by the Spirit knows God's salvation in Jesus Christ, and is, therefore, freed to be able to be loving, joyous, patient, kind, generous, faithful, gentle, and self-controlled.⁸⁷ Knowledge of the ultimate future with God in Christ through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the present alters the person's life in the present, realizing its promise now through the guarantee that is offered. Indeed, in the resurrection narrative according to John, Jesus both offers 'peace' and breathes the Holy Spirit upon the disciples.⁸⁸ The Spirit brings the peace of God to the present, with the assurance of Christ's past and His return.⁸⁹ Through the Spirit, a pledge and guarantee of what is future is given to those who believe, realizing the promises in the present in a way which gives a foretaste of what is yet to come.⁹⁰

There is, moreover, a greater unity between Origen (whose concept of temporality seems centred on growth) and Barth (for whom the responsive element of Christian life is to have gratitude each new day) than might first be imagined.⁹¹ It has already been noted that Origen himself places emphasis on the 'each day' aspect of the work of the

⁸⁶ A similar understanding of the work of the Spirit is again found in Pannenberg: 'In light of the eschatological consummation of creation, the Spirit enables us to see the universal truth of the sending of Jesus and glorifies Jesus as the Messiah and the new human. The Spirit's specific work in the church always relates to Jesus and to the eschatological future of God's kingdom that has dawned already in him' (*ibid.*, 20).

⁸⁷ Gal. 5.22-5.

⁸⁸ Jn 20.19-21.

⁸⁹ Cf. Paul in II Cor. 5.5 and Eph. 1.3-4.

⁹⁰ Gunton, 'Atonement and the Triune God', 128: 'the Spirit is God enabling the world to be itself, to realise its eschatological perfection'.

⁹¹ Indeed, the unity of the themes of growth and ever newness is also expressed by Bonhoeffer: 'In order for the church, which is already completed in Christ, to build itself up in time, the will of God must be actualized ever anew... In order to build the Church up as the community of God in time, God reveals God's own self as *Holy Spirit*' (Bonhoeffer, *Sanctorum Communio*, 143). Bonhoeffer recognizes that the growth of the church is built upon the ever new actualization of the will of God: growth and newness belong together.

Spirit. Yet this is held simultaneously with a belief in the progress of souls towards the Logos. Similarly, Barth was clear in conversation that growth is not only possible but demanded inasmuch as revelation comes *to us*.⁹² The main theme of his work on sanctification, however, is its objective nature in Christ and the ever new nature of the Spirit in the present. How are these tensions to be brought together? Here, one may employ a similar manner of reparative reasoning as was utilized regarding spatial language in discussing the Spirit's economic work. Just as spatial terms required being re-described in terms of 'intensity', language about growth perhaps requires re-describing in terms of 'intensification': if the Spirit brings fullness, this fullness eternally gives way to something ever fuller.⁹³ Here, one finds a means of understanding the place for progress, which is necessary if the Spirit relates the work of Christ to the present—that given past presents, the Spirit engages in an ever fuller work of bringing the fullness of God's salvation in each new and future present.⁹⁴ The sense of growth involved in this intensification is not one brought about by humanity's own action or a process of 'being saved' as one moves closer towards a point of arrival: the freedom of the Spirit means that He cannot be conditioned by humanity into bringing His ever fuller intensity to the believer, and this fullness is a fullness which never fully arrives but is ever fuller. As the Spirit dwells ever more deeply within the believer, so the presence

⁹² *TT*, 39.

⁹³ Although the language is very different, one can see a similar idea in Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 3, 11: through the Spirit, the believer participates in the sonship of Jesus and, through that, in the intra Trinitarian life of God. This involves the receiving of the Spirit by the Son and the giving back of the Spirit to the Father; through sharing in this glorifying of the Son who glorifies the Father, the believers' own lives are changed into imperishable fellowship with the eternal God, from one degree of glory to another *as given them by the Spirit* (2 Cor. 3.18).

⁹⁴ A precedent for this move may be found in Barth's doctrine of the glory of God in II/1. In this, the creature is permitted to serve the glory of God as the result of the superabundance of God's glory, which can flow over to the creature and create fellowship with her in her obedience (671–4). However, it is only in post temporal eternity that the creature can say all that there is to say about the glorification of God. In the present she may find knowledge of that future glorification, but she is also involved in the temporal form of God's glorification in supratemporally eternal worship. However, the perfection of this in supratemporal eternity always lies ahead (675–6). There is, therefore, an intensifying of the glorification the creature offers to God in the present as she moves towards post temporal eternity.

of God is ever intensified in her in an eschatological direction: that is how the community of the Spirit (in Barth's terms) is eschatologically directed in the present.⁹⁵ Language of *epektasis* may prove helpful in this, in remembering that with God one is always engaged in comparatives (for example, ever fuller)—even in the *eschaton*.

Furthermore, it is important to note the necessary role of the Holy Spirit in the theologies of Origen and Barth, which are so concerned with eternity. Origen's belief in the pre-existence of souls and *apokatastasis* and Barth's *Gnadenwahl* could lead one to question the need for continued temporality after Christ, given the dominant emphasis on the eternity of God.⁹⁶ Their theologies rightly posit that all God's ways and works must never be separated from God's eternity, seeing creation and eschatology as inextricably linked. The danger exists, however, that such an emphasis undermines the place for continued temporality in the present. Their understandings of the Spirit of God in relation to the present prevent such a problem from arising. The Spirit is at work in human life in the present with all its contingencies.⁹⁷ He continues the work of Christ now within all the variety and particularity of humanity, as He has throughout the times of the church up to this point. The Spirit prevents the universality of the eternal work of the second person of the Trinity from obliterating all other times and from seeing all decisions and reality as sewn up in pre- and post-temporal eternity. The Holy Spirit is the work of God in the now of each age and generation. Christ's universal work does not involve the removal of human particularity and history. While creation should not be separated from eschatology, neither can eschatology be separated from creation: God's love for creation and His taking seriously His creative act means that creation is given time by God—a time for the Holy Spirit. In this time it is better that Christ has gone, for another Counsellor has come.⁹⁸

⁹⁵ I/1, 463 4.

⁹⁶ This is a criticism of Barth that McGrath, *Iustia Dei*, suggests, stating that Barth has little interest in the here and now (365).

⁹⁷ Indeed, one could suggest that the importance of life for both Origen and Barth in many ways relativizes the difference between their respective emphases on progress and newness. God gives life so freely and graciously in His love that nothing other than God could contradict it. The human must, therefore, seek to live the life which is such a great gift of God in all its fullness to have life and life abundantly.

⁹⁸ Jn 16.7.

