

## **The Holy Spirit in the Theology of T. F. Torrance**

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In the theology of Thomas Torrance, the doctrine of the Holy Spirit represents the culmination of reflection on the doctrine of God as the Father and the Son, that is, the Life internal (*ad intra*) to the Trinity. It marks out, also, the point of departure for the completion of reflection on all of God's works external (*ad extra*) to the Triune life.

### ***Introduction***

The challenge to understanding Torrance's theology at this point is much the same as at all other points, but perhaps intensified. The reader is tempted to think that Torrance's work essentially involves fine tuned redefinition of terms within the historically orthodox Christian faith. However, the significance of Torrance's contribution can only be fully grasped when one realizes that his theological formulations call for the cultivation of new habits of mind, new ways of thinking, not just new thoughts.

Methodologically, Torrance approaches the doctrine of the Holy Spirit in a way consistent with every other part of his work. Knowledge of God is not an independent human possibility. Without the self-revealing action of God which also must secure its effective reception, there could be no regulative knowledge of God. God can be apprehended only if, when and where God has acted decisively to reveal himself. This is nowhere more emphatically the case than when giving consideration to God the Holy Spirit.

Definite knowledge of God as Holy Spirit is given through Jesus Christ the Son of God incarnate because this is the apex of revelation, the appointed meeting place of the whole God with humanity. There in the person, activity and communication of Jesus we are led to the Father and to the Spirit. In that meeting God makes possible and actual knowledge of our creaturely relations with the Father, Son and Spirit (*ad extra*) but also the internal and eternal relations of the Father, Son, and Spirit (*ad intra*). Thus Torrance's pneumatology, in conformity with the actuality of revelation, is Christocentric and incarnational in a way that comes to fruition in an onto-relational and trinitarian formulation. What all this means we intend to unpack in terms of the Holy Spirit.

One more thing must be said before we can begin our exposition. The God revealed in Jesus Christ cannot be approached neutrally because in Jesus Christ God has not approached us neutrally. Revelation and reconciliation are inextricably related in the knowledge of this God. Thus, for Torrance, how we come to know the true identity of the Spirit is necessarily conditioned by Who the Holy Spirit is. Essentially for Torrance the Holy Spirit is rightly identified as the Spirit of Jesus Christ the Son of God and the Spirit of God the Father. The Spirit can only be personally recognized and identified in relation to Jesus Christ because the Spirit is the Spirit of Jesus and Jesus is the place where God the Father and God the Son have provided access to the knowledge of themselves. The place where the knowledge, faith and worship of the people of God arise then is in and through Jesus Christ. In answer as to how God can be known, Torrance answers, the people of God have come to know, trust and worship the Father through the Son and in the Spirit.

From the focal point of God's self revelation in Jesus we come to know God in relation to ourselves, in the meeting. Out of that meeting which calls for doxology and communion

(*koinonia*) arises a deeper level of understanding. We come to grasp the nature of God's relationship to us as Father, Son, and Spirit, the relations and interactions of God with that which is not God, *ad extra*. Furthermore, out of that knowledge has grown, by the grace of God, an actual knowledge of the internal and eternal relations between the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Torrance along with the early church affirms that the truth of God in action towards us corresponds to the identity of God in the inner Triune life. That is, in Jesus Christ God the Father through the power of the Spirit is able to accomplish an astounding self revelation so that we in the end can and do have an actual knowledge of God which is congruent with God's own self knowledge as Father Son and Spirit.<sup>1</sup>

Following this pattern of God's self revelation we will attempt to articulate some of the main insights Torrance has about the Holy Spirit. We will, then, begin with the knowledge of the Spirit as made known in Jesus Christ.

### **The Holy Spirit and the Incarnate Son**

For Torrance the disclosure of the Holy Spirit reached its fullness in Jesus Christ. Consequently, the church came to know the Spirit through the incarnate Son. There was no independent revelation of the Spirit since the Spirit has no autonomous identity. The Spirit is the Spirit of the Father and of the Son.<sup>2</sup> In Jesus Christ the church came to discover in the deepest way that the Holy Spirit is God and God is the Holy Spirit.<sup>3</sup> And furthermore it realized that the fulfillment of the direct working of God among his creatures through immediate relations with them is entirely dependent upon the Holy Spirit.<sup>4</sup>

In the presence of Jesus Christ the church recognized that it was dealing in an intensely personal way with God the Father. Similarly it knew and came to articulate more and more explicitly that it was dealing in a profoundly immediate way with God the Spirit.<sup>5</sup> The roots of this revelation were grounded in the very life and activity of Jesus Christ. This was most apparent in Jesus' conception by the Spirit in the womb of Mary and his anointing by the Spirit upon his baptism in the Jordan. But throughout his whole life, in all that Jesus did and said, the presence and power of the Spirit of God was present and active in his healings, raising persons from the dead, exorcisms, overcoming temptations and obedience, in his rejoicing and in his exasperation. Jesus himself spoke clearly and often of his sending the Spirit upon his disciples, of the Spirit baptizing and indwelling them, and of their empowerment for participation in his mission during his earthly life, and also after it. In fact Jesus' entire saving life-purpose could be summed up in saying that he came to take us to the Father and send us his Spirit.<sup>6</sup> The teaching ministry of Jesus culminates in his directive to his apostles to go out baptizing "in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."<sup>7</sup>

But most profoundly the deep connection between Jesus and the Spirit was recognized in the central act of his ministry which caught up all that he had been doing and saying—the crucifixion. It was at the Cross where the reality of his union with the Holy Spirit of God was most profoundly active and manifest. In the supreme obedience of hope, faith and love Jesus offered up himself by handing over his Spirit to the Father. Thus both the Apostle Paul and the author of the book of Hebrews explicitly propound the atoning work as one co-involving the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.<sup>8</sup>

Torrance points out that this unity of presence and action led the church in its declarations of faith to say that as the Son was one in being (*homoousios*) with the Father, so the Spirit was one in being (*homoousios*) with the Father and Son.<sup>9</sup> That is to say the Spirit sent by Jesus was to be

regarded as divine and not as a creature. Thus, Torrance notes, the early church worshiped, sang and offered prayer to the Father through the Son and in the Spirit.<sup>10</sup> It declared the Holy Spirit the Lord, the Giver of Life.<sup>11</sup>

This unity of Jesus and the Spirit was understood in terms of a unity of being and activity of the whole Triune God. Thus Athanasius spoke of the Father doing all things through the Word and in the Holy Spirit and said that the Spirit is the activity of the Son “who is not outside of him but in him as he is in the Father...[so that] we discern that there is only one godhead, in the Father who is above all things, in the Son who pervades all things, and in the Spirit who is active in all things through the Word.”<sup>12</sup> In Torrance’s words there is one operation of God in the world, but this takes form as a two-fold activity in Jesus Christ and in the Spirit.<sup>13</sup>

There is not a separate activity of the Holy Spirit in revelation or salvation in addition to or independent of the activity of Christ, for what he does is to empower and actualise the words and works of Christ in our midst as the words and works of the Father.<sup>14</sup>

It follows then that in the self-giving and self-revelation of the Son we have the self-giving and self-revelation of the Father and of the Spirit.<sup>15</sup> That is we have the self-giving and self-revelation of the whole triune God.<sup>16</sup> The astounding conclusion then is that God has made possible, and actual in Jesus, a true human knowledge of himself, not just as God is towards us, but in some real measure as God knows himself, as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, from all eternity.<sup>17</sup>

Moreover this means that the whole God, Father, Son, and Spirit,<sup>18</sup> God did not send someone or something else to accomplish our reconciliation and redemption, but at his own cost himself achieved our salvation. God was directly and immediately present and active in Christ by the Spirit for us and our salvation.<sup>19</sup> There was no deistic distance between God and what occurred in the entire life of Jesus from conception to crucifixion and resurrection.<sup>20</sup> What God has done for us through Christ and in the Spirit is not an arbitrary act of will, but the out working *ad extra* of the profound reality of his nature and character *ad intra*.<sup>21</sup> God is who he is in Christ by the Spirit, our Redeemer.<sup>22</sup>

For Torrance, a proper Christocentrism makes pneumatology no less central.<sup>23</sup> The doctrine of the Spirit develops from the doctrine of the Son.<sup>24</sup> In and through the incarnation of the Son of God the being and action of the Holy Spirit is revealed in two dimensions. Thus the church in its own worship and doctrine traced out the two dimensions in terms of two relations. The relation of the Holy Spirit with the Triune life and also in relation to the creation. So, on the basis of the person and work of Jesus Christ, Torrance considers the Person and Work of the Holy Spirit in these two relations. We will take up Torrance’s insights on the intra-Trinitarian relation first.

