Modern Theology 19:2 April 2003
ISSN 0266-7177 (Print)
ISSN 1468-0025 (Online)

THE MYSTERY OF THE SPIRIT IN THREE TRADITIONS: CALVIN, RAHNER, FLORENSKY OR, YOU *KEEP* WONDERING WHERE THE SPIRIT WENT[1]

EUGENE F. ROGERS, JR.

I

It has become a commonplace of recent theological scholarship that successive trinitarian revivals have left something to be desired in the theology of the Holy Spirit. Indeed, whether one has something interesting to say about the Spirit has become a test or index of the seriousness of one's trinitarianism. The chief puzzle in this line of thought has been Karl Barth. Author of more than one book with "Spirit" in the title, and of voluminous sections in the *Dogmatics* running many hundreds of pages,[2] Barth is nevertheless subject of a developing consensus that his doctrine of the Spirit subsides into Christology, as if there's nothing the Spirit can do that Christ can't do better.[3] Robert Jenson puts the critique into a sentence that reading hundreds of pages of and about Barth on the Spirit tends more to confirm than to deny: "the personal agent of [the Church's] work in fact turns out at every step of Barth's argument to be *not* the Spirit, as advertised, but Christ; the Spirit is denoted invariably by impersonal terms. The Spirit is 'the power of Jesus Christ's being.' "[4] It is not the point here to rehearse that critique—which I tend to agree with—or to defend Barth, but to add an apophatic moment to the program. It is less an issue I want here to resolve, than a further puzzlement to elaborate.[5]

Eugene F. Rogers, Jr.
Department of Religious Studies, Cocke Hall, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA 22904, USA

On the other hand, it is also a familiar theme in all Christian traditions that the Spirit does not always, obviously show itself. The Pharisees, asking to discern the Spirit of God, are told that "an evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign", and that the only sign will be a christological one (Matt. 12:38–41). The hunger for experience of the Spirit can become clearly or hiddenly a desire for self-aggrandizement. Several theologians note that it is characteristic of the Spirit to speak in a "still, small voice" (I Kings 19:12); that the reticence of the Spirit initiates us into Christ's own experiences of the Spirit, that it drives him into the wilderness and finally to the experience of God-abandonment on the Cross; that the kind of anonymity or absence of the Spirit that Jenson describes and decries is characteristic not only of Barth, but of the Cappadocian theologians and even of the liturgy, where one might think a robust doctrine of the Spirit likeliest to be found. Furthermore, they suggest or insist, this apophaticism is as it should be. As diverse and representative authors I take John Calvin, the sixteenth-century Reformer; Karl Rahner, the Kantian Catholic; and Pavel Florensky, the early twentieth-century Russian Orthodox polymath from whom both Sophiological and Neopatristic streams flow.

Perhaps the modern Spirit debate recalls that friendly and generous difference of rhetorical strategy between Basil of Caesarea and Gregory Nazianzen. Basil the Great, in "On the Holy Spirit", applied divine attributes to the Spirit, but left it to be inferred that the Spirit was God.[6] According to Gregory's appreciative account, Basil soft-pedaled the Spirit in order not to embarrass his more cautious supporters, and not to be misunderstood.[7] Gregory of Nazianzus, on the other hand, crystalizes and defends the identification of God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit when he writes his "Theological Orations". Unlike Basil, Gregory of Nazianzus loudly insists that the Holy Spirit is God: "But we have so much confidence in the deity of the Spirit whom we adore, that we will begin our teaching concerning his Godhead by applying to him the names which belong to the Trinity, even though some persons may think us too bold."[8] Indeed, in a letter Gregory tells his friend Cledonius that he finds it his vocation to remedy the inadequacy of the Nicene Creed and "confess that the Spirit is also God".[9] If Basil is coy and diplomatic, Gregory is bold and outspoken. No one now shies away from saying "The Spirit is God". But the Basilian and Gregorian strategies continue.

A constructive doctrine of the Spirit—not provided here—might do well to navigate between saying too little, and saying too much, between maximalism and minimalism in pneumatology. Here I do not accuse anyone in particular of pneumatic maximalism or minimalism, because as far as I can so far see, either or both may be right, and because I would also be accusing myself, in alternate moods. Here I merely register an apophatic moment.

II

John Calvin is often considered a "theologian of the Holy Spirit", because Books III and IV, which treat the reception of Christ's benefits and the external means of grace, occupy fully two-thirds of the *Institutes*, almost one thousand pages. Coming after Book I, "The Knowledge of God the Creator", and Book II, "The Knowledge of God the Redeemer in Christ", they occupy structurally the space of the Third Article. As in Barth, what this means is subject to debate.

Rowan Williams suggests that doctrines of the Spirit divide according to whether, on the one hand, the Spirit crosses the last bit of a *distance between* God and the creature, often to provide information, or, on the other hand, the Spirit invites the creature into *participation within* the triune life, often with the language of transformation or even deification.[10] In the twentieth-century, Calvin scholars have nicely illustrated this divide.

In English-, Dutch-, and German-speaking Calvin scholarship they have worked in the context of debates about revelation, whether the Barth-Brunner debate in Germany, or the debates over biblical authority and even inerrancy in the United States. Scholars like Dowey and Forstman have therefore quite naturally turned to noetic elements in Calvin's doctrine to address the great twentieth-century debates on revelation. The Spirit becomes the provider of faith or the guarantor of scripture. In Germany, the Barthian Wilhelm Niesel places his main account of the Spirit squarely under the rubric of Scripture in the locus on the knowledge of God; in the Netherlands, Simon van der Linde explicitly seeks to use Calvin's pneumatology to measure Karl Barth.[11] It is in this context that Werner Krusche raises the same question about Calvin as Jenson raises about Barth:

> Whether a *vis* or a *virtus* can be no Person: therewith is indicated exactly the question, with which an investigation of the work of the Holy Spirit appropriate to its content must engage: the question about the *Who* of the one here working . . . since Calvin can say, "under the name 'spirit' we know to be understood [God's] potential and power [*potentiam eius ac virtutem*]."[12]