5 ESTABLISHING PARTICULARITY

i. Theme

It is this involvement in each now of every generation that establishes the particularity of the church in light of the seemingly universal reality of salvation.⁹⁹ The difference between the believer and the unbeliever is not a matter of eternal salvation for the former and eternal damnation for the latter. Rather, it is a particularity which is established through the Holy Spirit.¹⁰⁰ While all of humanity has salvation in the second person of the Trinity, only the believer has the reality of this ultimate promise in the present,¹⁰¹ as the Holy Spirit works with the Christian.¹⁰² The reality of ultimate salvation is a hoped-for reality for those outside the church. However, it is only *known* as such, and, therefore, only known to be real, by the people of faith through the Holy Spirit.¹⁰³ This work of the Spirit is transformative in the present. The believer is differentiated from humanity not in terms of the Son's relationship to her, but in terms of her knowledge of that and faith in it through the Holy Spirit. There is, thus, room for both the church and Christian with their particularity and a universally optimistic understanding of salvation.¹⁰⁴

⁹⁹ On the Holy Spirit and ecclesiology, see Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, Vol. 2; Bonhoeffer, *Sanctorum Communio*, throughout which there is discussion of the pneumatological nature of the church (e.g. 139, 143, 152, etc.); and Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 3, ch. 12, §1.c (16–20).

¹⁰⁰ C. F. D. Moule, *The Holy Spirit* (London and New York: Continuum, 2000), 74: 'The presence of the Spirit is a *sine qua non* of being a Christian (Rom 8.9 . . .). Christians know themselves to be Christians precisely because they know themselves possessed of the Spirit.'

¹⁰¹ A similar dynamic is hinted at by Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 3 (for all it is expressed in very different terminology) in his idea that the spiritual expresses the 'unambiguous' within the ambiguous in a manner which anticipates the new reality awaited by all (ch. XXVI).

¹⁰² Ford describes Eucharistic practice in terms which are helpful here as 'the particularising activity of the Holy Spirit – a flourishing of distinctive and different realisations of the eventfulness of God' (Ford, *Self and Salvation*, 144). This surely need not be limited to the event of the Eucharist, but could also be applied to the whole life and activity of the church, as a particularized community of the Holy Spirit.

¹⁰³ Gunton, 'Atonement and the Triune God', 130. For Gunton, the economy of the Holy Spirit is 'to *particularize* the universal redemption in anticipations of the eschatological redemption.'

¹⁰⁴ Furthermore, there is room here for the particularity of each believer within the community of Christians. See Welker, *God the Spirit*, 21–7. Welker speaks of a

ii. Origen

For Origen, the work of the Holy Spirit demarcates those who are in the present already able to participate in the holiness of God. The Spirit enables the human to grow towards God in the present following baptism.¹⁰⁵ It is the indwelling work of the Holy Spirit to 'perfect' the believer in the present.¹⁰⁶ This begins the perfection which awaits the unbeliever only after death. It is in unity with the Holy Spirit that one becomes holy as one is cleansed from sinfulness.¹⁰⁷ While all rational creatures will ultimately be restored, that ultimacy is realized in the present for the believer. This does not, however, remove the future element of eschatology as particularity extends into judgment. For Origen, there is a dual sense of resurrection with a first and immediate resurrection for believers to be with God, and a second penultimate resurrection of unbelievers to purification.¹⁰⁸ Thus, while in the end God will be 'all-in-all', and there will be a full restoration, the present particularity of believers still has implications for the *eschaton*, and it is a work of the Spirit that achieves this particularity in His purifying of the Christian.

iii. Barth

In Barth, one similarly sees the differentiation of humanity through the Holy Spirit. The doctrine of election determines that all humanity is elected in Jesus Christ, in whom humanity finds its origin and future. Humanity is not divided into saved and damned, but into Christian and non-Christian, which is a division dependent on the

non hierarchical 'differentiated diversity' in relation to Christ though the Spirit that cannot be reduced to a simple unity. He describes this as 'polyindividual diversity and abundance' (23).

¹⁰⁵ There is a baptism with fire for those not already cleansed by the baptism of the Holy Spirit. See *HomLk.* f.24; *HomJer.* 2.3; *HomEz.* 1.13. Daley, *The Hope of the Early Church*, also notes that the resurrection is not exclusively future, but anticipated already in part in the life of the baptized Christian (54 5). See *CommJn.* I.25; *CommRom.* Gr. Frag 29. For further discussion of baptism in Origen, see Crouzel, *Origen*, 223 6; Daniélou, *Origen*, 52 61.

¹⁰⁶ *CommMt.* XIV.3.

¹⁰⁷ *CommRom.* 10.9.2.

¹⁰⁸ See Edwards, 'Origen's Two Resurrections'.

Spirit who makes believers into Christians each day.¹⁰⁹ It is the Spirit who distinguishes believers from non-believers in the present and calls believers to the expression of their election.¹¹⁰ Christ's work of salvation was for all. However, it is only through the Spirit that it is a work known and manifested in the lives of believers and, thereby, truly salvific.¹¹¹ Hence, Barth can write:

The Holy Spirit Himself and as such is here a reality which is still lacking and is still to be expected. He is the content of a promise which is given but not yet fulfilled. What is lacking to these 'unspiritual men', as they lack the Spirit, is obviously His eternal and temporal, ultimate and penultimate, promise, and therefore their own qualification as its recipients, bearers and possessors, the determination, characterisation, endowment and equipment of their existence accomplished with this reception. As they have no promise of the ultimate future, the eternal kingdom and eternal life, they cannot have the enclosed promise in respect of their own existence in time as their immediate future.¹¹²

This does not mean that the 'unspiritual' person is beyond salvation. Barth continues concerning the non-Christian:

He [the non Christian], too, is reconciled to God . . . This means, however, that the Spirit and His ultimate and penultimate pledge with all its indwelling power are promised to him. It cannot be simply said that he is not the recipient, bearer and possessor. It must be said that he is not yet these things, because he does not yet know Jesus Christ . . . He is not yet within, not yet caught up in the living stream of life, not yet moved by the promise of the Spirit, not yet living by the lights and powers and gifts bestowed with this promise, but still without on the rocky banks of the stream. Or conversely, he is still within on a patch of desert, but not yet without in the surrounding meadows. Yet the stream already flows for him and the meadows are already there for him. The promise of the Spirit already avails for him and applies to him.¹¹³

It is, therefore, in the Spirit that the Christian differs from the unbeliever.

¹⁰⁹ IV/2, 328.

¹¹⁰ II/2, 345-6.

¹¹¹ Indeed, Barth felt that Pietists were right in this much: it is only when salvation and revelation is real to us that we may speak of it as real (I/2, 237).

¹¹² IV/3, 353.