### **The Holy Spirit in Relation *ad intra***

The first thing that should be said about the Spirit is that the Spirit is God, is divine. This was uncontroversial in the church until the fourth century when it was challenged. As noted above Torrance traces out how the divinity of the Holy Spirit was subsequently defended and firmly established on the basis of the Incarnation of the Son of God and the apostolic deposit of faith given to the church in its Scripture. The Spirit is Lord, Giver of Life and is rightly to be regarded as one in being and act (*homoousios*) with the Father and Son.<sup>25</sup> The Holy Spirit is not a creature, even a supreme creature, but is to be acknowledged as the Eternal Creator Spirit (*Spiritus Creator*).<sup>26</sup>

### ***The Holy Spirit is Personal***

The second thing prominent in Torrance's exposition of the church's faith is that the Holy Spirit is personal. Following Gregory Nyssen, Torrance notes that the Holy Spirit exists personally with his own distinctive existence and acts with his own freedom to 'choose, move and act as he wills with the power to carry out every purpose.'<sup>27</sup> In the New Testament we find the Holy Spirit "speaking, witnessing, crying grieving, interceding, intervening, creating, rebuking, judging, etc."<sup>28</sup> Jesus referred to the Spirit as "he" and as "the Paraclete," another Comforter.<sup>29</sup> The Holy Spirit cannot be regarded as an impersonal emanation or a cosmological force or even the as an energy of God.<sup>30</sup> For the being and the working (*energia*) of the Spirit can never be separated without calling into question the unity of the Trinity in being and activity.<sup>31</sup> The Holy Spirit is the intensely active presence of God himself among us through Jesus Christ.<sup>32</sup> In the Spirit we are confronted with God in his own irreducible transcendence and his own self judgment and salvation.<sup>33</sup>

Speaking of Athanasius' understanding, Torrance says that since

there is no separation between the Activity and the Being of God in the Trinity or in the Incarnation or in the work of the Spirit, that carries theology consistently forward from 'the economic Trinity' into 'the ontological Trinity', for what God is in the economy of his saving operations towards us in Jesus Christ he is antecedently and inherently and eternally in himself as the Triune God.<sup>34</sup>

God personally, really and actually interacts with what he has made. The answer as to how this is possible for the holy, transcendent being of God to do this is: through the Son and in the Spirit.

According to Torrance, the early church had to radically reconceptualize the nature of being itself, beginning with God's own being as made known in the incarnate Son. Then, all that was discovered and articulated about the Son was seen to follow in its own proper way for the Holy Spirit also.

This can be seen in the gradual but inexorable transformation in the mind of the church of the Greek concept of *hypostasis*. This word was usually understood to be synonymous with *ousia*. However in the church it became more and more associated with the words *proposton* (face, person) and *onoma* (name), terms which were decidedly unrelated to the notion of essential being. Under the impact of the recognition that the Son and the Spirit were homoousios, the notion of the *hypostasis* (Person) was personalized.

Consequently, the Holy Spirit came to be regarded as having a real personal and objective subsistence in God and yet exercising the divine functions in his own Person.<sup>35</sup> Epiphanius saw a connection, on the one hand, between the "I am" of God's self identification in Hebraic thought and *ousia*, and on the other, the notions of name, face and *hypostasis*. Torrance sees Epiphanius bringing the Nicene belief in the Holy Spirit to a climatic conclusion. Thus Epiphanius could write<sup>36</sup>

We call the Father God, the Son God, and the Holy Spirit God...When you pronounce the homoousion, you declare that the Son is God of God, and the Holy Spirit is God of the same Godhead.<sup>37</sup>

A further explication given by Epiphanius of the nature of the divine persons (*hypostaseis*) indicates a profound intensification of the personal aspect. Rather than speaking of the different Persons as 'modes of existence,' as the Cappadocian Fathers did, Epiphanius preferred to speak of them more concretely as *enhypostatic* in God. That is, the living individuality and reality of the divine Persons is substantiated by coinhering together in the one being of God. Thus there are not three gods or three parts to God, but one Tripersonal God.<sup>38</sup> The Spirit, then, must belong to and flow from the inner being and light of the Holy Trinity.

### ***The Communion of the Trinity***

For Torrance several other key elements are important for grasping the church's understanding of its faith in God the Holy Spirit. Being *enhypostatic* in the Godhead the Holy Spirit came to be regarded uniquely as being "between" the Father and the Son.<sup>39</sup> Thus the Spirit was identified by different theologians as being 'in the midst of the Father and the Son,' or being 'the bond of the Trinity' The Spirit was also regarded as the 'intermediate' between the Father and the Son and the 'communion' (*koinonia*) of the Father and the Son.<sup>40</sup> Augustine incorporated this insight when he expounded the doctrine of the Holy Spirit as 'the consubstantial communion of the Father and the Son' and as 'the mutual love where with the Father and the Son reciprocally love one another.'<sup>41</sup>

### ***Immediate Personal Activity of God***

Against their Greek dualistic background, the most essential transformation in the frame of mind in the church was to regard divine being as being inherently personal and relational. In wrestling with the incarnate presence (*ensarkos parousia*) of God in Jesus and in light of the Old Testament revelation of the Face and Word of God the Nicene theologians came to declare that "whatever is said and done by God is said and done exclusively *from the Person (ek prosopou)* of Christ" because "to see and hear the Lord Jesus Christ is to see and hear God the Father himself face to face."<sup>42</sup> In Jesus Christ God came in person. Furthermore, the recognition of the very presence of the Holy Spirit in the person and work of the Son only intensified and personalized the church's grasp of the personal nature of the being of God. For the Spirit is the presence and immediate personal activity of the Creator "in the sheer reality of his own transcendent being" as Torrance puts it.<sup>43</sup> Like the Son the Spirit is in God and of God, that is, from the very being of God.<sup>44</sup>

### ***Personal Onto-relations***

But not only was the conception of the being of God radically qualified by the incorporation of personal concepts. The notion of personhood itself was reciprocally transfigured. In the church's consideration of the mutual presence and action of the Son and the Spirit *homoousios* with the Father, it was forced to clarify the nature of the differentiation of the Persons (hypostaseis). For the Father, Son and Spirit must be understood as united in being while they remain personally and eternally distinguishable. If they are not distinguishable in terms of deity, eternality, being, act and powers (or any other attribute appropriate to God) then in what does the difference consist?

All we can do here is point to the essential conclusion, as Torrance understands it, to which the church through its teachers came. In short the answer was that the being of God was constituted by personal relations internal to God. The being of God came to be regarded as inherently and eternally personal and relational.<sup>45</sup> The relations of the Persons belong to what the Persons of the Trinity are such that if the Spirit was not the Spirit of the Son, or if the Son was not the Son of the Father or the Father the Father of the Son, they would not be who they are. Torrance coins a term to represent this. He says that "person" becomes an "onto-relational" concept.<sup>46</sup> The Father could not be the Father without the Son and the Spirit, nor the Son be the Son, nor the Spirit be the Spirit. The interrelations between the three divine Persons Torrance says are "substantive relations or 'onto-relations'".<sup>47</sup>

Following the lead of the New Testament itself in its indication of the relations among the divine Persons, each relation became associated with a distinct term. The Fatherhood of God was identified with paternity (begetting or unbegotten), the Son with filiation (being begotten) and the Spirit with spiration or procession.<sup>48</sup> The differentiation of the divine Persons is grounded in their differing relations which do not mitigate against their unity but rather established the oneness of

the Triune being.<sup>49</sup> Thus, the only difference between the Persons is the difference of their 'subsistent relations' (as they came to be called).<sup>50</sup>

### ***Perichoresis***

The church in the exposition of its faith could not easily find an existing term to properly refer to the essential and absolutely unique quality and reality of these subsistent onto-relations.

Consequently, taking its lead from the apostolic witness, especially the Gospel of John where Jesus says 'I am in the Father and the Father is in me,' it is possible that it may have coined a term for that purpose. Torrance explains that based on the word *chorein* (from the root *choreo*, but not *choreuo*=to dance) meaning 'to make room, to contain, or to go,' the noun *perichoresis* (the prefix *peri-* indicating a circle) came to be used to point to the absolutely unique relations of the triune persons in terms of the mutual indwelling or reciprocal containing of one another.<sup>51</sup>

In the framework of this perichoretic apprehension of the Triune being-in-relation of God, the Holy Spirit was seen to uniquely proceed out of the coinherent communion of the Father and Son. In fact the Spirit himself was seen to be "the enhypostatic Love and Communion of Love in the perichoretic relations between the Father and the Son."<sup>52</sup> In this way the church articulated the profound truth that God is Being in Loving Communion since the Spirit is the Union and Communion of love between the Father and the Son.

### ***Procession of the Spirit***

It was inevitable that the question of the procession of the Holy Spirit would arise. What exactly is meant by this subsisting relation in differentiation from the Father's paternity and the Son's filiation? Many of the teachers of the church resisted attempts to probe any further than to affirm only what this relation is not: procession is not paternity or filiation but a unique relation appropriate to the Spirit in contrast to the two others.

However, representatives of the Western church later went on to make one clarification regarding the procession of the Holy Spirit; one which was sufficient to contribute to a schism between it and the Eastern branch of the Church. The West, in order to protect the divinity of the Son, altered the ecumenical Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed by expanding the clause which said the Spirit proceeds from the Father by adding the word "and the son" (*filioque*). The Eastern church claimed this "double procession" threw the unity of the Godhead into disarray for now it seemed that there were two sources or founts for the spiration of the Holy Spirit.

Torrance invested a significant amount of his life in pursuit of a reconciliation between Eastern orthodox and Western branches of the church. His efforts along with those of others have indeed born fruit (or at least first fruits) in resolving the theological rift regarding the procession of the Spirit. We cannot even survey the history much less the story of the resolution of that dispute. We can only point out key elements which led to an official reconciling statement of agreement.

The agreed upon language that the Spirit proceeds "from the Father *through* the Son," as significant as it is, cannot convey the richness and theological depth of the understanding achieved which made it possible. Only consideration of the theological reflection that lies behind it can indicate its true meaning and value.<sup>53</sup> A brief summary must suffice.

As it turned out, the key to resolution was found in a renewed apprehension of the significance the teachings of Athanasius, Epiphanius, Didymus the Blind, Cyril of Alexandria and Hilary over against what now seems the more ambiguous formulations of the Cappadocians. While making every qualification to avoid any subordinationism of the Son to the Father, the Cappadocians

nevertheless tended to locate the unity of the Godhead in the mon-arche (*monarchia*) of the Father, at times speaking of the person of the Father as the cause and source of the being of the Son and Spirit.<sup>54</sup> In this frame it was more appropriate to speak of both the Son and the Spirit being from the Father, each in their own way. However, this way of putting it seemed to suggest that the divinity of the Son and the Spirit was derived.