In Francophone scholarship, at least since Émile Doumergue in 1910—whether because of dialogue with Catholicism, or because at one remove from the Barthian and biblicist debates in Germany and America—Calvin scholars have stressed Calvin's resources for the stronger, participationist or transformative view.[13] The exception proves the rule: The Anglophone author most open to ontic language in Calvin's doctrine of the Spirit may be Thomas Torrance, in dialogue with Orthodox theology.[14] Thus, according to Doumergue, the Holy Spirit, working in the heart, effects a "communication" not just of saving information but of Christ's "nature and substance".[15]

Participationist Calvin scholars stress passages such as the following (with not one but two Reformer's *sola*'s, including a *solo Spiritu*):

> this union alone [of the believer with Christ] ensures that, as far as we are concerned, he has not unprofitably come with the name of Savior. The same purpose is served by that sacred wedlock through which we are made flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone, and thus one with him. But he unites himself to us by the Spirit alone.[16]

This union, which introduces a discussion of faith, is nevertheless not limited to the noetic realm, but is a participation in the trinitarian communion and life, because the union of believers with Christ images the union of Father and Son:

> Christ's design [in John 17:21] was very different from that of raising us to a bare speculation on His divinity. For He reasons from the end that we ought to be one, because otherwise the unity He has with the Father would be empty and barren. . . . [C]onsider Him rather as He is Head of the Church, and join Him to His members. Thus the connexion will be best preserved; that, if *the unity of the Son with the Father* is not to be fruitless and useless, its power must be defused through the whole body of believers. From this, too, we infer that we are one with Christ; not because *He* transfuses His substance into us, but because *by the power of His Spirit* He communicates to us His life and all the blessings He has received from the Father.[17]

Similarly,

> our ingrafting signifies not only our conformity to the example of Christ, but also the secret union [*arcanam coniunctionem*] by which we grow together with Him, in such a way that He revives us by His Spirit. . . .[18]

If therefore we follow the Francophone interpreters, it appears that Calvin offers a fairly robust doctrine of the Spirit. If it is perhaps odd that in his commentary on Romans 8 there is no sense of our entering the Trinitarian *koinonia*,[19] nevertheless in passages that invite it, union with Christ is present, sometimes emphatic, and due to the Spirit. We may even see in Calvin the overcoming of the dichotomy between the provision of information, and the incorporation of the believer into the trinitarian community, if we observe, with Werner Krusche, that precisely *Erkenntnis*-language might serve to undergird *koinonia*:

> In der Erkenntnis des Glaubens verwirklicht sich die Gemeinschaft mit dem Erkannten. Im Glauben an den im Evangelium verkündigten Herrn Jesus Christus kommt es zur koinonia Jesou Christou . . . das besondere Werk des Heligen Geistes. . . .[20]

Yet it cannot escape notice that the union remains *secret*. The reason is not christological; there is no Messianic secret in Calvin. The reason is pneumatological; it is the Spirit that works in secret. God gains "admission to our souls by the secret impulse of His Spirit".[21] The emphasis recurs in the *Institutes,* so that Chapter I of Book III defends the thesis: "The Things Spoken Concerning Christ Profit Us by the Secret Working of the Spirit." This is Calvin's contribution to the debate between those who would take a more Basilian and those who would take a more Gregorian approach. The Spirit is secret because it manifests Christ in preference to itself; because we cannot usually observe its workings in human hearts; because we cannot often understand its answers to prayer. Here too the solution is about rhetoric—no small matter—about what Luther would call the *modus loquendi theologorum.*

Consider Calvin's rhetoric about the Holy Spirit on the relation of prayer and providence. A dialectic opens up between the pastoral needs for manifestation and hiddenness, a dialectic governed by pastoral concerns. Prayer is itself "a means for the Holy Spirit to increase and strengthen faith".[22] Calvin affirms that "Certainty about God's providence puts joyous trust toward God in our hearts", and that "Without certainty about God's providence life would be unbearable."[23] But Calvin assigns a pastoral rather than epistemological function to both of those "certainties". They bespeak no privileged access by unaided human powers, but promise comfort. Their purpose is expressly that the believer "will be relieved and set free from extreme anxiety and fear".[24] They concern the *use* of Christian doctrine to shape the believer; witness the title of the section from which they come, "How We May Apply This Doctrine to Our Greatest Benefit", one of many section titles that direct the reader to a pastoral rather than epistemological practice. This certainty, like Luther's, is not a matter of fortune-telling or special revelation, but of trust in God's care. To deploy these doctrines pastorally is no modern psycho-theology, but a classical rhetorical strategy, according to which Calvin casts himself, like God, as a great Speaker, one who moves the hearer with his address.[25] God not only calls the world into being with his Word, but in his word becomes a Shepherd, or Pastor, who calls and comforts and admonishes his sheep. A pastoral deployment of language is not, for Calvin, a touchy-feely flaw, but a deliberate imitation of God himself. All of God's words are not for bare knowledge but for human "benefit"—itself a crucial tool of Calvin's rhetoric, since for Calvin saving knowledge is recognition *(agnitio)* of Christ "and of his benefits".

Thus Calvin cannot allow references to manifest certainty to go uncountered, lest his hearers fall into complacency. So "Scripture does not teach that our minds are illumined only on one day".[26] "The true causes of events are hidden to us", furthermore, "since the order, reason, end and necessity of those things which happen for the most part lie hidden in God's purpose, and are not apprehended by human opinion".[27] Since primary causality—in

the Person of the Holy Spirit—hides from us, Heywood Spangler concludes that for Calvin "an individual should be careful in assuming that she is the subject of an unmediated divine act. Or, put another way, there should be a prima facie presumption against interpreting events as instances of direct divine intervention. The individual should assume that God engages her through secondary causes."[28] Thus Calvin rescues human agency: "shall we say that they are insane who developed medicine, devoting their labor to our benefit? . . . We ought not to forget those most excellent benefits of the divine Spirit, which he distributes to whomever he wills, for the common good of humankind."[29] As Spangler points out, this move expands rather than limits God's agency in the Spirit, since the Spirit need not always expose itself to all eyes, but may retire behind the secondary agency of human beings.[30]