¹¹³ IV/3, 355.

iv. Symphony

Such particularity within universalism in the theologies of Origen and Barth accords with the narrative of scripture. God's universal purpose has always been fulfilled through particulars: the history of Israel and the life of Jesus Christ reveal this. To associate Christian faith with the work of the Holy Spirit determines that faith in God is not simply a divine insurance plan associated with a future outcome: to have faith is to respond in love to God through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and not to respond in order to gain something for oneself out of fear. The response of faith is to live a life in the ever fuller fullness of the Spirit in the present. This has two implications. The first is that it challenges the negative reasons for rejecting some form of universalism. Hart (while ultimately unconvinced of universalism) suggests the danger of rejecting it out of any sense of disappointment on the Christian's part that, should universalism be the case, it would be unfair.¹¹⁴ Too often, faith is seen as a chore or work which almost deserves God's reward, compared to the faithlessness of those who make little or no effort: too often grace becomes a work. This may be prevented through a properly articulated pneumatology. What the Christian is offered is not only life, but fuller life,¹¹⁵ brought by the Spirit who offers the promise of God now and provides hope. Second, particularity through the indwelling Spirit allows for a positive message both for the church and the unbeliever: the church is blessed by the presence of the Spirit, while it can also offer a positive message of the grace of God to the unbeliever. It provides for both the distinction and the unity of which Bonhoeffer speaks: 'All are united with each other, and yet distinct.'¹¹⁶ By this, the church is both differentiated from and yet united to the unbeliever. Through the Spirit, the church is seen to be the exclusive people who know the salvation of God (*extra ecclesiam nulla salus*), but its message of salvation does not exclude. While the Spirit rests upon it exclusively, He does so in order that the church might witness to God's universal work of salvation.

¹¹⁴ See Hart, 'Universalism', esp. 34.

¹¹⁵ Jn 10.10.

¹¹⁶ Bonhoeffer, *Sanctorum Communio*, 289.

This distinction in the Trinitarian economy is apposite. Often the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ are too easily subsumed by Pentecost. That is to say that the church is too closely identified with exclusive rights to salvation: the exclusive particularity of Pentecost comes to create an exclusive view of God's saving grace in Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection. Equally, the outpouring of the Spirit and the establishment of the church are seen as the salvific event, rather than the event which leads the apostles to preach the Gospel to the world. By contrast, the Spirit's work is not to narrow the salvific work of Christ, but to widen it in the spreading of its message abroad by giving the community identity as those who witness to the salvation of humanity in Christ.

6 WITNESSING TO THE RESTORATION: THE EXTENSIVE WORK OF THE SPIRIT

i. Theme

It is necessary to be brought back to the question of the universal work of the Spirit with which this chapter began. It is the work of the Spirit in establishing the community of witnesses to which it is now necessary to turn. In this work it is believed that the simple binary of universal and particular is overcome, as the Spirit establishes and empowers the Christian *to demonstrate the will of God in the world*. In differentiating the Christian and establishing Christian identity and particularity, the work of the Spirit is not only inwards with regard to the particular Christian or community, but also outwards in terms of establishing such particularity *for the sake of the world*.¹¹⁷ There are

¹¹⁷ This point is made repeatedly by Hardy, *Finding the Church*. For example, the church 'is the primary sign of this "economy of salvation" and the embodiment of the *intensity* of God's Trinitarian self determination in its social life. But as Church it is also mission, the embodiment of God's Trinitarian self determination in the *extensity* of social life in the world, both now and in their outworking in time to the eschaton.' (34). Hardy warns of the dangers of this new intensity that came at Pentecost being turned in on itself, when it should actually reach out (136-9). A similar point about the overflowing of the received Holy Spirit is also made in Rowan Williams, 'Pentecost Sunday Sermon: The Experience of the Holy Spirit' (2002).

not two economies of salvation in the Trinity, but rather the universal work of Christ is united to the particular work of the Spirit: the latter allows for the witness to and knowledge of the former. If spatial categories break down in terms of the economic work of the Spirit within the lives of the believers, so too they must break down regarding the economic work of the Spirit in creation as a whole. This is not to return to a view of the Holy Spirit as some kind of amorphous or collective human spirit. It is to say that the Spirit's work of intensification leads to a radical extensity of His economy. These two movements are one for the believer.

ii. Origen

Origen makes this point in terms of the identity he presents Christians as possessing over and against all other rational beings. This comes through the worthiness of the Christian to possess the Spirit of God.¹¹⁸ Given that there is a need for purity for a person to come to salvation in Origen's soteriology, the purification that the Christian demonstrates through the work of the Holy Spirit upon her is a witness to the purification through which all rational beings must go, as that which is irrational is removed and purged. The Christian, then, witnesses to the future for all humanity, a future in which the partially rational will be returned to being completely rational as it participates fully in the origin and end of all rationality—the Logos.

iii. Barth

For Barth, the Spirit summons the Christian to witness to election in a life of gratitude for the kindness of God in the election of Jesus Christ.¹¹⁹ This is the vocation of humanity in Barth's theology.¹²⁰ For Barth, the calling to be a witness to Jesus Christ is 'predominantly a spiritual process'.¹²¹ There is a unity in the works of the Son and the Spirit. Barth writes:

¹¹⁸ *Comm.Jn.* II.6; *De Princ.* I.3.7.

¹¹⁹ II/2, 414 15.

¹²⁰ IV/3, §71.

¹²¹ IV/3, 501.

It is crucial that the Holy Spirit should not in any sense be understood as a relatively or absolutely independent and independently operative force intervening between Jesus Christ and the man who is called by Him, but as His Spirit, as the power of His presence, work and Word, as the shining of the life of which He is the fullness.¹²²

The Holy Spirit works in the Christian and the church to witness to Jesus Christ.¹²³ In Barth's threefold understanding of the work of the Holy Spirit in the doctrine of reconciliation, there is also this dual movement of (1) establishing particularity, and (2) doing this for the sake of the other. This is evident, not in the threefold nature of the doctrine, but in the deeper logics of the twofold nature of each of the discussions on the Holy Spirit in each of the three books.¹²⁴ In each of these, there is a sense of the particularity of the community (in faith, love, and hope) for the sake of its witness in the broader world (as it is gathered, built up, and sent).¹²⁵

iv. Symphony

Whether this work of the Spirit is conceived as broad enough might be questioned. There is a sense in scripture that the Spirit has a universal work as well as a particular one.¹²⁶ However, the understanding of the Spirit as the one who enables witness to God's work of salvation in Jesus Christ must be acknowledged as both a particular work and a universal one. The Spirit establishes the particular witness of the Christian *for the sake of the world*. This reflects Pentecost, with the apostles speaking in

¹²² IV/3, 503.

¹²³ Again, one may find a parallel in Barth's doctrine of the glory of God, where he suggests that the glory of God may be found in the world since 'He is God who is glorious in His community, and for that reason and in that way in all the world' (II/1, 677).

¹²⁴ §§62 and 63; §§67 and 68; §§72 and 73.

¹²⁵ It is hoped that this in some way begins to answer the criticism of Roberts, 'Spirit, Structure and Truth', that Barth's pneumatology completes his unbroken theological circle, making it 'dangerous by comprehensiveness' (80). This opening up of the work of the Spirit to the world (which admittedly Barth could have pursued further) could lead to an avoidance of the criticisms Roberts lists (81). The Spirit not only allows a place for the human reality which Roberts claims Barth's theology cannot allow (83), but He does so in a way which allows for the discussion of human reality not only within the church but also outside of it in this outwards movement.