On the basis of Athanasius' line of thinking, however, this problem could be avoided. On the basis of 1) a clear and profound understanding of the *homoousios* applying to the Trinity as a whole, 2) the *hypostaseis* considered as being *enhypostatic*, 3) the unity of action (*energia*) of the one God considered *enousios*, 4) the personal subsisting relations grasped in such a way that the perichoretic quality of them applies to the whole God 5) such that the Holy Spirit is seen to be the union and communion of the Father and the Son, and that 6) the relations then must not be construed in terms of causation but in terms of that perichoretic communion of the Spirit, it should then be concluded that 7) the unity of Trinity must not be located in the person of the Father, but in the perichoretic Triunity of the being of God. The being of the Spirit should not be said to proceed from the person of the Father, but rather the person of the Spirit proceeds from the person of the Father who, in his being, is in communion with the Son, i.e., in the communion that the Spirit is. In this frame, the deity of all the Persons is clearly underived. All the persons have their being by being perichoretically and enhypostatically Triune. Thus the Unity in being of God is none other than a Triunity.<sup>55</sup>

Perhaps the most succinct way of formulating this understanding is captured by Torrance's summary of Athanasius' doctrine of God as "Trinity in Unity and Unity in Trinity."<sup>56</sup> In this way the unity of the Godhead is secured without inadvertently being open to the charge of subordinationism or a hierarchy within the Godhead while the divinity of the Son is secure without inadvertently leaving the unity of the Godhead vulnerable to conceptual deterioration. It was in this way that agreement was reached between the two branches of the church on the procession of the Spirit.

In conclusion to this section a few more things can be said about the identity of the Holy Spirit concerning the relations internal to the Triune Life as Torrance understands it.

### ***God is Spirit***

The Holy Spirit is to be regarded as one of the hypostaseis of the Triune God. However, it is proper, as is obvious in Holy Scripture, to speak of the whole of God as Spirit. Spirit can refer to God in an absolute way without referring to the distinction of persons. Spirit then is equally applicable to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. God as Spirit designates the divine nature of God and so of all the Persons. To say that God is Spirit designates his "infinite, transcendent, invisible, immaterial, immutable nature" and "characterizes what God is in himself, in the boundless perfection of his holy being."

### ***The Freedom of God as Spirit***

But, Torrance goes on to say it also "characterizes what God is in his limitless freedom toward every thing that is not God."<sup>57</sup> Because God is Spirit and the Holy Spirit is God, "through the ineffability of his own personal mode of being, the Holy Spirit confronts us with the sheer ineffability of God, for in him we are in immediate touch with the ultimate being and acts of the All-Holy and Almighty before whom all our forms of thought and speech break off in wonder and adoration."<sup>58</sup>

### ***God's Sheer Otherness***

By the Holy Spirit we are confronted by God the Spirit, God in his transcendent freedom to act according to his own divine Being and the “total sovereignty and power of His Presence.”<sup>59</sup> As Spirit God is imageless. God remains beyond human knowing in the unfathomable depth of his own infinite transcendent being and self-knowledge. The sheer otherness of God, incomprehensible by mere creatures, is manifest through the Holy Spirit. So Torrance says the Holy Spirit “guards the ultimate mystery and ineffability of God in virtue of the fact that while it is in the Spirit that we are confronted with the ultimate being and presence of God, he is not approachable in thought or knowable in himself. The Holy Spirit is *Spirit*...He is ‘Spirit of Spirit for God is Spirit.’”<sup>60</sup>

The Holy Spirit in his own hypostasis remains “veiled by the very revelation of the Father and Son which he brings.” The Spirit remains hidden, does not speak of himself and does not show us himself, for the Spirit does not come in his own personal name but in the name of the Father and the Son. “The Holy Spirit is indeed personally present among us, but in his *transparent and translucent mode of being*.”<sup>61</sup>

### ***The Freedom of Self-giving***

But there is another side to the freedom of God the Holy Spirit. In God’s unlimited freedom God is also free to actually “impart” himself while nevertheless remaining infinitely and transcendently Lord over our creaturely existence. The freedom of God to be present to the creature means that in the Spirit God is free to bring to completion God’s purposes for the creature by not only moving toward creature but by acting in the creature to establish “an enduring ontological relation” with God.<sup>62</sup>

Following Basil and Athanasius, Torrance reminds us that only God knows God and only God reveals God. Echoing the Apostle Paul, only the Spirit knows the depths of God so it is only in the Spirit and by his power that we may really know God and know God according to his nature as ineffable and imageless Spirit, that is according to the Truth of God’s being Spirit. So Torrance points out that “the revelation of the unknowable is the peculiar function of the Spirit.”<sup>63</sup> God is ineffable, but not closed to us. We may, by the Holy Spirit, truly apprehend even if we may not comprehend God.<sup>64</sup>

### ***Double Mediation***

This then brings us full circle. For the knowledge of the Spirit *ad intra* can only come by way of the revelation of God in the incarnate Son (*ad extra*). In the Son we have a double mediation.<sup>65</sup> The Son of God mediates the Spirit to us, since the Spirit cannot be known independently. The Spirit is known in the Son as the Spirit of the Son and then as the Spirit of the Father revealed in him. But we are also shown that our own openness to the revelation mediated in the Son is made possible only by the ineffable mediation of the Spirit at work in us to acknowledge the Son. For we are made to realize that without the Son we would have no knowledge of the Spirit and without the Spirit mediated to us by the Son, we would have no knowledge of the Son.<sup>66</sup>

### ***God Intrinsically Alive***

One final but important theme for Torrance on the doctrine of the Spirit is that by the Spirit God is to be regarded as intrinsically alive with activity both within and without the Triune life. God is who he is in his activity towards us through the Son and in the Spirit...so it “belongs to the essential nature of his eternal Being to move and energise and act.”<sup>67</sup> This was a radically different apprehension of ultimate and transcendent reality as understood in a Greek frame of mind. Torrance notes that Aristotle’s conception of God can be characterized as the activity of immobility and as one who moves the world only by being an object of its desire.<sup>68</sup>



The movement of the Spirit of God, is spiritual and so unique. Its movement is therefore incomparable to creaturely movement. The power of God to act and the act of his power cannot be identified with human acts, accomplishments and power. Doing so would amount to a mythologization. God's power is a spiritual power that is essentially the movement of Holy Loving Communion between the Father Son and Spirit.<sup>69</sup>

All God's works *ad extra*, then, will share in the same spirituality of action. In particular the act of God is a unified movement of Being and Act. God acts according to who he is and who he is generates what he does.<sup>70</sup> More particularly, the movement of God in all his ways "can be expressed in the Patristic formulation: *From the Father, through the Son, and in the Spirit and in the Spirit, through the Son, and to the Father.*"<sup>71</sup> That is God's works are all shaped by his Triune nature.

### ***The Becoming of God***

In creation and reconciliation/recreation, the two greatest movements of God, we see the astounding freedom of God to act in the power and communion of his Spirit so that we can rightly say that by them God becomes something other than what he was. God has the freedom to be affected by something new, something not God.<sup>72</sup> For in creation God became something that he was not: a Creator. And in bringing about our reconciliation, the Son of God became incarnate, something that the Son of God was not.<sup>73</sup> In the Spirit God is free to be open to his creation in a way that affects the very being of God. Ultimately God's becoming means that in the Spirit and through the Son we are being brought up to share in the very Triune life of Union and Communion with the Father. Such a divine freedom discloses to us the profound depths of the grace of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

### **The Holy Spirit in Relation *ad extra***

We are now in a position to consider Torrance's understanding of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit in terms of the Spirit's relation to creation. Again we will only be able to provide the briefest survey of the most salient points.

#### ***Grounded in the Incarnation***

At one point Torrance poignantly notes that

Everything depends in the last analysis upon whether we believe in *a God who really acts* or not...interact[ing] with what he has made in such a way that he creates genuine reciprocity between us and himself within the space-time structures of existence in which he has placed us.<sup>74</sup>

The Incarnation of the Son of God demonstrated that the God who was over all creation was free to become personally present and active within his creation. But in Jesus the activity of the Son was identified with the activity, presence and power of the very Spirit of God.<sup>75</sup> Thus, in Jesus God was more particularly and profoundly at work within humanity as God the Holy Spirit. Thus Torrance says, "the eternal relations within the Triune God have assumed an economic form within human history, while remaining immanent in the Godhead, thus opening out history to the transcendence of God while actualising the self-giving of God within it."<sup>76</sup> The Holy Spirit who is the bond of the Trinity by his mediation of the Son of God through the incarnation is also the bond between the inner life of God and the life of God in relation to creation external to God. That is, the Holy Spirit is "the divinely forged bond between the economic Trinity and the ontological Trinity."<sup>77</sup>

But the incarnation is not the revelation of a hidden general truth about the Spirit. It is an event, an accomplishment, the actual establishment of a new and renewed relationship of God with creation. In the double movement of God towards creation through the Son and in the Spirit, the relationship of all creation was put on an entirely new foundation. In particular, the Son of God incarnate received the Holy Spirit in his assumed humanity not for himself (already having the Spirit from all eternity for himself), but for us. He has the Holy Spirit for us, and so he promises to send it to us.<sup>78</sup> He lives in the power of the Spirit so that we might share with him in the life he has for us in the Spirit.<sup>79</sup> And as noted above, the Spirit is the communion of the Father and the Son. So for us to have the Spirit is for us to share in the Son's union and communion with the Father. Thus salvation consists in being drawn up in the Son into the very Triune life by the power of the Spirit.