Even when Calvin proclaims that the Spirit "shows us hidden things", the account revels in paradox, and the rhetoric preserves an apophatic moment:

> The Spirit of God shows us hidden things, the knowledge of which cannot reach our senses: promised to us is eternal life, but it is promised to the dead; we are assured of a happy resurrection, but we are as yet involved in corruption; we are pronounced just, yet sin dwells in us; we hear that we are happy, but we are as yet in the midst of many miseries; an abundance of all good things is promised to us, but still we often hunger and thirst; God proclaims that he will come quickly, but he seems deaf when we cry to him. What would become of us were we not supported by hope and did our minds not emerge out of the midst of the darkness above the world through light of God's word and of his Spirit?[31]

This is not a doctrine of the Spirit that Symeon the New Theologian, for example, would regard as too robust. Rather it practices a reserve, with respect both to human agency and to sensible events, that Calvin finds strictly appropriate, and that a theologian as different as Karl Rahner will share.

III

Karl Rahner takes it as characteristic of the Spirit's still, small voice, of its working *suaviter* (Wisdom 8:1), that at least in "everyday experience" it retires behind our conscious awareness. "The experience of the Spirit which we are considering here is therefore not to be rejected *a priori* as nonexistent, merely because . . . it can always be overlooked."[32]

Rahner expects the Spirit to hide behind the categorial features of human experience:

> [T]his transcendental experience of God in the Holy Spirit is present in the ordinary course of human life *only* unthematically, covered and con-

> cealed by preoccupation with the concrete realities with which we are involved in our milieu and environment. In everyday life this transcendental experience of God in the Holy Spirit remains anonymous, implicit, unthematic, like the widely and diffusely spread light of a sun which we do not directly see, while we turn *only* to the individual objects visible in this light in our sense-experience.[33]

The Spirit retires in this way just in order to be everywhere present, because "Christianity is . . . not elitist"; rather, it is "contrary to the elitist pride of 'pneumatic' enthusiasts".[34] Furthermore, the Spirit retires in this way precisely in order to empower human freedom for love of God and neighbor:

> [W]hen the fragmentary experience of love, beauty, and joy is felt and accepted as promise of love, beauty, and joy purely and simply, and not regarded with deep cynicism and scepticism as facile consolation in the face of ultimate bleakness, . . .
>
> when we venture to pray in silent darkness and know that in any case we are heard, although there seems to be no response from there about which it would be possible to reason and argue, . . .
>
> when despair is accepted and mysteriously experienced as assurance without any easy consolation, . . .
>
> when we practice our death in the course of ordinary life and then attempt to live in the way that we wish to approach death, calmly and with resignation,
>
> when . . . (as we said, it would be possible to go on for a long time),
>
> *then* God is present in his liberating grace. Then we experience what we Christians describe as the Holy Spirit of God; . . . here is the sober intoxication of the Spirit of which the Church Fathers and the early liturgy spoke, which we may not reject or despise simply because it is sober.[35]

At first glance it may appear that there is nothing particularly Christian about that litany. The experience may appear as some form of spiritualized stoicism, or Kantian duty, grit your teeth without reward. The Spirit, in turn, may appear as some form of Kantian noumenon, a formless and unnecessary hypothesis, trapped beyond experience. If experience is stoic, and the Spirit is noumenal, what's distinctively Christian about either?

But each of Rahner's examples shows another pattern, a pattern of living and dying, or mortification and vivification, that corresponds to baptism. And that pattern is in turn one that reflects and imitates the human life of Christ. Christ, too, on Rahner's account, experienced the Spirit in temptation and abandonment. The ordinary, everyday experiences of the Spirit that Rahner puts forward are not free of distinctively Christian content: rather they form the life of the believer according to the pattern of the life of Christ.

Here too the Spirit never floats free from the Word, but comes to repose upon the believer, as it conforms the believer to the pattern of Christ. Here, too, the Spirit comes to repose upon the Body of Christ in the Church, as it builds up that body, over time, out of its (thematic or unthematic) gifts of suffering and redemption to the members, conforming it to the body and blood given in the Eucharist.

> It can be seen therefore that there is an identity between experience of the Spirit and participation in the victorious death of Jesus, in which alone the real success of our death is experienced, and experienced within a believing community. In this life the chalice of the Holy Spirit is identical with the chalice of Christ. But it is drunk only by someone who has slowly learned up to a point to taste fullness in the void, dawn in doom, discovery in renunciation.[36]

Rahner does not deny Pentecost and Tabor. Indeed he opens with them.[37] But he will not treat them apart from the concrete life in the Spirit of the bodily Christ. Even when Rahner is at his most Kantian, dividing the prethematic and unreflective from categorial experience, one can discern this other, christological pattern. For the presence of the categorial in the foreground indicates the Spirit's refusal to bypass the body. Every "everyday" experience of the Spirit must shine out from the body of Christ, that is, must become incarnate through concrete experiences in the world and with the neighbor. So far from a "philosophical" or "mystical" account of the Spirit that would trap it in some noumenal realm apart from any Christian particularity, Rahner insists instead upon an account that builds in a christoformity in experience itself, in the life of the believer, and in the upbuilding of the community. If the Spirit is anonymous, that is because it witnesses anonymously to Christ.

IV

You might suppose that Calvin and Rahner have something in common to account for their accounts of a retiring Spirit—namely, they are Western. The retiring of the Spirit behind the Son, so a modern Western theologian, having read the Eastern polemics, would confess, is part of the problem, a symptom of the *Filioque,* and of the West's tendency to subordinate the Spirit to the Son. But you would be wrong. For the strongest case for an apophatic theology of the Spirit comes not from the West, but from the East.

Pavel Florensky, in *The Pillar and Ground of the Truth*[38] (originally published in 1914) makes a stronger case than either Calvin or Rahner for the anonymity of the Spirit, because he—the Easterner—makes it explicitly. He makes it from the Cappadocians. He makes it from the liturgy. He makes it from the very sources in which Orientalist Western theologians would expect

to see an unreconstructed pneumatic golden age. Furthermore, he finds the anonymity of the Spirit not a flaw, but as it should be.