¹²⁶ Jn 3.8. However, Moule argues forcefully that the Holy Spirit is most closely identified with the Christian, and His work is not 'cosmic in scope' (Moule, *The Holy Spirit*, 19ff.).

different tongues (Acts 2.1–12): the Spirit works in a very particular way with very particular individuals in order that they can speak to the universality of all people within each of their particularities.¹²⁷ The Spirit enables, in a very particular way, the apostles to speak to all people with the universal message of Jesus Christ. Such readings of the Holy Spirit do not limit the Spirit's work: He works in witnessing to Christ in all circumstances, whether these are perceivable or not. The problem does not lie in stating that the particular work of the Spirit concerns Christians, in whom He establishes the ministry of witnessing to Jesus Christ. Rather, the danger lies in too rigidly demarcating a space which properly belongs to the believer and the church from a space which properly belongs to the unbeliever and the world. There are areas at the fringes of both categories where the Spirit is at work, witnessing to Jesus Christ. Barth helpfully states: 'For all the seriousness with which we must distinguish between Christian and non-Christian, we can never think in terms of a rigid separation.'¹²⁸ The Spirit works within the Christian, but one should not be too certain as to which group of people an individual belongs.¹²⁹ While there is a broad work of the Spirit in witnessing, this is different to the universal work of Christ: the Spirit always works with individuals and groups in every age and place; Christ's saving work was unique in history and singularly universal for all humanity.

7 THE IMPLICATIONS OF CHRISTIAN PARTICULARITY THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT

(a) Removal of unhelpful binaries

One of the benefits of a particularity established in the Spirit is that it enables the Christian to escape the dangers and difficulties of

¹²⁷ Welker makes a similar point regarding the Holy Spirit: 'The individualism of the Spirit is marked by diverse concreteness and by concrete diversity, without crumbling into the indeterminate plurality of "pure" individuality. No one is totally the same as others, and no one is unique in every respect' (Welker, *God the Spirit*, 22).

¹²⁸ IV/3, 494. The same point could also be made regarding other religions: see Greggs, 'Bringing Barth's Critique of Religion to the Inter Faith Table'.

¹²⁹ Rowland, 'The Lamb and the Beast', makes this point well with regard to salvation and the exclusivist language of Revelation and Matthew, e.g. 189.

working with unhelpful divisions and binaries. Reminding the person of faith that God is Trinitarian and not twofold guards against seeing people simplistically as saved or damned, elect or reject, insider or outsider. The Holy Spirit allows the Christian to articulate both her distinctive nature and simultaneously her unity with the non-Christian in the eternal salvific plan of God. It is not an 'either-or' situation which the Christian faces with regard to the world, but rather a 'both-and' situation which she recognizes in her relationship to the grace of God in Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit allows room for speech about faith and church and holiness, but not in such a way that these must be discussed in binary opposition to the non-Christian. Rather they can be discussed alongside and *for* the non-Christian. The Spirit brings the Christian to recognize that she stands with the non-Christian as one eternally elected by God, and that she is called to witness to that fact to all humanity.

This movement in soteriology is extremely liberating for evangelical theology.¹³⁰ Indeed, it may even guard against the excesses of this movement in fundamentalism.¹³¹ To begin to re-evaluate speech about salvation outside of unhelpful binaries is necessary for evangelicalism: the dynamic of Spirit and Son with regard to the universal and the particular allows the evangelical both to speak of universal salvation offered in Christ for all people (the Good News), and simultaneously to speak of her own faith for the sake of the other through the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit. Decision, ethics, and personal obedience are vital, but vital to the fuller life offered in the Spirit, rather than vital to escaping the fires of hell.

(b) Way of preaching

This understanding of the economy of the Spirit may have tremendous implications for the church's speech about God. Moving away

¹³⁰ For reflections on the German situation that could be transferable to English speaking evangelicalism, see Busch, *Karl Barth & the Pietists: The Young Karl Barth's Critique of Pietism and Its Response*, esp. the epilogue.

¹³¹ One should not simply equate evangelicalism or fundamentalism with literal approaches to texts: both movements require great sophistication on the part of their followers in reading particular views of soteriology onto scripture — hence the need to speak of dispensations, covenants, and prophecy.

from preaching in terms of insider-outsider categories, the church must preach through the Spirit the message of salvation in Jesus Christ for all the world and its own need for an ever deeper intensification of the Spirit. Thus, the church can preach a message of universal love and salvation in the second person of the Trinity in a way which does not undermine its own existence and purpose, but recognizes this as the special work of the Spirit. The church preaches itself as ontologically in unity with the world, but differentiated from it in terms of its explicit recognition of its relationship to God in Christ *through the Holy Spirit*. Its proclamation is, therefore, not that it is elect because it is special, but that its election is to be in differentiated unity to the world in order to witness to it the love of God in Christ. It is not that the Christian is elect because of her superiority, but rather that if even the Christian is elect she can proclaim a message of hope in the election of all humanity. The Spirit allows the church and the Christian to do this, rather than engaging in dreadful and disastrous dividing that can result in unwarranted moral superiority and a return to a belief in God's eternal election of some and not others.¹³²

(c) Freedom

The Spirit provides for room for freedom in a universalist soteriology. Origen achieves this in terms of the work of the Spirit in purifying the believer in the present; for the unbeliever, purging after death is necessary. In Barth, the Spirit allows the human the room to respond to her election in Jesus Christ. Herein lies the Christian belief (and irony) that only in the Spirit is one truly free. In the Spirit one can understand what would otherwise seem the strange statement that humanity is not free to be without God. On this point, it is important that theology should not be conditioned by Enlightenment notions of what freedom is. Rather than speaking in terms of how one is free 'from' something, Christian discussion should be in terms of how one can be free 'for' something—free,

¹³² This also has inter faith implications, see Greggs, 'Bringing Barth's Critique of Religion to the Inter Faith Table'.

indeed, for God.¹³³ This seems to reflect the Augustinian sense that true freedom is not *posse non peccare* but *non posse peccare*. For Origen and Barth, freedom is primarily seen in terms of the freedom of the believer to choose God in the present. This is a choice for God to which she is freed by the Spirit. To speak of the opposite is in many ways meaningless: humans cannot choose to be absolutely free from God; as creatures, their very existence is dependent on Him.¹³⁴ To consider the doctrine of hell or ideas of annihilation as a means for allowing human freedom is equally a nonsense. The reverse is true: that in freeing humans from the expectation of hell, they are actually given a real choice: no one would freely choose an eternity of torture.¹³⁵ The idea of freedom in terms of a choice of one possibility or another, or indeed of a choice against God, hardly seems to do justice to the sense of the word *ἐλευθερία*. The freedom that God offers is a freedom of His Spirit, a freedom which makes sense of the inescapable victory of Jesus Christ.