Of course, we must never forget that for Torrance the incarnation of the Son of God must never be separated from his atoning work, for the being and work of the Son entirely coinheres.<sup>80</sup> Without the atoning and sanctifying work of the Spirit in the life of Jesus, the Spirit could not indwell humanity, it only could relate to fallen humanity in a relatively external way. Through what was divinely done in Christ (not just *by* Christ) we can receive in us all that was accomplished for us by that same Spirit.<sup>81</sup> So Torrance says that the Spirit connects us to Christ who shares with us his immediate and unbroken communion with God.<sup>82</sup>

For Torrance the Holy Spirit is the ontological connection between the Father and Son in their Trinitarian life, between the Son and his human nature in the incarnation, and between us and the incarnate Son. These relations each in their proper way are all onto-relations, that is, they are all being constituting relations.<sup>83</sup> Thus the atoning exchange which took place in Jesus renewed the very being of human nature.<sup>84</sup>

### ***Real Relationship with Christ***

Torrance provides a profoundly ontological and so real, actual, personal and relational grasp of the work of the Spirit. Torrance's realistic and ontological interpretation makes intelligible the reality and actuality of our relationship to God which demands a real and actual response of praise and worship.

### ***Union with Christ in the Spirit***

Through consideration of a number of ever more comprehensive themes Torrance further discovers the intensely personal nature of the relationship established with humanity in Christ. Union with Christ, understood in an onto-relational way, encapsulates his grasp of the reality of relationship.<sup>85</sup> For Torrance salvation is the perfection and completion of our union and communion with the Father through the Son and in the Spirit.<sup>86</sup> That union to God actualizes a reconciling exchange<sup>87</sup> which affects us at the very core of our being, so that we become in relationship to God other than what we were on our own. For in that exchange we receive not some divine stuff or something external to us, but are united in person to Christ by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, the same Spirit which was in Christ.<sup>88</sup>

To receive the Spirit is to receive God himself, because in the Spirit the Gift and the Giver are one. Through this communion with the Spirit we don't become divine but we are nevertheless united to God while remaining a (radically transfigured) creature.<sup>89</sup> This, Torrance contends is the proper understanding of the Eastern Orthodox doctrine of *theosis*.

Torrance also likes to explain the indwelling of the Spirit as "interiorizing" because we are redeemed from our "in-turned and in-grown existence" through his possession of our

subjectivities by actualizing God's own knowledge of himself in us and so turning our spirits "outward and upward to God."<sup>90</sup>

But most comprehensively and with an obvious Scriptural point of departure Torrance likes to explicate our union with Christ in terms of our having access to the Father through the Spirit. Jesus Christ is the One "through whom and with whom we have access to the Father in the Spirit, and through whom the Spirit lifts us up to have communion with the Father."<sup>91</sup>

### ***The Radical Objectivity of Spirit***

For Torrance the reality of union with Christ and the self-giving of God by the Holy Spirit mounts a radical critique of subjectivist, instrumentalist, legal or institutionalized understandings. These approaches represent two dangers in connection with the doctrine of the Spirit. A false objectivity and a false subjectivity.

Regarding a false objectivity, Torrance points out that the Spirit cannot be identified through an analysis of its supposed effects, manifestations or operations in creation, for this puts a deistic distance between the person of the Spirit and the works of the Spirit, the being of the Spirit and the Act of the Spirit.<sup>92</sup> The Spirit has also been wrongly identified with immanent principles of creation, often providing a base for a natural theology.<sup>93</sup> Within Catholicism the mistake made most often is the identification of the church and its ministrations with the Spirit, In error in Protestantism is its identification of the Spirit with the human heart, religious affections, states of consciousness, moral rectitude (personal or social) or even with aesthetic sensitivity or experience.<sup>94</sup> These habits of mind confuse the Holy Spirit with the fallen, creaturely human spirit and subordinate and domesticate it to ourselves, our institutions or creation.

Torrance is also concerned to warn against falsely objectifying the the work of Christ and the Spirit by giving an improper emphasis to the legal or forensic dimensions of Christ's atoning work. Torrance's warning should not be regarded as a rejection of the judicial aspects of the atonement. Rather he places it in the much larger and deeper context of the unity of the Incarnate Person and Work of Christ, the unity of the Son and the Spirit, and the onto-relational nature of our union and communion with Christ. He does this in order to keep the atoning work from being regarded in a mechanical, external, impersonal and deistic fashion thereby bearing an unfaithful witness to the Scriptural account of the Persons of the Trinity and to the ontological depths of what was accomplished for us in the reconciliation and renewal of our human being in Christ communicated to us in the Spirit. So Torrance states that "the forensic element in justification reposes for its substance and meaning upon union with Christ."<sup>95</sup>

He goes on to warn that when judicial justification and justifying faith are made the basis for a subsequent union with Christ both the meaning of justification and faith are altered and the Communion of the Spirit is displaced by inadequate judicial and cognitive notions of relation with God.<sup>96</sup>

### ***False Subjectivity***

But there is an opposite danger as well. In the West, Torrance suggests, there has been a growing tendency to identify the Spirit with the human spirit and creativity.<sup>97</sup> He insists that the Holy Spirit can in no way be identified with the human spirit or its experiences. The Spirit, although united to human subjectivity, can never be confused with it. The Spirit retains its sovereign lordship over and independent personhood within humanity. So while the Spirit may indeed indwell our subjectivity, the Spirit cannot be identified with our subjectivity.

Torrance often characterizes the real presence of the Spirit in us by saying that it constitutes a profound “objective inwardness” which can never be reduced to a psychological or even a sacramental inwardness.<sup>98</sup> The Holy Spirit always belongs to God and not to us. We may be possessed by the Spirit but the Spirit is never in our possession.<sup>99</sup>

### ***Personalizing Person***

It might seem that this view jeopardizes the integrity of humanity. But if humanity is constituted by its relation with its Creator and Redeemer, such that there is no such thing as human autonomy, then, for Torrance such union and communion in the Holy Spirit is no threat to humanity but is its fulfillment. For the Spirit is mediated to us in and through the perfected humanity of Jesus Christ. The only thing threatened is a claim to human autonomy which leads to alienation from God and death. In the Spirit God does not overwhelm us, Rather than a loss of self the Spirit provides its completion (*theosis, theopoiesis, teleiosis*).<sup>100</sup> The Spirit perfects our humanity in our humanity on the basis of the humanity of Jesus Christ.<sup>101</sup>

In fact, God gives his Spirit in order to emancipate us from “imprisonment in ourselves to be lifted up to partake of the living presence and saving acts of God the Creator and Redeemer.”<sup>102</sup> And in order for this to happen the Holy Spirit must resist our spirits with “the implacable objectivity of His divine Being, objecting to our objectifying modes of thought and imparting himself to us in accordance with the modes of His own self-revealing through the Word.”<sup>103</sup> The working of the Spirit “turn[s] us inside out” so that “our relations with the objective reality of God are brought to their telos.”<sup>104</sup>

To highlight this aspect of the work of the Spirit Torrance employs another unique term. Our relationship to the Spirit and the Word, he says, can only result in our “personalization” since only God is truly personal. We can speak of our selves as persons only in a derivative way. Torrance identifies both the Word and Spirit as a “personalizing Person” and humanity as “personalized persons.”<sup>105</sup> The action of God by the Spirit in the humanity of the Son perfects/sanctifies our personhood, for by the Spirit we are given a share in the Son’s perfected and so personalized human nature.<sup>106</sup> “Far from crushing our creaturely nature or damaging our personal existence, the indwelling presence of God through Jesus Christ and in the Holy Spirit has the effect of healing and restoring and deepening human personal being.”<sup>107</sup> For Torrance our communion with Christ through the Spirit can rightly be understood as our humanization.<sup>108</sup>

In fact the ministry of the Spirit not only renews our relations with God, but as the “inner principle of *koinonia*,” also renews relationships in society.<sup>109</sup> The living presence of God who confronts us as “personalizing Spirit” rehabilitates us in the context of the social structures of life.<sup>110</sup>

### ***Actualizing, Participating, Responding in the Spirit***

Torrance often speaks of the essential work of the Holy Spirit as actualizing subjectively in us what was accomplished for us objectively in Christ.<sup>111</sup> The Holy Spirit does not accomplish something distinct from what was accomplished in Christ in the power of the same Spirit. The Holy Spirit who unites Father and Son, the Son and our humanity also shares with us all that was accomplished for us in Jesus Christ—our adoption, sanctification and regeneration.<sup>112</sup>

For Torrance, this double mediation of Jesus by the Spirit and the Spirit by Jesus is also a two way movement: from the Father to the Son in the Spirit and in the Spirit through the Son to the Father. The mediation of the Spirit involves a God-manward movement and a man-Godward movement. There is also a vicarious aspect to both sides of that mediation. For the Spirit not only

brings to us the objective effects worked out in the vicarious life of Jesus Christ, but also the subjective effects worked out in his humanity. That is, the Spirit enables us to share in Jesus' own faithful response to the Father. In the Spirit God has the freedom "to actualize his relation with us and the freedom ... to actualise our relation with himself."<sup>113</sup> Torrance notes, "Man's reception of the Holy Spirit is itself a creative work of God."<sup>114</sup>

This freedom of the Spirit can be seen quintessentially in the Apostle Paul's teaching that the Spirit is the Spirit of Sonship which leads us to cry out "Abba Father." So Torrance comments that we are so intimately united to Christ that his Spirit makes us call out with him as those adopted in Him to be joint-heirs with him.<sup>115</sup> The Holy Spirit as our Paraclete, Advocate along with the Son exercises a high priestly ministry on our behalf.<sup>116</sup>

### ***Prayer***

The New Testament and early church had a profound understanding of the entire Christian life as a participation (sharing/communion/*koinonia*) in union with Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit. United in one Spirit with Christ we do nothing on our own, but by the Spirit share in all of Christ's response worked out for us throughout his whole vicarious life. For in the Spirit we have no life apart from Christ. Rather we have our being in Christ which includes our every response to God. This can especially be seen in our prayer. For we do not know how to pray. But as our Advocate and Intercessor the Spirit empowers us in our prayer and worship to "participate in ways beyond our understanding in the prayer and worship of the glorified Christ."<sup>117</sup>

In our worship "the Holy Spirit comes forth from God, uniting us to the response and obedience and faith and prayer of Jesus, and returns to God, raising us up in Jesus to participate in the worship of heaven and in the eternal communion of the Holy Trinity."<sup>118</sup> In the Spirit we never worship or pray alone.