The argument has several steps. First, the office of the Spirit is to teach truth and to promote ascetic practice among human beings. Since the work of the Trinity in the economy does not mislead us about the character of God *in se*, it is not unreasonable to suppose, but it is to be expected, that the Spirit itself would practice an ascetic discipline precisely with regard to the truth about itself.[39] Furthermore, both ascetic practice and the revelation of truth take place (if I may put the words of Thomas Aquinas into Florensky's mouth) "by a few and over a long period of time",[40] so that their beginning is "only a betrothal", a kiss of the Bride, "given in view of the long way, the many torments—not because we are worthy of it but to give us courage".[41] The Spirit like the Kingdom is known only fleetingly before the End, even if the truth and the ascetic run before it. "It could not be otherwise. Knowledge of the Holy Spirit would give perfect spirituality, perfect deification to all Creation, perfect illumination."[42] For Florensky, "Come Holy Spirit!" and "Thy Kingdom come!" pray the same prayer, even after Pentecost.[43]

Those who want more from pneumatology may demur: they are not asking for perfection; they are asking only for adequacy. Florensky has preceded them. He too "finds it strange" that a theologian should "speak of the importance of the idea of the Spirit in the Christian worldview but hardly . . . gives a clear and precise explanation of anything".[44] He too sees that this lack "applies chiefly to dogmatists, for they are the ones who have to speak decisively and to the heart of the matter". As many later twentieth- and twenty-first-century theologians would complain after him, Florensky concludes, "And it is they who turn out to be almost mute, or clearly confused."[45]

Only, this strangeness does not apply to twentieth-century theologians in successive trinitarian revivals (Barth, Rahner, von Balthasar): Florensky comes too soon for any of them. Nor does this strangeness apply to nineteenth-century trinitarian revivals. Florensky applies it to the entire theological tradition, *tout court*. So the puzzled phrases from the previous paragraph have as their subject "all the holy fathers and mystical philosophers"! At most (one thinks of the charges against Barth) Florensky notes a "'false window' created for the sake of the symmetry of the building, no more".[46]

Even here the reader who knows Florensky may demur. She may recall that the remark about the "false window" applies to Origen. Florensky speaks of the binitarianism of Hermas, Pseudo-Clement, and Tertullian. In that period—as everyone knows—trinitarianism remained underdeveloped, especially with regard to the Third Person. So the "formal and schematic character" that Florensky notes counts merely as a stage in development, not yet the twentieth-century forgetfulness or failure of nerve. It is an historical,

not a critical remark, if the affirmations about the Spirit "differ from corresponding affirmations about the Son and the Father in the same way that pencil sketches differ from a painted canvas". It is a nice observation, but not yet a complaint, if Florensky notes that "the doctrine of the Holy Spirit . . . is disclosed in a derivative or roundabout manner, as a rational theorem, according to the schema: 'Since such-and-such is said about the Son, it follows that we are compelled to say such-and-such about the Spirit' ".[47] The observation becomes a complaint, the demurrer might hold, when applied to theologians a millennium and a half later. In the meantime, one might claim, the doctrine of the Spirit developed, in the theology of the Cappadocians and in the liturgical form of the epiklesis.[48]

To the rejoinder about the Cappadocians Florensky employs a minimizing strategy. The reticence of Basil's *On the Holy Spirit*, as only leading to a conclusion in favor of the divinity of the Spirit, that Basil refuses to draw, is well known. Both Basil and Gregory of Nyssa, Florensky concludes (fairly enough) also "viewed the Spirit together with the Father and the Son, not independently".[49] The more important text, one might think, is Athanasius's *Letters to Serapion On the Holy Spirit*. One might find the constant linking of Son and Spirit in that text a flowering of pneumatology, of the principle that the Spirit reposes upon the Son. But Florensky appeals to Athanasius's clear intention—again, fairly enough—to defend the character of the Spirit, so as not to backtrack about the Son.[50] Archly he cites Gregory of Nyssa on the "unfathomability of the procession of the Holy Spirit", as if that led to the reticence in pneumatology, any more than the unfathomability of the begetting of the Son led to reticence in christology.[51] One might interpret those or other texts so as to maximize, rather than minimize the development of a doctrine of the Spirit among the fathers.[52] Florensky's interpretation is hardly unassailable, but it is surprisingly plausible. Florensky's remarks are qualified so as to be theologically unobjectionable, and historically they are well founded—better founded, perhaps, than those (like myself) using such texts to eke out an entire book about this disappearing subject, the Holy Spirit.

The real test, surely, is the liturgy. As Florensky notes, "The liturgy is the most significant and essential function of the life of the body of the Church. The witness of the liturgy is the most reliable witness."[53]

At that point Florensky asserts that reticence about the Spirit "is not an accident of the history of theology . . . but a deficiency of [Christian] life itself". But unlike the similar-sounding thesis of Ephraim Radner in *The End of the Church*,[54] Florensky's thesis has the tone not of alarm but of gentle bemusement. He turns to "the point where the very celebration was directed toward the glorification of all three Hypostases . . . [t]he service of the Day of the Trinity",[55] by which Florensky means not Trinity Sunday, but Pentecost. The result is little short of amazing, and was in desperate need of further study.[56]

The first prayer of genuflection, or kneeling prayer (*gonyklisia*), is addressed to God the Father: "We pray to You and we beseech you, Lord who loves man, Father of our Lord and God and Savior Jesus Christ."[57]

The second prayer of genuflection belongs just as explicitly to the Son: "Lord Jesus Christ our God, who gave your peace to human beings and the gift of the Most Holy Spirit when you were still with us in life."[58]

The third prayer, "which occupies in the office a place that precisely corresponds to that of the two previous prayers, i.e., which is their liturgical analogue, opens with the address: 'Eternally flowing, living, and illuminating Source, consubstantial with the Father, enabling Power, You Who wonderfully accomplished the economy of human salvation. . . .' "[59]

Here Florensky's analysis deserves quotation at length.