(d) Restoration *and* transformation

Further comment is required on the way in which the doctrine of the Holy Spirit allows for a universalist understanding of salvation which is simultaneously restorative and transformative. This understanding is clearly necessary: to be restored involves restoring. This is most clear in Origen, for whom it is through the transformation of humanity in the present world or future punishment that what is irrational is purged from humans and they are returned to full participation in the Logos. However, the same is true of Barth in a different way. For him, humanity is restored to the 'prototype of humanity' who is Jesus Christ,¹³⁶ but this is a restoration which for

¹³³ Barth speaks of this through the Holy Spirit: *Credo* 70 cf. 130. See also *EvangTheol*, 53 4.

¹³⁴ Note in scripture: 'For freedom Christ has set us free' (Gal. 5.1); 'whoever was free when called is a slave of Christ' (I Cor. 7.22).

¹³⁵ Barth points towards this kind of logic when he states: 'to say a person *must* believe would be inappropriate, since he can only really believe as a *free* believer, as one freed for faith' (*EvangTheol*, 102). The doctrine of an eternal hell is one way of understanding what it is to say a person *must* believe.

¹³⁶ III/2, 155 speaks of the pre existence of humanity in Jesus Christ.

humans involves a transformation in time into true humanity—as one living for God and for others. While from the perspective of God’s eternity, this is restorative, from the perspective of the human present, this is transformative.

There is an advance made by humanity in time: there is not simply a restoration to a pre-fallen state. In Barth, one sees this in terms of glorification and redemption. Redemption is a work of the Spirit in which humanity is brought by the Spirit to be something more than it presently is.¹³⁷ Through the Spirit, humanity is enabled to be a covenant partner of God, which in its own creatureliness it cannot be by itself. This is the ‘determination’ of humanity and, therefore, not simply retrospective.¹³⁸ In Origen, unlike the Stoic use of the word simply to indicate the recreation of an old world, there is also a prospective as well as a retrospective use of the word *apokatastasis*.¹³⁹ Given Origen’s rejection of the possibility of a second fall of humanity at some future point in eternity, since this would question the efficacy of Christ’s death and resurrection (I Cor. 15.28), the *eschaton* is not exactly the same as the beginning: there is some progress, perhaps a greater maturity on the part of humanity.¹⁴⁰

The best way to understand this unity of restoration and transformation is in terms of the deepening and intensifying work of the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit that works through each present, relating the work of God to it. There is in human time, therefore, a sense of progress achieved through the Spirit.¹⁴¹ While in Origen this is clear,¹⁴² it is even hinted at by Barth: ‘Knowledge and faith come to

¹³⁷ I/1, §12.

¹³⁸ See III/2, §45. In this section, Barth speaks of addressing the borders between the determination of humanity as God’s covenant partner, on one side, and his cosmic and creaturely being, on the other (204), recognizing the dual nature of humanity as creaturely on the one side and determined to be a covenant partner with God on the other. Barth summarizes this well when he states: ‘man exists from God and for God, and as God’s creature is rushing toward Him and His eternal life’ (*GHN*, 6). However, he follows by stating: ‘man does *not* exist in that reality in which he might exist, in relationship with God and his fellow man’ (7).

¹³⁹ Ludlow, *Universal Salvation*, 39 cf. 41 2.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 35 6.

¹⁴¹ A similar point is made, albeit not pneumatologically, by Bonhoeffer, *Sanctorum Communio*, 144: ‘Humanity is new in Christ, that is from the perspective of eternity; but it also becomes new in time.’

¹⁴² Cruzel, *Origen*, 98.

us, and we have to study and live under the Word of God. Now not only the possibility, but the necessity of growth is declared.¹⁴³ The things to which Barth points here are matters which concern the Holy Spirit—knowledge and faith received. These bring growth. Jesus states that it is better that he goes, in order that the disciples might receive the Paraclete:¹⁴⁴ the Spirit offers something more, something fuller; He glorifies Christ.¹⁴⁵ While Christ restores, the Spirit transforms humanity for that restoration.¹⁴⁶

(e) Theosis

It may, indeed, be in this way that one is best to understand *theosis* for these two theologians. The work of the Spirit in restoring transforms humanity in the present to its eternal determination in the will of God. In Origen, the Spirit establishes the true rationality of the believer, and allows the believer to participate in the source of all rationality, the Logos.¹⁴⁷ It is the restoring of her humanity which transforms the believer to the divine prototype, without removing the ontological distinction between Creator and creature. In Barth the Spirit frees the believer to be truly human—relating Christ to the believer and thereby establishing His humanity in her. In being a person for God and for others, the human is truly human, as she is truly like Jesus Christ, the Son of God. In that way, she may actively participate in His humanity, and in that in the eternal humanity of

¹⁴³ *TT*, 39. Cf. Nimmo, *Being in Action*, 164–5.

¹⁴⁴ Jn 16.7.

¹⁴⁵ Jn 16.14.

¹⁴⁶ This is a pneumatological way of stating with Jüngel that: ‘God is the one who concerns our humanity in such an unconditional way that the revelation of God makes us thematic in our humanity. This happens in such a way, however, that for our part we are revealed as those whose humanity consists in becoming *ever more human*. Over and against our humanity which, certainly, already establishes itself in the midst of and despite our inhumanity, the incarnation of God and the justification of humanity which it accomplishes show that our humanity is able to be increased’ (Jüngel, *Theological Essays I*, 184). This theme is in line with two of Jüngel’s other essays in the same book: ‘The world as possibility and actuality. The ontology of the doctrine of justification’ (95–123) and ‘Humanity in correspondence to God. Remarks on the image of God as the basic concept in theological anthropology’ (124–53).

¹⁴⁷ The *logika* become *logikoi*.

God. Hunsinger points to Barth's speaking of the 'unprecedented fact of kinship of being' between humanity and God (*CD IV/1*, 599) and states: 'The idea that in Jesus Christ human beings are brought into an "ontological kinship" with God is an idea that comes within a hair of the traditional Eastern Orthodox understanding of salvation as "divinization" (*theosis*).'¹⁴⁸ However, one must take care to remember that the very differentiation internal to the Trinity avoids some form of monism, while recognizing the relation of self-distinction grounded within one's own relation to the Trinitarian being of God found in Christ through the inward moving of the Spirit.¹⁴⁹ *Theosis* wrongly understood also presents the danger of an imperial universal: particularity must be retained, and one must remember: 'All are in God, and yet each remains distinct from God.'¹⁵⁰ One should take care not so to overemphasize transformation as to allow particularity within the world at the expense of particularity from God.