In fact our whole lives in every part are constituted a participation: a dynamic life of union and communion with God. For the only regeneration we have is a share (*koinonia*) in his.<sup>119</sup> The only holiness or sanctification we have is his already accomplished for us in him.<sup>120</sup> The only repentance, faith, obedience, love we have is his actualized in us by the Holy Spirit. The only baptism we undergo and eucharistic self-consecration we offer<sup>121</sup> is that which was made in the flesh and blood of Jesus Christ in the power of the same Spirit who makes us participate, share, be united to Jesus Christ. The only glory we give is the result of the mission of the Spirit.<sup>122</sup>

For Torrance participation in Christ by the Spirit is what is meant in the Epistle of 2 Peter by our being "partakers (*koinonoi*=sharers) of the divine (*theias*) nature". Torrance sums up his grasp of our participation with Christ in his explication of the doctrine of *theosis* usually associated with Eastern Orthodox teaching. He laments that this word is misleadingly translated deification since it has "nothing to do with the divinization of man any more than the Incarnation has to do with the humanization of God." *Theosis* means that by grace we are raised up to find the true centers of our existence not in ourselves but in God according to his absolutely divine saving acts of election, adoption, regeneration and sanctification in which we are made to share in that which God has accomplished for us.<sup>123</sup>

### ***The Holy Spirit and Church***

The work of the Jesus Christ and the Spirit should not be taken in an individualistic way. For the Spirit unites us to Christ by incorporating us in to the Body of Christ, the renewed people of God. The Spirit that comes from the depths of the Triune life creates and recreates communion among people. The Spirit's personalizing and incorporating ministry makes us members of his Body and

creates a “community of reciprocity” among them which “reflects the trinitarian relations in God himself.”<sup>124</sup>

Individuals have their being by being in communion with others engrafted into Christ. The unifying Spirit creates community and so overcomes all divisions. The mission of the church is “to bring all nations and races the message of hope in the darkness and dangers of our times...that the love of God in Jesus Christ may be poured out upon them by the Spirit, breaking down all barriers, healing all divisions and gathering them together as one universal flock.”<sup>125</sup> The Spirit then makes a “new undivided race” sharing equally in the life and love of God.<sup>126</sup> The church embraces all races and nations in a new covenant of the Spirit and in one universal people of God.<sup>127</sup>

### ***One People of God***

In Torrance’s view, there is and can be only one people of God and one covenant since there is only one God united in one Spirit who through one Mediator establishes one Body for one purpose. Following the teaching of the New Testament he holds that in the economy of God there are two forms of the one covenant and two phases or forms of the life of the people of God.<sup>128</sup> There is one covenant of grace with all creation. In the Old Testament God worked uniquely with Israel as his chosen people. The Spirit of God was indeed with them.<sup>129</sup> But at that point in God’s economy Israel related to God in a relatively external way. For true indwelling of the Spirit could only occur subsequent to the reconciling atonement accomplished in the human flesh of Jesus Christ the one true high priest.

Israel had to wait in anticipation of the promise that it would enjoy a much more deeply and intensely personal knowledge of and communion with God.<sup>130</sup> Israel was the womb of preparation for the coming of the Word of God in the womb of Mary. That promise was fulfilled in Jesus Christ. For in him Jew and Gentile both have profound access to the Father through the Spirit, one which reconciles and heals all humanity.<sup>131</sup>

### ***The Mission of Reconciliation***

The pattern of God’s covenantal purpose was to choose one people to be a channel of blessing to all humanity. The people of God always had a mission to others. Ultimately that mission was to be fulfilled by Jesus Christ himself, the Chosen One. In him the renewed people of God are incorporated first of all on behalf of the inclusion of all humanity. The church is such a Communion in the Spirit that it must transcend itself and reach out toward all those for whom Christ became Incarnate, lived and died that they might be included in the life of God as well.<sup>132</sup>

The church, then, is the immediate sphere of the Spirit’s operation, but the world is nevertheless the mediate sphere.<sup>133</sup> The church is the community where reconciliation is intensively actualized through the Spirit. But this is done “in order that it may be fulfilled extensively in all mankind and creation.” The church is “the new humanity within the world, the provisional manifestation of the new creation within the old.”<sup>134</sup>

Those outside the church are to be regarded in the sphere where this reconciliation has not yet been subjectively actualized but is nevertheless objectively accomplished for them in Jesus Christ.<sup>135</sup> In Torrance’s view “no one has being apart from Christ” for “that is the decisive, final thing about the whole Incarnation including the death of Christ, that it affects all men, indeed the whole of creation, for the whole of creation is now put on a new basis with God, the basis of a Love that does not withhold itself but only overflows in pure unending Love.”<sup>136</sup>

Consequently the Spirit empowers the church for a mission beyond itself since all humanity is related to Christ by virtue of creation and incarnation. Torrance notes that “we have to take seriously the fact that the Spirit was poured out on "all flesh" and operates on "all flesh."<sup>137</sup>

### ***The Church Universalized***

The Church is pressed into the service of the Spirit as it works out God’s universal intention. Torrance exhorts the church to keep its boundaries open to all and not limit the “range of the Communion of the Spirit.” Rather on the basis of the “universal range” of the Spirit God intends to catholicise or universalize the church thereby consummating the fullness of Him who is all in all.<sup>138</sup> In this way the people of God in both forms have their existence in a way correlative to Jesus Christ, the One for the Many, the Many in the one and the One in the Many.

### ***Opposition in the World***

For Torrance, this does not mean that the church will not live in tension with the world or that the Spirit will not have to resist the world. The church in the power of the Spirit “calls the world into question, judges the will of the world to isolate itself from the love of God.” The world will resist the Spirit. Torrance comments on the mystery of evil and the possibility of unbelief.

All this is not to say that a man may not suffer damnation, for he may in spite of all reject Christ and refuse God's grace. How that is possible, we simply cannot understand; that a sinner face to face with the infinite love of God should rebel against it and choose to take his own way, isolating himself from that love--that is the bottomless mystery of evil before which we can only stand aghast, at the surd which we cannot rationalise, the enigma of Judas.

It may somehow be possible for the sinner to break off their engrafting in Christ. But “it is their own fault that they are rendered utter strangers to Him.”<sup>139</sup> Consequently, “His being in hell is not the result of God's decision to damn him, but the result of his own decision to choose himself against the love of God and therefore of the negative decision of God's love to oppose his refusal of God's love just by being Love.”<sup>140</sup>

### ***The Origin of the Church***

When grasped in terms of the Person and Work of the Spirit the origin of the church now comes into perspective. The church was founded with creation and the covenant of grace which accompanied it. God has had a people from the very beginning. So Torrance writes,

It is important to remember that this Church was already in existence as church when Christ died and rose again. The Church was not founded with Pentecost; nor indeed was it first founded with the Incarnation. It was founded with creation.”<sup>141</sup>

Thus the church is not the special independent creation of the Spirit.<sup>142</sup> As Torrance puts it, there is no Kingdom of the Spirit, but only a Kingdom of Christ in and by the Spirit. There is no Body of the Spirit, but only the Body of Christ.<sup>143</sup>

### ***Pentecost***

Pentecost then, is not an independent work of the Spirit added to the atoning work.<sup>144</sup> The church did not come into being with the Resurrection or with the pouring out of the Spirit at Pentecost.<sup>145</sup> Pentecost was the re-birth of God’s missionary people.<sup>146</sup>

Pentecost also marks the universalization of the people of God on the basis of the reconciling work of the Cross.<sup>147</sup> For by this work of the Spirit the one people of God, Israel, was opened up to the engrafting of all the peoples of the world.

## *The Holy Spirit and the Knowledge of God.*

For Torrance the doctrine of the Spirit makes it clear that the relation between our knowledge of God and the Spirit is absolutely essential. For there could be no real knowledge of God without the Spirit, even within God! Consequently, this essential connection between pneumatology and epistemology also has significant implications for the doctrine of Scripture.

### *Scripture*

For Torrance, knowledge of God does have its ontological origin in Scripture. First, knowledge of God is entirely at the disposal of God. It requires the deliberate personal decision and act of God since God is Spirit and we are not. The knowledge of God then is a matter of the grace of God. God, precisely as Spirit, can only be known where he has acted to reveal himself. "That is, the activity of the Spirit is the epistemological ground of our knowledge, for in Him we meet God's Being in His Act and His Act in His Being."<sup>148</sup> Our knowing of him cannot be determined by us (either positively by way of our confidence in our capacities or theoretical methodologies or negatively by our skepticism).<sup>149</sup> It must correspond to that act, decision, and "location" which God has appointed.<sup>150</sup>

The answer to how human beings can know God is, strictly speaking, simply put: by the Word and the Spirit of the Father.<sup>151</sup> Thus, knowledge of God has a trinitarian shape. As noted earlier the Spirit mediates the knowledge of the Father and Son from all eternity in the Triune life. But the inseparability of the Word and Spirit is also essential to revelation *ad extra*.<sup>152</sup>

Second the Spirit mediates the Incarnate Son in time and space: conceiving, anointing, indwelling, empowering, sanctifying, raising and glorifying. The Spirit is the life, act and energy of the Son. But also, the Spirit mediates a human knowledge of the transcendent God in Jesus.