> According to the meaning of the feast itself (the Day of the "Trinity"), according to the liturgical place of this third prayer, and finally, according to the epithets it uses for the Person to Whom it is addressed, it is natural to expect the following continuation: "O Holy Spirit" or "Comforter" or "King of Truth" or some other name of the Third Hypostasis of the Holy Trinity. This expectation is so natural that, in listening to this prayer, one inevitably hears something like this and remains convinced that it is addressed to the Holy Spirit. But this is not in fact the case. Here is the immediate continuation of the prayer which we interrupted: "O Christ our God; You Who have broken the indestructible chains of death and the unbreakable bonds of hell. . . ."[60]

It is so shocking that one wishes for an historian to examine the transmission history of the rite.[61]

Florensky suggests that the prayer "was composed, most probably, around the time" of Basil the Great.[62] If so, it might have reflected the context of Basil's famous soft-pedaling of the Spirit. But modern liturgical scholarship suggests that Florensky's conjecture was much too simple. The prolific liturgiologist Miguel Arranz argues on the basis of the earliest manuscripts that the first prayer may have semitic roots, perhaps in Jerusalem; that for the second prayer "we would have less trouble in recognizing a Basilian paternity"; but that the third prayer was "unknown by the most ancient Greek euchologia".[63] It may have been adopted in the Great Church at Constantinople at the beginning of the eleventh-century, choosing one for dissemination from a considerable variety of schemes.[64] It is attractive to consider that the oddity of the third prayer and its place in the sequence may be the historical result of some amalgamation.

One might agree with Florensky that the Pentecost prayers are odd, and yet find them so atypical that they make little difference:

> *Pace* Florensky, it is not true that Orthodox liturgy does not speak directly of and to the Spirit and in extremely robust fashion. The epicle-

> sis of their anaphoras puts direct invocation of the Spirit at the heart of all the church's liturgy; and Orthodox scholars have proclaimed the Latin mass's failure to do so such a defect as to call the consecration into question. Like a good many Orthodox who sink into the sea of their liturgy, Florensky pays too much attention to quirks of subsidiary liturgical acts and too little to the main event.[65]

In giving a synopsis of the prayer, Arranz describes it as "also" addressed to Jesus Christ. Arranz does not otherwise suggest what seems obvious to Florensky, that the third prayer ought to be addressed instead to the Spirit, so that Florensky's concerns get no direct answer. And yet for one who has read Florensky they do not go away; they recur in different forms. Already in the eleventh-century, that is, the Great Church in Constantinople had three kneeling prayers, the first to the Father, the second to the Son, and the third "also" to the Son, that starts with epithets usually appropriated to the Holy Spirit; since the beginning of the eleventh, that is, an apparent christological reduction, and precisely in the third place on Pentecost:

> Ἡ ἀενάως βρύονσα ζωτικὴ καὶ φωτιστικὴ πηγή
> ἡ συναΐδιος τοῦ Πατρὸς δημιουργικὴ δύναμις
> ὁ πᾶσαν οἰκονομίαν διὰ τὴν τῶν βροτῶν σωτηρίαν
> ὑπερκάλως πληρῶσας Χριστὲ ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν. . . .[66]

Is not the trinitarianism of the church sufficient to discipline sequences with tendencies as apparently binitarian as this? What can the amalgamators have been thinking? Did the prayers really survive from the eleventh- to the twentieth-century without comment or reform? Even if, on account of the indivisibility of the acts of the Trinity *ad extra,* it is not actually wrong to appropriate power, illumination, and management of the economy to the Son, how can this be liturgically fitting?

But Florensky is not finished. He proposes still more places to look, and find the Spirit lacking. If not in Athanasius or the Pentecost liturgy (whether from the fourth-century or the eleventh-century) where *are* we to look for a robust doctrine of the Spirit? No doubt, Florensky answers himself, in the ascetics.

Florensky finds there plenty of Spirit-talk. About it, he makes the same observation that Jenson and others have made about Barth: that the Spirit becomes the Spirit of Christ or the Spirit of God, "a kind of sanctifying and impersonal *power* of God".[67] Furthermore, the ascetic fathers "began unnoticeably and gradually to speak of 'grace,' i.e., of something completely impersonal",[68] another failure of nerve noted elsewhere by Jenson.[69] Even in the ascetic writers, "what is usually known is not the Holy Spirit but his grace-giving energies, His powers, His acts and activities".[70] Of course, that happens because of the work of the Spirit. It is in the nature of the Spirit's work that the Spirit of God inspires the spirit of the human being.

Accordingly, words like "spiritual" and "spirit-bearing" abound. The more this happens, however, the harder it becomes to distinguish the Holy Spirit from the human spirit. Is that a problem? Florensky puts it this way: one might also say that our sonship comes from the Son—and yet no one entertains as much uncertainty as to "whether a particular passage is talking about the Son or a son". "In essence, the holy fathers speak much not about the Holy Spirit but about a holy spirit."[71] If features of a personal perception of the Holy Spirit do emerge from the ascetic fathers, they are "preliminary and incomplete".[72]

Thus as Florensky compendiously sums up his argument: "If, by their indecisiveness or silence, the dogmatist fathers show their inner uncertainty concerning the question of the Holy Spirit, their insufficient knowledge of the Spirit as a Hypostasis, the ascetic fathers by their copious words reveal the same state of consciousness even more clearly."[73]

And yet here too the tone is one of bemusement rather than alarm. "However, it would be ridiculous to see in this incompleteness [as we tend to see in twentieth-century trinitarians] a personal defect of the saints, a defect attributable to some deficiency of profundity or purity."[74]

If there is anything predictable about Florensky's argument, it is that the East has something right, which the West has overlooked. But the diagnosis is the reverse of the usual one. Quite unlike the usual caricature of Eastern Orthodox polemic—according to which it is Western preoccupations with nature and grace, and Western subordination of the Spirit to the Son, that have led Western Christians to know too little of the Spirit—Florensky worries only that perhaps Western Christians have sought to know too much. Florensky quotes Mark of Ephesus to the effect that "We, together with St. John of Damascus and all the holy fathers, *do not know the difference between birth and procession*."[75]