¹⁴⁸ Hunsinger, *How to Read Karl Barth*, 175. Hunsinger is, however, quick to point to the fact Barth grounds this 'kinship of being' in 'an ongoing distinctiveness of particulars maintained by the mystery of grace' (*IV/1*, 600). Torrance speaks of *theosis* in a similar way, as humanity being lifted up 'to the level of participation in God where we are opened out for union and communion with him far beyond the limits of our creaturely existence which is another way of describing *theosis*. It is precisely there and in that way, however, that we are restrained by the sheer holiness and majesty of the divine Being from transgressing the bounds of our creaturely being' (Thomas F. Torrance, *Trinitarian Perspectives: Toward Doctrinal Agreement* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1994), 87). He also makes a similar point regarding the Holy Spirit in Calvin's theology (76). On the other hand, McCormack, 'Participation in God', argues strongly that one misunderstands Barth in seeking a place for *theosis* in his thought. However, this argument itself rests upon a failure to maintain the distinction McCormack himself notes in Palamas between divine energies and essence albeit this is a distinction Barth himself also rejects. When this distinction is understood, one can understand what is meant by *theosis* better, and one may well see the proper place for the doctrine. Moreover, this is buttressed by further discussion of the orthodox understanding of *theosis* as participation which upholds the ontological distinction between creature and Creator (see John Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology: Historical Trends and Doctrinal Themes* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1987), 163-5, and Prestige, *God in Patristic Thought*, 75).

¹⁴⁹ See also Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 2, 450-3.

¹⁵⁰ Bonhoeffer, *Sanctorum Communio*, 288.

10 CONCLUSION

This chapter has indicated the importance of the work of the Holy Spirit in establishing the space for particularity within a universalist soteriology. The Spirit allows for the continued existence of time and the purpose of people of faith; He establishes the particularity of believers, but not in a way that leads to unhelpful binaries. Such an understanding of the economic dynamics of Spirit and Son cannot but have enormous implications for speech about salvation.

In concluding, I wish to point to one event in which one sees this dynamic—the resurrection. The resurrection of Jesus does involve restoration, but it also involves transformation. It is a breaking of temporal boundaries, but in the wounds of the crucified borne by the resurrected, there is also room for temporality, suffering and contingency. Moreover, the power of this resurrected one is offered to the church in His breathing upon them, saying, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit.’¹⁵¹ The connection between resurrection and the giving of the Spirit is clear and strong, both in scripture and in the theology of Barth and Origen. It is this image which helps humanity to understand its ultimate salvation and redemption—in the one who has been restored, and in that restoration made more wonderful than first He was. In His resurrection, He offers the restoring power of the Spirit to broken people, transforming them into something even greater than they were before—transforming them into the humanity He willed for them from eternity, and restoring them in that to their proper relationship with God in Christ through the Holy Spirit.

¹⁵¹ Jn 20.22.

Conclusion

1 SUMMARY

This book has sought to articulate a form of Christian universalism which is genuinely *Christian* and which does not exist at the expense of particularity. The work has sought to describe universalism better through a re-examination of the economic dynamics of the Son and the Spirit in Christian theology. The foundation point for the universalism expressed is particularist: it does not proceed on any universalized theory of religion, as seen in, for example, Marx or Feuerbach; nor does it proceed on the basis of any socially or religiously liberal pluralism. It is exclusively Christian, but seeks to articulate a soteriology which does not itself exclude. It takes seriously Christian scripture and tradition, but looks to that strand of the tradition which offers the hope of salvation to all humanity—regardless of whether the salvation offered by God is recognized and acted upon, or not. The book considers that the Son's relationship to humanity is a relationship to *all* humanity, for *all* humanity is saved *in* Him. Thus, Christians are not in binary opposition to non-Christians in the eternal plan of God's salvation, but are instead united with all humanity at a deeper level through the unity of all humanity in the Son.

The argument of this book, therefore, is that people should not be divided into categories. It recognizes that even the saint is a sinner, and every sinner has the potential to be a saint. It considers the separation of God's will from His love to be a dangerous move, and it has proceeded in the belief that the eternity of God needs to be taken seriously in any speech about salvation. The argument considers perverse the view that

a loving God would make the world knowing that He would ultimately torture the vast majority of people in hell.¹ It understands that salvation cannot be seen, from God's eternity, as a 'knee-jerk' reaction to a failed 'plan A': for God, who is beginning and end, Creator and Redeemer, this cannot be so. Eschatology must be seen through creation, and creation must be seen through eschatology.

This book has sought not only to articulate its argument from a position of Christian particularity. It has also sought to articulate a Christian universalism in which the universal itself does not destroy this particularity. In the first instance, this was done through the discussion of the Son's economy.² The universal salvation that comes in Him is not one which obliterates human particularity, but rather one which is underscored by it in His person. In emphasizing the Son and the salvation of all in Him, one does not impose a universal principle to which everything must conform (even God!), but instead one indicates a person—Jesus Christ.³ Rather than arising from a principle (even that of grace), the universalism expressed is a description of the Son in whom all are saved. In His person, there is room for (and indeed the necessity of) particularity. Thus, this study has sought to express the relationship between God's eternity and salvation in a way that still allows for the integrity of each moment and of present temporality. It has sought to express the election and acceptance of God in a way that takes seriously the rejection of God, sin, and theodicy. It has sought to discuss the graciousness of God in a manner which does not undermine the need for holiness and the place for judgment and punishment. Certainly, there has been no desire or effort to suggest universalism out of an overly optimistic view of humanity. This work has attempted to discuss a salvation for all in the Son which does nevertheless realize that there is varied

¹ This perversity is picked up with characteristic irony in *Pilgrim's Regress* by C. S. Lewis, 'Pilgrim's Regress', in *Selected Books* (London: Harper Collins, 2002), 21: 'the Landlord was quite extraordinarily kind and good to his tenants, and would certainly torture most of them to death the moment he had the slightest pretext. "And you can't blame him," said the Steward. "For after all, it is his land, and it is so very good of him to let us live here at all people like us, you know."'

² See Ch. 4 above.

³ One sees this in Barth's words to universalist Richard Imberg: 'I don't believe in universalism, but I do believe in Jesus Christ, the reconciler of all' (Busch, *Karl Barth*, 447).

participation in Him and particularity even in the *eschaton*. In short, the argument contained in this book has sought to speak of the salvation of all in the Son in a manner which does justice to each—a universal salvation for all particulars which is the result of a particular, Jesus Christ. The book has sought to express a greater hope for all humanity in a way which does not destroy human particularity.

This importance of particularity is even more clearly seen in the economic dynamics of the Holy Spirit.⁴ While the Son's very particularity offers salvation universally to humans, the Spirit's universality particularizes that universal salvation in the lives of humans in the present. The work of the Spirit is, then, to establish the church and believers. This is a deep and intense work of God. The Spirit, as the third member of the Trinity, undoes any attempt to speak of Christian salvation in simply binary terms. When His role in the economy of salvation is considered, one recognizes the importance of Christian identity not only in terms of salvation but also in terms of the reception of the Spirit in the present. This is a realizing of the eschatology promised to all creation—a proleptic anticipation of that which awaits all humanity. The Spirit is at work in the present in the lives of Christians, making real to them the work of the Son in their lives. The Spirit provides Christian particularity: He makes sense of the place of faith and obedience within a universal hope of salvation. He is the one who allows God to be present to humanity without in any way removing the integrity of human particularity or the divinity of God. He gives not only life, but life more abundantly. He sets aside Christians from non-Christians in a way which does not lead to the destruction and eternal torture of the latter. He also unites the Christian to the non-Christian, leading the former to a service of witness for the sake of the world. The church and the believer are established through the Holy Spirit not for the sake of their own salvation, but for the sake of the salvation of the world.