Third, the Spirit makes possible, that is mediates, human openness to God.<sup>153</sup> First in the apostles by way of inspiration and then in all those who receive their word spoken and enscriptured.<sup>154</sup> The Spirit creates human capacity for receptivity.<sup>155</sup> And all this is possible because the Spirit puts us in actual, immediate, intuitive,<sup>156</sup> non-formal,<sup>157</sup> even empirical touch with the actual reality and presence of God himself as the Word, not just externally, but internally present to our very spirits.<sup>158</sup>

The end result of this revelatory activity of the Word and the Spirit is that in the light of the Spirit the Face of the Father is illuminated in the Son of God incarnate.<sup>159</sup> In this trinitarian and incarnational way we come to have not just inductive or deductive knowledge about God. "we come to know him in some real measure as he is in himself since the Son and the Spirit are proper to the Being of God and dwell within his Being; and it is in the Spirit that our knowing of God really is knowing, since through participating in his Spirit...we are made partakers of God."<sup>160</sup>

Astoundingly although all creaturely knowledge of God comes to us in some creaturely form the revelatory action of the Spirit through the Word enables the forms to be transcended and prevents us from reducing that personal and actual knowledge to those creaturely forms. The Spirit communicates through the creaturely forms but not as creaturely forms. The knowledge of God in the Spirit is trans-formal. So Torrance writes that God relates the human forms to himself in such a way that they become "diacoustic" and "diaphanous" media. Without the work of the Holy Spirit all the forms of revelation would "remain dark and opaque but in and through His presence they become translucent and transparent."<sup>161</sup> The effect of this work is that our response to revelation "does not terminate on the media but on the Being of God Himself."<sup>162</sup>



God is Holy Spirit in Person and so must be known in accordance with his very nature, that is in a holy, godly and personal way. This means that God cannot be approached neutrally in a disinterested, much less hostile or autonomous, manner. In fact, given the rebellious and enslaved nature of humanity, a radically reconciling work must accompany all revelatory work, for no cognitive union and communion can occur within an alienated relationship.<sup>163</sup>

The knowledge of God involves direct confrontation with the Spirit to question and convict us so that “by the Spirit we are carried beyond ourselves to genuine knowledge of Him.”<sup>164</sup> At Pentecost, Torrance notes, the Spirit rescued us from our “sinful creativity,” our religious propensity to mythologize and project ourselves onto God.<sup>165</sup>

The provision of Scripture, the deposit of faith, for the church in no way obviates the gracious and powerful working of the Spirit. For if there is to be any real reconciling knowledge of God the Spirit is essential to the inspiration, preservation, and illumination of the Bible. The words are the instruments of the Spirit as Torrance puts it. “The meaning of the words written is not found in the letters as such but in the divine actions which they express, and the written words are the instrument of the Spirit who writes them in our minds and lives if we receive them in accordance with his power and nature.”<sup>166</sup> Torrance follows Irenaeus’ line of thought when he wrote that Scripture came from the Word and Spirit of God and so must be interpreted in terms of that Word and Spirit, thus ruling out all independent and private interpretations.<sup>167</sup> God did not speak once and then become mute, but by the same Spirit and Word continues to speak in and through the Scripture and its human forms of thought and speech so that “the Holy Scriptures point far beyond themselves to the sheer reality and glory of God who alone can bear witness to himself and create in us, beyond any capacity of our own, genuine knowledge of God.”<sup>168</sup>

That is why anyone who would interpret Scripture “must pray to be enlightened by the same Spirit.”<sup>169</sup> For interpretation of Holy Scripture is not merely a matter of definitions, grammar and historical background but a matter of real living union and communion, actual relationship with God. Scripture must be interpreted according to the the creative and renewing power of the Spirit if we are to have God’s word inscribed on our hearts and have our minds renewed after the likeness of Christ.<sup>170</sup>

God the Father through his Word and Spirit is “eloquent Being.”<sup>171</sup>

The revelation of the Triune God means God graciously extends himself in self-giving and self-revelation, acting and speaking in Person by His Word through the Holy Spirit. Without the presence of the Spirit there would be no break through to us of the transcendent God “in His reality as Being and thus in His distinction from our thought and speech of Him.”<sup>172</sup>

### **Critical Engagement with Thomas F. Torrance's Doctrine of the Holy Spirit**

Although Thomas Torrance has written only a few chapter-length treatments specifically devoted to pneumatology, his theological reflections are saturated in every part with reference to the Holy Spirit. In his view, in fact, nothing complete can be said about any topic in theology without some vital reference to the Holy Spirit.

When these references are taken together it can be seen that Torrance has a very well developed and integrated theology of the Holy Spirit. Moreover, his writings on the topic make a fairly unique and powerful contribution to Christian theology. Indeed, he sounds a prophetic note in countering the tendency of much modern theology to reduce pneumatology to one or another

aspect of anthropology. From another angle, one could also regard Torrance's theology of the Holy Spirit as delivering a fatal blow to Harnack's thesis that the Greek fathers Hellenized the Christian faith with ontological abstractions. Torrance shows how the early church fathers waged a diligent and largely successful battle against such uncritical adaptation of Greek dualistic ways of thinking. On the basis of their most faithful contributions Torrance has set forth a realist pneumatology which understands the Spirit in a most immediate, concrete, personal and relational way.

It is true that often the person and work of the Spirit remains implicit in Torrance's treatment of other topics. However, I believe this approach actually corresponds to the nature of the subject matter--the Holy Spirit. It reflects the ineffable and self-effacing nature of the Spirit whose ministry is to shed light on everything else rather than to be in the spotlight. Consequently the working of the Spirit cannot and need not always be explicitly referenced. The form of Torrance's theology is shaped by the form of the revelation concerning the Holy Spirit.

Some may still find this lack of symmetrical treatment between the Father, Son and Spirit a fault. Karl Barth has been critiqued in this very way, having been charged with a subordinationism of the Spirit. However, I submit that our very brief survey given here demonstrates that Torrance has indeed securely laid a solid foundation for a doctrine of the Holy Spirit—even if he has not completed an entire superstructure which might be built upon it.

What Torrance has given us is a profoundly trinitarian, incarnational and onto-relational approach to the doctrine of the Spirit integrated intimately with the essential and core matters of the Christian faith. One could say that here in this doctrine the realism of the Gospel itself reaches its climax and so the call to a living vital faith shines through it. For in the doctrine of the Spirit the transcendent majesty of God is seen to come to bear essentially on Who the Triune God is and on all that God has done for us and in us. The personal transcendence, immanence and indwelling of God all find their proper place in the doctrine of the Spirit. Torrance's pneumatology highlights the immediacy and efficacy of God which would remain obscure and at a deistic distance if left out of any presentation of the doctrines of the Father and the Son. The Doctrine of the Spirit is radical and absolutely determinative of the shape of Torrance's theology. To take it as seriously, personally, and ineffably as Torrance has presented it calls for a decisive reorientation not just of our thought but of our lives. It does not leave much room for neutrality towards the subject matter. Torrance has provided the church an astounding and reorienting presentation which in the end can only lead us to doxology.

This does not mean Torrance's theology is beyond question or is inimical to further development. However, strong opposition to Torrance's pneumatology will mostly come about at the level of profoundly divergent presuppositions regarding the Holy Spirit rather than over secondary matters. This will usually be the case because the essence of Torrance's work addresses very directly the most foundational issues regarding our faith in and understanding of the Holy Spirit.

Indicative of this is the fact that his pneumatology stands in radical contrast to any objectivizing, subjectivizing, institutionalizing or other anthropomorphic renderings of the doctrine. Those who would resist his radical critique of these modern tendencies would be questioning the very foundation upon which Torrance builds his case. At this level, the argument would be over which spirit was the Holy Spirit.

Consequently Torrance's pneumatology will draw some predictable critiques. As mentioned above some will say it fails to give the Spirit equal time and development compared to the other

Persons of the Trinity and so gives the impression of a subordinationism of the Spirit. However, if I understand Torrance's pneumatology correctly the ineffable and self-effacing nature of the Spirit means that we should not expect an equally explicit treatment of the Spirit.

Some will complain that Torrance's view of the works of the Spirit does not show a proper independence from the other Trinitarian Persons and so fails to exhibit the equality of deity. However, once again, if Torrance is right about the co-inherent nature of the working of the Triune God then one should not expect the Spirit to have some kind of autonomous working. Indeed, in Torrance's view the Father and Son's own actions *ad extra* have all too often been rendered far too independent from each other thus distorting the proper communion of God in Act and Being in the Holy Spirit.

Torrance's challenge to those who make such foundational criticisms would be for them to offer a more "balanced" presentation of the Spirit which would not in actuality reduce pneumatology to anthropology or a mythology of the human spirit. Such alternatives would most likely turn out to be incommensurable with Torrance's most foundational understandings of the person and work of the Spirit. With Torrance it seems that there is a foundationally decisive fork in the pneumatological road and one must choose one path or another.

However, concerning the matter of greater development of his pneumatology, there are two very different reasons to hope for more of a superstructure to be built on Torrance's foundation. First, such hope could arise out of the awareness that much more could be drawn out of it because of its sheer coherence and profound integration with all other aspects of Christian faith. It was built for a superstructure.

A second reason for wanting more development might be the drive towards gaining more practical "how" explanations of the Spirit's working or more practical advice on what the church should say or do. Torrance does not offer a lot which would directly satisfy this second concern for pragmatics. In part this is due to the fact that asking a general how question of the working of the Holy Spirit (How does the Spirit unite the natures in Jesus?) is in his view incoherent. For the Holy Spirit itself is the answer to the ultimate How questions we might ask. Q: How was Jesus conceived in the womb of Mary? A: By the Holy Spirit! Referring to the agency of the Holy Spirit as the ultimate answer goes against the grain of modern Western habits of mind which seeks impersonal, causal or instrumental means as explanation. For the most part agency has been eliminated from the category of being essential to explanation. But for Torrance the Triune agency in perichoretic communion is the ultimate explanation. Torrance's theology of the Spirit re-establishes the centrality of agency for theological description.