V

These doctrines—or apophaticisms—of Calvin, Rahner, and, above all, Florensky, raise a question for theologians like myself who seek a more robust doctrine of the Spirit. Do we seek to know too much? What if the tendency of Barth, to name again the most celebrated example, to announce the Spirit and expound the Son, is the tendency of the Church (almost) always and everywhere? What if even the Eastern liturgy of Holy Trinity, in the third of three prayers, announces the Spirit and addresses the Son? What if the missions of the Spirit and the Son are such, that this is just as it should be? Or is it the case that one might see the very generality of a Spirit-deficit in the tradition as further evidence for "our not yet having fully appropriated the eschatological character of Scripture's talk about God"?[76]

Is it the case that the missions of the Son and the Spirit place them in the economy always together, in a pair? Then can we see the theological prac-

tices as different as that of Athanasius in the *Letters to Serapion* (naming Son and Spirit always together), Barth (announcing one and speaking of the other), and Bulgakov (making the yoking, or *dvoica*, itself a the subject of reflective exposition)[77] as all orthodox variations upon a theme, instead of rivalrous alternatives?

Again, is the Spirit—with the Creed—a "hypostasis", only we don't know what that is? Can "hypostasis" work so analogously, and so trinitarianly, that it comes out differently for each of the "Persons"? Is a hypostasis, perhaps, a "Person" whom we can recognize as such in the case of Jesus Christ, but more barely a narrative character in the case of the Father, and above all, an hypostasis in some third, more apophatic way in the case of the Spirit?

Or are all three authors really objecting to something that late twentieth- and early twenty-first-century theologians do not really exhibit at all, perhaps even pay too little attention to: various enthusiastic movements that have more to do, according to their detractors, with Montanism than with orthodoxy? After all, Calvin like Luther was aware of the *Schwärmer*; Rahner dismisses certain "elitist", charismatic movements in favor of the "every-day"; Florensky polemicizes against the "new [religious] consciousness", which sought new revelations and social utopia.[78] It may be true that the Spirit finishes its work of perfection at the Eschaton, but it is also true that Pentecost has come.

I merely raise these questions: I do not answer them. As Rahner also remarked, "There can . . . be an experience that amounts simultaneously to a genuine question."[79]

NOTES

1 I wish to thank the Center for the Study of Religion at Princeton University and the Center of Theological Inquiry at Princeton Theological Seminary for contributing to a leave that made possible the speedier completion of this essay, and especially the companionship and reference library of CTI.

2 In books: Karl Barth, *Come Holy Spirit* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1978) and *The Holy Spirit and Christian Life: The Theological Basis of Ethics*, trans. Birch Hoyle (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993). In the *Church Dogmatics:* §12, "God the Holy Spirit", I/1, pp. 448–490; Chapter II, Part III, "The Outpouring of the Holy Spirit", §§16–18, I/1, pp. 203–456; §62, "The Holy Spirit and the Gathering of the Christian Community", IV/1, pp. 643–739; §63, "The Holy Spirit and Christian Faith", IV/1, pp. 740–779; §67, "The Holy Spirit and the Upbuilding of the Christian Community", IV/2, pp. 614–726; §68, "The Holy Spirit and Christian Love", IV/2, pp. 727–840; §72, "The Holy Spirit and the Sending of the Christian Community", IV/3/2, pp. 681–901; §73, "The Holy Spirit and Christian Hope", IV/3/2, pp. 903–942. The Holy Spirit is also announced in the *Leitsätze* or thesis statements of §9, "The Triunity of God", I/1 pp. 348–383; §15, "The Mystery of Revelation", I/2, pp. 122–201; §16, "The Freedom of Man for God", I/2, pp. 203–279; §17, "The Revelation of God as the Abolition of Religion", I/2, pp. 280–361; §18, "The Life of the Children of God", I/2, pp. 362–456; §19, "The Word of God for the Church", I/2, pp. 457–537; §25, "The Fulfillment of the Knowledge of God", II/1, pp. 3–62; §26, "The Knowability of God", II/1, pp. 63–178; §28, "The Being of God as the One who Loves in Freedom", II/1, pp. 257–322; §64, "The Exaltation of the Son of Man", IV/2, pp. 3–377; and §[74], "The Foundation of the Christian Life", IV/4, pp. 2–218. At least two secondary books

are devoted to Barth on the Spirit: John Thompson, *The Holy Spirit in the Theology of Karl Barth* (Allison Park, PA: Pickwick Publications, 1991); Philip J. Rosato, *The Spirit as Lord: The Pneumatology of Karl Barth* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1981). And yet to read all this is to be persuaded of the basic justice of Jenson's critique (cited in the next note).

3 Above all and very elegantly, Robert W. Jenson, "You Wonder Where the Spirit Went", *Pro Ecclesia* Vol. 2 no. 3 (Summer, 1993), pp. 296–304; Rowan Williams, "Word and Spirit" in *On Christian Theology* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2000), pp. 107–127, esp. pp. 107, 117–118, 120–121; Eugene F. Rogers, Jr., "Supplementing Barth on Jews and Gender: Identifying God by Anagogy and the Spirit" *Modern Theology* Vol. 14 no. 1 (January, 1998), pp. 43–81; Eugene F. Rogers, Jr., "The Eclipse of the Spirit in Karl Barth" in *Conversing with Barth,* ed. John McDowell and Michael Higton (London: Ashgate, forthcoming). For another view, see now George Hunsinger, "The Mediator of Communion: Karl Barth's Doctrine of the Holy Spirit" in Hunsinger, *Disruptive Grace: Studies in the Theology of Karl Barth* (Grand Rapids and Cambridge: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2000), pp. 148–185.