When one recognizes the work of God in salvation as both Son and Spirit, one is enabled to be freely Christian and freely human. Faith is as essential as if it were to escape the tortures of hell, but in this expression one is genuinely freed for God. Yet, faith does not exist in

⁴ See Ch.7 above.

a way which separates, divides, and leads to mindless acts of terror. Instead, it allows true worship of and gratitude towards God for God Himself and for His work of salvation; and it allows worship to be expressed not only vertically (to God) but horizontally in continuing acts of grace in the world through the Holy Spirit. It allows a unity to exist which does not seek a lowest common denominator of faiths in order to extend to them the hope of salvation,⁵ but which seeks to be a genuine unity of people in all their differentiation and particularity.

2 SOME POSSIBLE IMPLICATIONS

This study is a work of systematic theology. It is not a work of ethics, liturgy, religious studies, or political theology. However, it is believed that this work has possible implications (some of which have been discussed throughout the work itself) for broader issues in the world and in theology. These are only suggestive but may include:

(a) Ecclesiology, liturgy, and homiletics

In advocating that particularity is grounded in the economy of the Holy Spirit, this study may well have considerable implications for expressions of ecclesiology. It necessitates that 'freshness' is central to any conception of the church, since the church is itself brought about by the ever new presence of the Holy Spirit who provides Christian particularity. This 'freshness' determines that the boundaries of the church and the world can never be sharply drawn, and glimpses of grace may be found even in places outside of the traditional or institutional church. In an age in which 'fresh expressions' of the church is a core concern for many denominations,⁶ an emphasis on the nature of the church as being dependent on the presence of the Spirit frees the church from an overly rigid construal of what it is: to

⁵ For example, theism, or monotheism, or the noumenal.

⁶ 'Fresh Expressions' is itself a movement within the Anglican and Methodist Churches of Great Britain.

have the presence of the Spirit, who makes real in the present the reality of Christ's universal salvation, is what it is to be church.

This can, in turn, inform liturgy and homiletics. To worship in the freedom of the Spirit is not simply to engage in one or other form of the tradition (whether that be the ostensibly more traditional and catholic, or the ostensibly more 'free' and charismatic): it is instead to be freed for the world in worship—to receive the deep things of God for the sake not of one's own salvation but for all humanity. This radically transforms certain understandings of repentance, praise, and sacrament, which now are freed to be for God's sake (rather than for the sake of the worshipper), and because for God's sake, for the sake of all the world. Preaching, also, becomes less about inviting outsiders into the inside through knowledge that they might receive, and more about directing those who may seem to be on the inside to the outside, re-orientating back onto the world. Through focusing on the Spirit, rather than worrying about whether we worship on Gerezim or in Jerusalem, the Christian is enabled to be a true worshipper, who worships in spirit and truth and in the reality that the truth brings.⁷

(b) Eschatological differentiation

In advocating an ultimate universalism in Jesus Christ, a radical transformation to certain views of eschatological differentiation may be offered. This transformation comes in two ways. The first is that not worrying about ultimate destinies of individual humans or, indeed, of nations, cultures, or religions, the Christian is freed by the Holy Spirit to focus more on this world. Salvation is truly saved from being some form of so-called Gnosticism, which offers 'magical' access through pieces of knowledge.⁸ Salvation is, instead, deeply real, and requires a recognition of the reality of the world and its history, with all its joys and sorrows. This should not lead, however, to an overemphasis on the world which fails to see something of the holiness and otherness of God. Remembering that a focus on God's

⁷ Cf. Jn 4.21–4.

⁸ This knowledge may for the Christian be understood in the likes of certain views of the mechanics of salvation, such as penal substitution, or else be understood as views of the church and its sacraments.

Spirit is a focus on the *Holy Spirit*, to be freed from binary eschatological differentiation (heaven-hell) must not lead to some form of hedonism. Instead, and secondly, moving past this binary may make greater sense of the language in scripture of treasures in heaven.⁹ It may provide for a fuller and more particularized eschatological differentiation, which allows for a greater continuity between this world and the next. Furthermore, one may find a greater unity between works and grace than is often offered: the grace of God's universal salvation in Christ frees our works by the power of His Holy Spirit to be ever holier and ever greater, and in that to be genuinely holy and not focused on our egotistical desire for self-preservation through an avoidance of hell.

(c) Ethical motivation

This is not, however, to take a focus away from this world. After speaking of storing up treasures in heaven, Jesus says: 'For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.'¹⁰ Seeking through the Holy Spirit to store treasures in heaven does not provide a motivation which is centred on ourselves (as is the case with storing treasures in this world) but on others. Storing treasures in heaven is contrasted to those who store things in this world for themselves, their own glory and self-preservation. Freeing ethical behaviour from being obsessed with the avoidance of eternal damnation, or from being a means of self-differentiation from those perceived to be damned, determines that seeking to be holy is not a selfish act but one which is for the sake of God and His glory and, through witness to that, for the sake of the world. A holy ethical life is the result of a desire for a life governed and, in that, freed for the ever fuller presence of the Holy Spirit. This may allow for a reduction in pharisaical behaviour in Christian self-identity: ethical identity comes not as a result of being over and against another, but instead from the Holy Spirit who frees us to behave in a manner which is holy for the sake of God and, therefore, for the sake of other humans. It determines that our hearts are in the proper place they should be in our ethical motivation.

⁹ Mt. 6.20.

¹⁰ Mt. 6.21.

(d) Political implications

In the present age, one must be sensitive to the role of faith in the political lives of the nations.¹¹ This is more complex than simply having religious people respond to situations as they arise, or setting a moral agenda for politicians. We live in an age in which doctrine affects politics.¹² In this, views of salvation are never far from the surface: there is a tendency to divide people and faiths too easily, to engage in polarizing right and wrong, insider and outsider, Judaeo-Christian and Muslim binaries. These divisions all too easily set up the other as the enemy. Theology needs to set its own house in order if it is to help to alter this situation. Only when Christians realize the proper ways in which they are to speak of their particularity and salvation can some of these overly simplified binaries be overcome. As long as the view persists that the vast majority of the world is destined to hell for living a life in opposition to God, in contradistinction to the Christian who is destined to heaven for living a life that follows the will of God, people will make divisions which they believe are based on the eternal plan of God: enemies of God become all too easily identified, and justification is found for why they are the enemies of people of faith in this world. Theology must inform the church that such distinctions cannot be made. Moreover, Christian theology must emphasize that this simply is not a satisfactory view of the nature of God and His salvation. Theology must teach that the Son saves all, and only 'me' because He saves all. Then the otherness of the person I see as an enemy is disrupted: she cannot so easily be seen as an enemy but must be seen as a child made by God the Creator and Redeemer; and I must remember that even as a child of God I, too, can still in my sin be His enemy and in need of redemption. However, the identity of the other *as the other* must also not be

¹¹ See Tom Greggs, 'Religionless Christianity in a Complexly Religious and Secular World: Thinking through and Beyond Bonhoeffer', in *Reading Bonhoeffer in the 21st Century: Religion, Religionlessness, and the Church.*, ed. Ralf K. Wüstenberg and Stephen Plant (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2008).