If my understanding of Torrance is correct, his pneumatology is a radical critique of the search for explanation in terms of impersonal, causal or instrumental means, at least as it pertains to Christian theology. Agency, and ultimately the agency of the Holy Spirit is the essence of the how questions which might be raised concerning God and God's people. Torrance's pneumatology makes clear that we can never master the Holy Spirit, we cannot take control. The Holy Spirit cannot be faithfully compared to, say, electricity which is "always in the wires so you just have to get plugged in." Any attempt to corral the Holy Spirit, even for the purposes of God, could only constitute a repeat of Simon Magus' error when he tried to purchase the power of the Holy Spirit from the Apostles. To the degree that we want to go behind the back of the Holy Spirit and find out how God "really" did something, or even how we might do something "for God" is not to build on Torrance's foundation, but to attempt to raise a structure on an entirely different one. Here I suspect Torrance intends to give us no satisfaction in this direction.

However, if our concern was to seek out the implications of the Doctrine of the Spirit for the work and ministry of the church as Torrance has laid out for us, I think it is clear that much could be written on that foundation with this in mind. For the ministry of the Spirit is to enable us to participate in all the things that God has done, is doing and will do for us and our salvation.

Torrance's pneumatology certainly is capable of providing a profound orientation and critique of all human participation in the things of God. The most thorough development in his thought in direct connection with his pneumatology involves matters of epistemology, revelation, theological method, and implications for our handling of Scripture. What he says of the Holy Spirit has tremendous practical implications, namely in the areas of philosophy, theology and biblical studies. Unfortunately, these issues are not of immediate concern to most pastors and laypersons who are often looking for very straight forward help in the mundane matters of daily ministry.

The area of greatest investment laden with practical implications, however, is his contribution to the doctrine of the Trinity as it applies to the controversy over the *filioque*. Here we see united a theological and practical concern for the unity of the Body of Christ. His labor for more than 14 years came to fruition in the historic document of March 13, 1991 'Joint Statement of the Official Dialogue between the Orthodox Church and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches' which included the announcement of an 'Agreed Statement on the Holy Trinity.' Incredible as it may seem, in principle the 1000 year old schism over the *filioque* has been resolved. This matter should no longer be an obstacle in the relations between the Eastern and Western branches of the one Body of Christ. Unfortunately the outworking of this agreement among all concerned parties will take some time. However, this theological work on the Holy Spirit will stand as perhaps Torrance's greatest contribution to the life of the church.

There are many other issues about which Torrance makes suggestive comments, e.g., on the Pentecostal/Charismatic movement. However these remain largely undeveloped. However, I think, for example, that his understanding of the humanizing and personalizing nature of the Spirit would provide us with a powerful orientation for the discernment and exercise of the gifts of the Spirit. Torrance's work is deliberately open ended and invites exploration of the "practical" implications of his work. The test of his contribution in these areas will be the adequacy of the foundation laid for others as they attempt to work out such developments.

There are a few practical concerns related to methodology which we might also mention. Torrance's explicit dialog partners in his writings on the Holy Spirit are for the most part not living. Mainly he engages with a considerable selection of Ante and Post-Nicene Fathers and Calvin. Karl Barth is of course the most often mentioned contemporary. He also interacts at some length with Karl Rahner. One familiar with the contemporary discussions on trinitarian theology, the development of the charismatic movement, debates on cosmology and matters involving the worship and mission of the church in our pluralistic social and ideological context, naturally would hope that Torrance would have interacted more directly with those presently teaching and writing on these topics. Such dialog would not be for the purpose of staking out territory, but for locating, fine-tuning, grasping more securely Torrance's own teaching and contribute to an improved ability to critique various contemporary proposals.

In my view, however, much of what Torrance has said does indeed bear directly, and critically on contemporary theologies of the Spirit. As mentioned above the resolution between Orthodox and the World Alliance of Reformed churches (and so in principle the Western church) is the most notable outworking of his doctrine of the Spirit.<sup>173</sup> That aside, Torrance's whole pneumatology

resists current pantheistic and panentheistic tendencies as well as subjectivizing and mystical approaches to the Spirit so much in vogue today.

So, while we might have benefited from Torrance's own comments on other contemporary debates, we are nevertheless left a foundational legacy which can inform debates and discussions for every time, including our own.

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<sup>1</sup> *Theology in Reconciliation* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1975), p. 238. Cf. *Divine Meaning: Studies in Patristic Hermeneutics* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1995), p. 201

<sup>2</sup> *Divine Meaning*, p. 382

<sup>3</sup> *Theology in Reconstruction* (Grand Rapids, Mich. : Eerdmans, 1965), p. 191 and *The Trinitarian Faith: The Evangelical Theology of the Ancient Catholic Church* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1988), p. 205 ff.

<sup>4</sup> *Theology in Reconciliation* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1975), pp. 290,91. Cf. *Trinitarian Faith*, p. 191.

<sup>5</sup> *The Christian Doctrine of God, One Being Three Persons* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), p. 63.

<sup>6</sup> *Doctrine of God*, pp. 62-63, *Theology in Reconstruction*, p. 200. *Theology in Reconciliation*, pp. 85-86. *Divine Meaning*, p. 384. *The Christian Doctrine of God*, pp. 62-63.

<sup>7</sup> *Trinitarian Faith*, p. 196, 197.

<sup>8</sup> *Theology in Reconciliation*, p. 292. *Divine Meaning*, p. 64, 199. See Eph. 2:18, Gal. 4:4-6 I Cor. 12:4-6 and Heb. 9:14. These passages are often cited or alluded to by Torrance.

<sup>9</sup> *Trinitarian Faith*, pp. 199-202. *The Christian Doctrine of God*, p. 147 *Theology in Reconciliation*, p. 114.

<sup>10</sup> *Theology in Reconstruction*, p. 242. *Divine Meaning*, p. 385.

<sup>11</sup> *Trinitarian Faith*, p. 202. *Divine Meaning*, p. 200.

<sup>12</sup> *Theology in Reconciliation*, p. 101. *Trinitarian Faith*, p. 202. *Divine Meaning*, p. 195.

<sup>13</sup> *The Christian Doctrine of God*, p. 196.

<sup>14</sup> *The Christian Doctrine of God*, p. 64.

<sup>15</sup> *The Trinitarian Faith*, p. 198. *Divine Meaning*, p. 412

<sup>16</sup> *Theology in Reconciliation*, p. 238. *Divine Meaning*, p. 201.

<sup>17</sup> *The Mediation of Christ Christ* (Colorado Springs, CO: Helmers and Howard, 1992), p. 126.

<sup>18</sup> *Theology in Reconciliation*, p. 101

<sup>19</sup> *The Christian Doctrine of God*, p. 218

<sup>20</sup> *The Trinitarian Faith*, p. 210.

<sup>21</sup> *The Mediation of Christ*, p. 112, 113.

<sup>22</sup> *Divine Meaning*, p. 216. A proper Christocentrism does not devolve into a Christomonism but leads to a true Trinitarianism. See also, *Theology in Reconciliation*, p. 253. Torrance finds this to be patently true in both Irenaeus and Athanasius. See *Divine Meaning*, p. 60-62.

<sup>23</sup> *Trinitarian Faith*, p. 200.

<sup>24</sup> *Trinitarian Faith*, p. 195. *The Christian Doctrine of God*, p. 158

<sup>25</sup> *Theology in Reconstruction*, pp. 220 ff. *Trinitarian Faith*, p. 101.

<sup>26</sup> *Trinitarian Faith*, p. 192, 220

<sup>27</sup> *The Christian Doctrine of God*, p. 63.

<sup>28</sup> *The Christian Doctrine of God*, p. 65. *Trinitarian Faith*, p. 249.

<sup>29</sup> *Trinitarian Faith*, p. 192, 218, 226.

<sup>30</sup> *Divine Meaning*, p.. 199-200. *Trinitarian Faith*, p. 236. *Theology in Reconciliation*, p. 252.

<sup>31</sup> *Divine Meaning*, p. 200.

<sup>32</sup> *Trinitarian Faith*, p. 192.

<sup>33</sup> *Divine Meaning*, p. 216.

<sup>34</sup> *Trinitarian Faith*, p. 218-219.

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36 *Trinitarian Faith*, p. 220

37 Quoted in *Trinitarian Faith*, p. 221 from Epiphanius, *Haer.* 69.72.

38 *Trinitarian Faith*, p. 222. So also Didymus of Alexandria and Cyril of  
Jerusalem. See *Trinitarian Faith*, pp. 223 and 247.

39 *Trinitarian Faith*, p. 222.

40 *Trinitarian Faith*, p. 234. Also see *The Christian Doctrine of God*, p.  
167.

41 Quoted in *Trinitarian Faith*, p. 234.

42 *Trinitarian Faith*, p. 65

43 *Trinitarian Faith*, p. 210

44 *Trinitarian Faith*, p. 235.

45 *Trinitarian Faith*, p. 233.

46 *The Christian Doctrine of God*, p. 157.

47 *The Christian Doctrine of God*, p. 156-157

48 *Trinitarian Faith*, p. 237.

49 "Their differentiating qualities instead of separating them actually  
serves their oneness with each other," *The Christian Doctrine of God*, p. 171.

50 *Trinitarian Faith*, p. 233, 234, 239.

51 *The Christian Doctrine of God*, p. 170n. 8 and pp., 170-174.

52 *The Christian Doctrine of God*, pp. 166, 171. Cf. p. 192.

53 The statement can be found in *Theological Dialogue between Orthodox and  
Reformed Churches*, vol. 2, Scottish Academic Press, Edinburgh, 1993, edited by  
T.F. Torrance.