4 Jenson, "You Wonder Where the Spirit Went", p. 303, in reference to IV/3.

5 I hope to resolve it later in a book on the subject.

6 Basil of Caesarea, *On the Holy Spirit* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1980).

7 Gregory, *Oration* 43.68. For discussion see Donald F. Winslow, *The Dynamics of Salvation: A Study in Gregory of Nazianzus* (Cambridge, MA: The Philadelphia Patristic Foundation, 1979), p. 123.

8 English translation in Edward R. Hardy, ed., *Christology of the Later Fathers*, The Library of Christian Classics (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1954), pp. 128–214; here, p. 195.

9 *Ep*. 102 (*PG* 37.193C), quoted in Winslow, p. 122.

10 Rowan Williams, "Word and Spirit" reprinted in *On Christian Theology* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2000), pp. 107–127.

11 Edward A. Dowey, *The Knowledge of God in Calvin's Theology,* third expanded ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1994), pp. 90–131 and pp. 172–189; H. J. Forstman, *Word and Spirit: Calvin's Doctrine of Biblical Authority* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1962); Wilhelm Niesel, *The Theology of Calvin*, trans. Harold Knight (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1980), pp. 30–38; Simon van der Linde, *De leer van den Heiligen Geest bij Calvijn: Bijdrage tot de kennis der reformatorische theologie* (Wageningen: Veenman, 1943). But see also Werner Krusche, *Das Wirken des heiligen Geistes nach Calvin* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1957), pp. 265–272.

12 Krusche, p. 1. The internal quotation comes from Calvin's commentary on Zechariah 4:6, my translation of Krusche's Latin; the English version by John Owen, *Commentaries on the Twelve Minor Prophets,* vol. 5 (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1950), p. 112, sounds much weaker.

13 So Émile Doumergue, *Jean Calvin,* vol. IV: *La pensée religieuse de Jean Calvin* (Lausanne: Georges Bridel & Cie. Éditeurs, 1910), pp. 241–242; François Wendel, *Calvin: Origins and Development of His Religious Thought,* trans. Philip Mairet (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), pp. 237–240; and the account of the eucharist in Alexandre Ganoczy, *Calvin, théologien de l'Église et du ministère,* Unam sanctam, no. 48 (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1964).

14 So Thomas F. Torrance, ed., "Introduction" to *Theological Dialogue Between Orthodox and Reformed Churches* (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1993), pp. ix–xxiv.

15 Doumergue, p. 242.

16 John Calvin, *Institutes* III.1.3 *in fin.* trans. Ford Lewis Battles, Library of Christian Classics, vol. XX (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1960).

17 John Calvin, *The Gospel According to St. John Part Two 11–21 and the First Epistle of John,* trans. T. H. L. Parker, Calvin's New Testament Commentaries, ed. David W. Torrance and Thomas F. Torrance (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1979), p. 148, on John 17:21. Part of the passage appears in Wendel, p. 238.

18 John Calvin, *The Epistles of Paul to the Romans and Thessalonians,* trans. Ross MacKenzie, Calvin's New Testament Commentaries, ed. David W. Torrance and Thomas F. Torrance (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1980), pp. 123–124. This passage appears in Doumergue, pp. 241–242.

19 Calvin, *Romans,* pp. 156–189 (chap. 8).

20 Krusche, p. 265, with further citations from Calvin.
21 Calvin, *Romans,* p. 178 (8:26 *in fin.*).
22 I owe my attention to Calvin on these matters to Haywood Spangler, "Christian Conceptions of Providence Related to Choices in Healthcare", Ph.D. dissertation, the University of Virginia, 2003, and this section follows his account with his permission. I am particularly grateful to him for his judicious selection of quotations, and for his attention to rhetorical analysis. The present quotation comes from *In.* III.20.3.
23 *In.* I.xvii. 9 and 11.
24 *In.* I.xvii. 11.
25 Serene Jones, *Calvin and the Rhetoric of Piety* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1995).
26 *In.* II.ii.27.
27 *In.* I.xvi.9.
28 Spangler, dissertation, pp. 95–96 of typescript.
29 *In.* II.ii.16, translation slightly altered.
30 Spangler, p. 86.
31 Calvin, *Commentary on Hebrews,* trans. W. B. Johnston, Calvin's New Testament Commentaries, ed. David W. Torrance and Thomas F. Torrance (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1980), pp. 157–158 (on 11:1). I owe this passage to Dowey, p. 190.
32 Karl Rahner, "Experience of the Holy Spirit" in *Theological Investigations* XVIII, trans. Edward Quinn (New York, NY: Crossroad Publishers, 1983), p. 191. In this passage Rahner is not considering extraordinary manifestations of the Spirit.
33 Rahner, p. 199, emphasis added.
34 Rahner, pp. 207 and 208.
35 Rahner, pp. 202–203.
36 Rahner, pp. 206–207.
37 Rahner, p. 189.
38 Pavel Florensky, "Letter Five: The Comforter" (= chapter 6), in *The Ground and Pillar of the Truth,* trans. Boris Jakim (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997), pp. 80–105. Original: *Stolp I utverzhdenie istiny* (Moscow: Put', 1914). Pavel Florensky (1882–1937) is different from the historian Georges Florovsky, whose works have been available in English for a long time.
39 *Ground,* p. 81.
40 *Summa,* prologue; cf. *Ground,* p. 82.
41 *Ground,* p. 81.
42 *Ground,* p. 82.
43 *Ground,* pp. 101–104, with references to an old version of Luke11:12, in which the Lord's Prayer goes, "Our Father . . . Thy Holy Spirit come down upon us", as well as to Gregory of Nyssa, Irenaeus of Lyon, and Maximus the Confessor.
44 *Ground,* p. 83.
45 *Ground,* p. 83.
46 *Ground,* p. 84.
47 *Ground,* p. 85.
48 The ordinary eucharistic rite has of course been exhaustively studied, and scholars characteristically find in it a trinitarian shape lacking in the West. So Taft, speaking of the pre-communion rites: "The Byzantine liturgy takes the shape it has in form and formula, text and symbol, because of its radically trinitarian shape and theology, a shape and theology quite different from the radically Christological emphasis of the ancient Roman *Canon Missae*, largely unaffected by the trinitarian controversies that embroiled the Christian East from the late 4th century on. This trinitarian eucharistic theology of the Byzantine rite, and its symbolic expression in details like the zeon [the dropping of warm water into the chalice to symbolize the descent of the Spirit], are nevertheless Integral to a total *Symbolgestalt*, and there is no way that any of its elements can be understood or judged in isolation, apart from this integrated eucharistic pneumatology as expressed by the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom in the anaphora and in the prayers immediately before and after it." Robert F. Taft, *A History of the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom, Vol. V The Precommunion Rites,* Orientalia Christiana Analecta 261 (Rome: Pontificio Istituto Orientale, 2000), pp. 495–496.