¹² One can see this, for example, in the USA regarding the Middle East. Not only is the rhetoric used often theological, but many of the concerns themselves arise from a Christian discomfort with Islam and a theologically pro Jewish stance based on certain views of dispensationalism.

forgotten; or else, in seeing the other as me, I am (at best) being inadequate in my description of that other and myself, or am (at worst) engaging in an act which is arrogant, self-centred, and fundamentally unloving. The Holy Spirit helps me to guard against removing the otherness of the other, but He allows that otherness to be established without the other becoming insurmountably alien to me, or even my enemy. The Holy Spirit guards speech about Christian identity from seeing the rest of the world as being excluded from God's plan of salvation, which—for all eternity—He has determined would be fulfilled in His Son.

Theology has political implications. Members of the church are involved in all aspects of life—military, political, economic, diplomatic, academic. Theology's first job is to form the church's proclamation. In doing so, it will form the lives of those involved in the political sphere. For many politicians, responding in a so-called 'Christian' way often only underscores the sorts of divisions that must be overcome in the world. Recognizing and forming what 'Christian' means is more subtly (and beneficially) the task of the church in the *polis*. And the task of the theologian is to serve the church in helping it to say better what it means by 'Christian' or 'God' or 'salvation'. If better readings of Revelation in the USA could help to lessen the fuel poured onto the Middle Eastern debate, so too could better understandings of salvation prevent the easy and falsely eternal distinctions between saved and damned that legitimate modern imperialism and divide communities (both locally and internationally).

(e) Inter-faith

This is connected to concerns about inter-faith dialogue. This book has sought to find a place in the salvation of God for peoples of all faiths and none, without denying anything of the uniqueness or particularity of the revelation of God in the Christian faith, and without lessening in any way a belief in *solus Christus* in terms of salvation. It has sought to achieve this entirely from within the Christian tradition. It has not been articulated on the basis of any shared principle or tradition external to the Christian faith. It has not sought to parallel teachings from different faiths. However, in its

exclusively Christian way, it has endeavoured to find a place for all humanity in the salvific plan of God. In that way, it may set an agenda for the possibilities of inter-faith dialogue.

For the Christian in the multicultural twenty-first century, the most pressing and immediate concern is how to understand the plan of God's salvation in the light of the reality of living in a pluralist society. As a teleological religion concerned with salvation and redemption, Christianity must confront the question of the future salvation of the other religionist who, put in real terms, lives next door. While this may lead to future reflections on the understanding of revelation, contextual settings for religious beliefs, shared civic and moral agendas between religion, and so on, the primary and pressing question of existence for the Christian with her belief in salvation in Christ is how to understand the religious other in light of that belief. Confronting the reality of the religious other, the Christian must understand the place of that other in God's plan of salvation. Furthermore, if beliefs in separationism, conditional immortality, hell or annihilation may variously present the Christian with a violence directed towards the other, so too is a violence done towards the other in describing her as essentially the same as the Christian, and failing to recognize her particularity as *another* religionist or as a *non*-religionist: the descriptive inadequacy of sameness will not suffice for a particularist agenda.

From a Christian perspective, inter-faith dialogue need not in the first instance seek to coordinate traditions between faiths; it needs instead in the first instance to be based upon particular traditions internal to the faith. It is not the place of Christian theology to find a way to mediate or coordinate between other faiths, but rather to express a hope internal to itself for all the world. If a greater hope for those of other faiths is to be found, it will not be found primarily by locating agreement or similarity between faiths, but by seeking a wider hope of salvation for all humanity internal to individual faiths themselves. It may not even be the case that other faiths seek this greater hope, or even have it as a concern.¹³ Inasmuch as the hope is

¹³ MacIntyre states that shared problems do not provide traditions with 'a neutral standard in terms of which their respective achievements can be measured. Some problems are indeed shared. But what importance each particular problem has varies from tradition to tradition, and so do the effects of failing to arrive at a solution' (Alasdair MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (London: Duckworth, 1988), 348).

desired, however, it is the responsibility of each faith to find a way internal to itself to achieve a view of humanity which does not fall back into insider-outsider binaries: it is the responsibility of the Muslim to find a greater hope for the non-Muslim internal to Islam; for the Jew to find a greater hope internal to Judaism; and so on. This book has not sought to provide an agenda for inter-faith dialogue, but to legitimate such a dialogue for Christians who need no longer see the other as so insurmountably alien that she might be seen to be an enemy. Instead, the other is seen as a child beloved of God who will be brought to salvation (even in her otherness) in Christ. This book has sought to be a work directed at Christian theologians and the Christian church in order that Christians may take the prior step to inter-faith dialogue necessary so as to free the church for inter-faith dialogue: in understanding the God who is for that other in Jesus Christ and still allowing the Christian to be other to that other in the Holy Spirit, the Christian is also freed to be for the other in her otherness. This is a topic for another (future) book,¹⁴ but it is hoped that some clues and directions for that book might be found within the pages of this one.¹⁵ Even if these themes are not a concern for other faiths, the Christian theologian cannot ultimately avoid them because for her, as for all, the one Eternal God will ultimately be *all in all*.

¹⁴ For the beginnings of reflections on this, the reader is directed to Greggs, 'Bringing Barth's Critique of Religion to the Inter Faith Table'; Greggs, 'The Many Names of Christ in Wisdom'; and Greggs, 'Religionless Christianity in a Complexly Religious and Secular World'.

¹⁵ Further reflection on actualism regarding the Holy Spirit might provide a means to understand the place of other religions *qua religions* within the plan of God: if the emphasis is placed on the acts of the Spirit in the lives of believers, where there is continuity with members of other faith communities in those acts (as she is freed for love, prayer, and so on), then one may be justified in believing the Holy Spirit to be present. One can see this in the biblical tradition of the so called 'holy pagans', such as the Syro Phoenician woman and the faithful centurion in the gospels, and the likes of Rahab, Melchizadek and Jethro in the Old Testament. From a Christological perspective, there might also be grounds for reflecting helpfully on God's relation to history and providence. But these reflections must be saved for discussion at another time.

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