54 Most if not all of Torrance's writing on the Trinity bears upon this  
issue. For key parts of his understanding see especially *The Christian  
Doctrine of God*, pp. 180-194, *Trinitarian Faith*, Chs. 6 and 8, *Theology in  
Reconciliation*, Ch. 5 and most comprehensively Torrance's book *Trinitarian  
Perspectives: Toward Doctrinal Agreement* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1994).

55 Torrance regards, for example Didymus the Blind's theology as being  
more successful at avoiding the ambiguities in the theologies of others which  
opened the door to the controversy over the procession of the Spirit.  
*Trinitarian Faith*, pp. 243-244.

56 *Trinitarian Faith*, p. 302-30. This language is also reflected in the  
so-called Athanasian Creed (Quinquage Vult)

57 *Trinitarian Faith*, p. 205.

58 *Trinitarian Faith*, p. 213

59 *God and Rationality* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 171.

60 *Trinitarian Faith*, p. 211, quoting Epiphanius.

61 *Trinitarian Faith*, p. 212. See also *Theology in Reconstruction*, p. 226,  
227.

62 *The Christian Doctrine of God*, p. 152

63 *Divine Meaning*, p. 274.

64 *Theology in Reconciliation*, p. 237.

65 *Theology in Reconstruction*, p. 246.

66 *Theology in Reconciliation*, p. 238. *Trinitarian Faith*, p. 61 and  
*Theology in Reconstruction*, p. 241,245 Cf. *Divine Meaning*, p. 382.

67 *Theology in Reconciliation*, p. 236-7. *Divine Meaning*, p. 200

68 *Trinitarian Faith*, p. 73.

69 *Theology in Reconciliation*, p. 290, 291

70 *Theology in Reconciliation*, p. 235-236.

71 *Theology in Reconciliation*, p. 290. *Trinitarian Faith*, p. 233-234.

72 *The Christian Doctrine of God*, p. 217.

73 *Theology in Reconciliation*, p. 237

74 *Theology in Reconciliation*, p. 100.

75 *Theology in Reconciliation*, p. 236

76 *Theology in Reconciliation*, p. 102.

77 *The Christian Doctrine of God*, p. 154

78 *Theology in Reconciliation*, p. 235.

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79        *Theology in Reconstruction*, p. 246, 247.

80        *Theology in Reconciliation*, p. 241.

81        *Theology in Reconstruction*, p. p. 246

82        *Theology in Reconciliation*, p. 140.

83        Of course within the Trinity they are coinherently and consubstantially mutual. In the relations established with humanity first in Jesus Christ and then through him in us, they are radically asymmetrical for the creature is entirely dependent upon the initiative and objective accomplishment of the absolutely new mode of relationship by God.

84        *Theology in Reconciliation*, p. 246.

85        *Theology in Reconciliation*, p. 111-112, 230

86        *Theology in Reconciliation*, p. 110.

87        *Theology in Reconciliation*, p. 110,111, 119. *God and Rationality*, p. 174

88        *Trinitarian Faith*, p. 209. *Theology in Reconciliation*, p. 140. *The Christian Doctrine of God*, p. 154. See also *Theology in Reconciliation*, p. 103. On Irenaeus' understanding see *Divine Meaning*, p. 73

89        *The Christian Doctrine of God*, p. 63.

90        *God and Rationality*, p. 173.

91        *Theology in Reconciliation*, p. 292.

92        *Trinitarian Faith*, p. 208.

93        *Theology in Reconstruction*, p. 230.

94        *Theology in Reconstruction*, p. 227-228, 242-243.

95        *The School of Faith: The Catechisms of the Reformed Church* (London: James Clarke & Co. Ltd., 1959), p. cx.

96        *The School of Faith*, p. cxi.

97        *Theology in Reconstruction*, p. p. 268.

98        *Divine Meaning*, pp. 197-198. *Theology in Reconciliation*, p. 234. *Trinitarian Faith*, p. 208.

99        *Divine Meaning*, p. 197-198. Cf. *Theology in Reconciliation*, p. 234.

100       *Theology in Reconciliation*, p. 134, 238-240. *Divine Meaning*, p. 198, 202. *Trinitarian Faith*, p. 198, 228

101       *Theology in Reconstruction*, p. 221.

102       *Theology in Reconstruction*, p. 243

103       *God and Rationality*, p. 174.

104       *God and Rationality*, p. 173, 174.

105       *Trinitarian Faith*, p. 230, 231. *God and Rationality*, p. 188-189, *The Mediation of Christ*, pp. 67-69. *The Christian Doctrine of God*, pp. 157, 160-161.

106       *The Christian Doctrine of God*, pp. 160, 220. *God and Rationality*, p. 188-189. *Trinitarian Faith*, 230-231

107       *Trinitarian Faith*, p. 230. Cf. pp. 227, 229.

108       *The Christian Doctrine of God*, p. 161. *Mediation of Christ*, p. 69

109       *Theology in Reconciliation*, p. 62.

110       *God and Rationality*, p. 188.

111       *The School of Faith*, p. cvi.

112       *Theology in Reconciliation*, p. 89.

113       *The Christian Doctrine of God*, p. 152. Cf. P. 150.

114       *Theology in Reconciliation*, p. 243.

115       *The Christian Doctrine of God*, p. 154. See also *Theology in Reconciliation*, p. 114 and *Divine Meaning*, p. 70.

116       *Trinitarian Faith*, p. 249, 250 picking up the phraseology of Hippolytus. See also *Theology in Reconstruction*, p. p. 250 and *The Christian Doctrine of God*, p. 63.

117       *Theology in Reconciliation*, p. 83-184, Cf. p. 209 and p. 186 on Origen

118       *Theology in Reconstruction*, p. 250. Cf. p. 249, 251. See also *Theology in Reconciliation*, pp. 211, 213.

119       *Theology in Reconciliation*, p. 105.

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120 *Theology in Reconstruction*, p. 250, 251.  
121 *Theology in Reconciliation*, p. 118, 134.  
122 *The Christian Doctrine of God*, p. 65.  
123 *Theology in Reconstruction*, p. 243  
124 *Trinitarian Faith*, p. 250-251.  
125 *Theology in Reconstruction*, p. 193. Cf. *Theology in Reconciliation*, p..  
22.  
126 *Theology in Reconstruction*, p. 193.  
127 *Theology in Reconstruction*, p. 195.  
128 *The School of Faith*, pp. Cxx, cxxxiv. Cf. *Theology in Reconstruction*,  
p. 193.  
129 *The Christian Doctrine of God*, p. 67ff. *Trinitarian Faith*, pp. 66, 192-  
93  
130 *The Christian Doctrine of God*, p. 67.  
131 *The Christian Doctrine of God*, p. 70.  
132 *The School of Faith*, p. cxxiv.  
133 *Theology in Reconstruction*, p. 204  
134 *The School of Faith*, p. cxxi.  
135 *The School of Faith*, p. cxvii.  
136 *The School of Faith*, p. cxii.  
137 *The School of Faith*, p. cxvii.  
138 *The School of Faith*, p. cxxiv. See also *Theology in Reconciliation*, p.  
21 and *The School of Faith*, p. cxxi.  
139 *The School of Faith*, p. cxvii.  
140 *The School of Faith*, p. cxv. Torrance also discusses a proper  
understanding of the irresistibility of grace and its distorting  
reformulation, building on Augustine, in terms of efficient causality and  
created grace. See *Theology in Reconciliation*, p. 98. This understanding of  
the work of the Spirit also has implications for our view of hell. See *The  
School of Faith*, p. cxv.  
141 *The School of Faith*, pp. cxix, cxx.  
142 *Theology in Reconstruction*, p. 204.  
143 *Theology in Reconstruction*, pp. 204-205.  
144 *Trinitarian Faith*, p. 190.  
145 *Theology in Reconstruction*, p. 204.  
146 *Theology in Reconstruction*, p. 195. See also, *Space, Time and  
Resurrection*, p. 121.  
147 *Theology in Reconciliation*, pp. 24,61. *The Christian Doctrine of God*,  
p. 64.  
148 *God and Rationality*, p. 255.  
149 *God and Rationality*, p. 165  
150 *Theology in Reconstruction*, p. p. 233. *Theology in Reconciliation*, p.  
239.  
151 *Theology in Reconciliation*, p. 232.  
152 *Divine Meaning*, p. 70-71.  
153 *Theology in Reconstruction*, p. 245ff.  
154 *Theology in Reconstruction*, p. 206. See also *Divine Meaning*, pp. 116,  
274-275; *God and Rationality*, p. 184.  
155 *Theology in Reconstruction*, pp. 226, 252. *Theology in Reconciliation*,  
p. 100.  
156 *God and Rationality*, p. 184.  
157 *God and Rationality*, p. 165, ,  
158 *God and Rationality*, p. 165,166, 176  
159 *God and Rationality*, p. 167. See also *Trinitarian Faith*, pp. 211-215.  
160 *Theology in Reconciliation*, p. 238.  
161 *God and Rationality*, p. 185.  
162 *God and Rationality*, p. 183-184.  
163 *God and Rationality*, p. 179.



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- 164 *God and Rationality*, p. 178. Cf. *The Christian Doctrine of God*, p. 150  
165 *Theology in Reconstruction*, p. 255.  
166 *Divine Meaning*, p. 232.  
167 *Divine Meaning*, p. 129.  
168 *Divine Meaning*, p. 375.  
169 *Divine Meaning*, p. 275.  
170 *Divine Meaning*, p. 232. Cf. *God and Rationality*, p. 186.  
171 *God and Rationality*, p. 179.  
172 *God and Rationality*, p. 175.  
173 The results of these discussions are contained in the two volumes  
edited by T.F. Torrance, *Theological Dialogue between Orthodox and Reformed  
Churches*, Vols. 1 and 2, Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1985, 1993.