See also J[uan] Metéos, "L'action du Saint-Esprit dans la liturgie dite de s. Jean Chrysostome", *Proche-Orient Chrétien: Revue d'études et d'informations* Vol. 9 (1959), pp. 193–208.

49 *Ground,* p. 86.
50 The subject of another article.
51 *Ground,* p. 89, citing Nyssa, *Catechetical Orations* III.
52 More promising, for example, might be Athanasius, *Orations Against the Arians* III, pp. 23–26; Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechetical Lectures*; Gregory Nazianzen, sermons *On Baptism* and *On the Festival of Light*.
53 *Ground,* p. 87.
54 Ephraim Radner, *The End of the Church: A Pneumatology of Christian Division in the West* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998).
55 *Ground,* p. 87, sentence and paragraph boundary elided.
56 See now Miguel Arranz, "Les prières de la Gonyklisia ou de la Génuflexion du jour de la Pentecôte dans l'ancien Euchologe byzantin", *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* Vol. 48 (1982), pp. 92–123. I am grateful to Paul Meyendorff for this reference.
57 *Ground,* p. 87. This is Boris Jakim's translation of Florensky's quotations. Florensky quotes *Bol'shoi Trebnik Dopolnitel'nyi*, ch. 78: The office of the Holy Pentecost, ed. of the Kiev-Pech. Lavra, 1875. The service is perhaps most easily available in a slightly different English translation in Hapgood: *Service Book of the Holy Orthodox-Catholic Apostolic Church, Compiled, Translated, and Arranged from the Old Church-Slavonic Service Books of the Russian Church, and Collated with the Service Books of the Greek Church*, sixth rev. ed., trans. by Isabel Florence Hapgood (Englewood, NJ: Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese, 1983), "Pentecost (Whitsunday)", pp. 245–257; here, pp. 249–250. I follow Jakim's version of Florensky's quotations, since it is best calculated to make Florensky's points.

The standard, authoritative source for the Greek underlying Florensky's rite is still Jacques Goar, *Euchologion, sive Rituale Graecorum complectens ritus et ordines divinae liturgiae, officiorum, sacramentorum . . .* , second ed. (Venice: Typographia Bartholomaei Javarina, 1730; reprint ed. Graz: Akademische Druck- u. Verlagsanstalt, 1960), pp. 597–606, with Greek and Latin in parallel columns. For a modern, critical edition of the earliest extant Greek texts, see *L'Eucologio Costantinopolitano,* cited below, n. 64.

For an edition taking account of the Old Church Slavonic, cf. Michael Rajewsky, *Euchologion der orthodox-katholischen Kirche aus dem griechischen Original-Text mit durchgängiger Berücksichtigung der altslavischen Übersetzung ins Deutsche übertragen* (Vienna: L.C. Zamarski & C. Dittmarsch, 1861), Part 3, pp. 29–37.

58 *Ground*, p. 87, translation modified; cf. Hapgood, pp. 252–253.
59 *Ground*, p. 87; cf. Hapgood, pp. 254–255.
60 *Ground*, pp. 87–88; Goar, pp. 600–601; cf. Hapgood, pp. 254–255. The translation in Hapgood makes the surprise not quite so dramatic, as the "O Christ our God" comes a little earlier in the prayer. Cf. also Rajewsky, p. 37.
61 See Arranz, n. 56 above. But as I note, Arranz does not answer or even really raise Florensky's question.
62 *Ground*, p. 87.
63 Arranz, p. 102.
64 Arranz, "Les prières de la Pentecôte", esp. pp. 122–123. For an edition, see Miguel Arranz, ed., *L'Eucologio Costantinopolitano agli inizi del secolo XI: Hagiasmatarion & Archieratikon (rituale & pontificale) con l'aggiunta del Leiturgikon (messale)* (Rome: Editrice Pontificia Università Gregoriana, 1996), p. 121.
65 Robert Jenson, personal correspondence, 26 September 2002.
66 *L'euchologio,* p. 121, II. 1–4; Goar, p. 600. If δημιουργικὴ is usually appropriated to Son-language, then πληρῶσας is usually appropriated to Spirit-language.
67 *Ground*, p. 90.
68 *Ground*, p. 90.
69 Robert W. Jenson, *Systematic Theology* I (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 149.
70 *Ground*, p. 90.
71 *Ground*, p. 90.
72 *Ground*, p. 90.
73 *Ground*, p. 90.

74 *Ground*, p. 91.
75 *Ground*, p. 89, quoting Mark of Ephesus, *The Unpublished Works of Mark of Ephesus*, trans. Avraam Norov (into Russian) (St. Petersburg, 1860), p. 27.
76 Robert Jenson, personal correspondence, 27 September 2002; for more, see his *Unbaptized God: The Basic Flaw in Ecumenical Theology* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress Press, 1992), esp. pp. 1–16, 107–147.
77 E.g., Serge Boulgakov, *Le Paraclete*, trans. Constantin Andronikof (Paris: Aubier, 1944) and Sergius Bulgakov, *The Bride of the Lamb*, trans. Boris Jakim (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, and Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2002), e.g., pp. 97–98. See also, compendiously, Charles Graves, *The Holy Spirit in the Theology of Sergius Bulgakov* (Geneva: Word Council of Churches, 1972).
78 *Ground*, p. 91, translator's note b.
79 Rahner, p. 192.