

The Doctrine of Appropriation as an Interpretative Framework for Karl Barth's Pneumatology of the *Church Dogmatics*

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Abstract: Although Karl Barth is widely recognised as the initiator of the renewal of trinitarian theology in the twentieth century, his theology of the *Church Dogmatics* has been strongly criticised for its inadequate account of the work of the Holy Spirit. This author argues that the putative weakness of Barth's pneumatology should be reconsidered in light of his doctrine of appropriation. Barth employs the doctrine of appropriation as a hermeneutical procedure, within his doctrine of the Trinity, for bringing to speech the persons of the Trinity in their inseparable distinctiveness. It is argued that the doctrine of appropriation provides a sound interpretative framework for his pneumatology of the *Church Dogmatics*.

THE DOCTRINE OF APPROPRIATION is of fundamental importance to Barth's doctrine of the Trinity. Despite this, it has received little attention from Barth scholars, especially in relation to Barth's pneumatology. Barth employs the doctrine of appropriation to bring to speech the persons of the Trinity in their particularity or, as Barth prefers to put it, to bring to speech the divine "modes of being". Barth's trinitarian theology has been strongly criticised for a tendency to binitarian rather than trinitarian thinking, the Spirit being the missing person. In this paper, I argue that Barth's lack of attention to the economy of the Spirit, where one would expect the work of the Spirit to come to prominence, is due to a methodological decision to employ the doctrine of appropriation as a conceptual framework for bringing to speech the divine modes of being in their particularity. In the first two sections of this study I shall locate and explicate Barth's doctrine of appropriation within his overall doctrine of the Trinity. Section three

will outline the criticisms that have been directed towards Barth's pneumatology. Finally, in section four I argue that Barth's use of the doctrine of appropriation should bring about a reinterpretation of the pneumatology of the *Church Dogmatics*.

1. TRINITY IN UNITY: THE DOCTRINE OF APPROPRIATION: TRIUNITY

The first task before us is to position Barth's doctrine of appropriation within his doctrine of the Trinity. Barth explicates the doctrine of the Trinity in terms of the dialectical concepts of "unity in trinity" and "trinity in unity" (oneness in threeness and threeness in oneness). The term "triunity" is the conflation of these two formulae.¹ Barth argues that when the "unity in trinity" or "trinity in unity" is discussed independently there is an inevitable one-sidedness. There is no advancement possible, in thinking about the Triune God, beyond these one-sided formulations.² For Barth the "unity in trinity", is best conceptualised in terms of the doctrine of *perichoresis*. He understands the "trinity in unity" in terms of the doctrine of appropriation. The doctrines of *perichoresis* and appropriation are the two aspects of Barth's concept of "triunity". They are, therefore, the two controlling concepts of his doctrine of the Trinity.

For Barth, the doctrine of *perichoresis* means that the modes of being of God "mutually condition and permeate one another so completely that one is always in the other two and the other two in the one".³ The doctrine of *perichoresis* relativises the distinction between the three modes of being of God since "none exists as a special individual, but all three 'in-exist' or exist only in concert as modes of being of the one God and Lord who posits Himself from eternity to eternity".⁴ The *perichoresis* of the three divine modes of being does not diminish the "trinity in unity" of God. Rather, the three modes of being of God all work in the order suitable to them, in which all three "reciprocally interpenetrate each other and inexist in one another".⁵

The doctrine of appropriation is the dialectical counterpart to the doctrine of *perichoresis*. It asserts that it is "appropriate" to think of one divine mode of being as the principal agent of a distinctive economy. The doctrine of appropriation is concerned with "appropriating" a particular work to one divine mode of being, while concomitantly

1. Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics* (trans. G. Bromiley and T. Torrance; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1975) Vol. I/I, 368. Hereafter C.D.

2. C.D. Vol. I/I, 368.

3. C.D. Vol. I/I, 370.

4. C.D. Vol. I/I, 370.

5. C.D. Vol. I/I, 396.

recognising the perichoretic unity of the one God and therefore not excluding the other two modes of being from participation in this work.

This conception is systematically worked out in the architecture of the *Church Dogmatics*, with the doctrine of creation being an explication of the particular work of the Father, the doctrine of reconciliation being concerned with the distinctive work of the Son and what was to be the doctrine of redemption understood to pertain to the particular saving work of the Spirit.⁶ The doctrine of appropriation enables Barth to distinguish the works of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, trinity in unity, without separating these works, while not diminishing the perichoretic unity of God. This allows Barth to bring God to speech in the particularity of the divine modes of being, emphasising the different works of the persons of the Trinity, while not diminishing the communal unity of the triune God. "By the specific assigning of a word or deed to this or that person of the Godhead, there should be brought to our awareness ...the truth of the triunity which is in fact undivided in its work and which still exists in three persons."⁷

2. THE RULES TO THE DOCTRINE OF APPROPRIATION

2.1. Three Rules

Barth enumerates three rules for his doctrine of appropriation. These rules begin to explain his use of appropriation within his doctrine of the Trinity. The first rule is as follows:

1. The appropriation must not be arbitrary but must take place intelligibly. Not each and every triad, however significant in itself, is adapted even to denote truthfully the mystery of the triunity. There has to be a manifest kinship, similarity and analogy between the three things signifying and the three things signified, as there manifestly is between Father, Son and Spirit on the one hand and the three relations of origin on the other. If this is lacking the appropriation lacks significance.⁸

6. Barth's special ethics provides a good example of the functioning of the doctrine of appropriation in the *Church Dogmatics*. All three doctrines of creation, reconciliation and redemption, as the three comprehensive acts of God, were to be followed by a corresponding ethical discussion. The threefold act of the triune God determines special ethics because it is this God, the Creator, Reconciler and Redeemer, whose command human beings obey. The divine command follows the distinction in God's actions as Creator, Reconciler and Redeemer within the conceptual framework of Barth's doctrine of appropriation. See C.D. Vol. III/IV, 24-37.

7. C.D. Vol. I/I, 373.

8. C.D. Vol. I/I, 374.

Barth's first rule indicates that to appropriate a work to God in his modes of being is not an arbitrary process, but has an "intelligibility" that is the criterion for determining the truth of these theological statements. This intelligibility is based on an analogy between the work appropriated to one person of the Trinity and the relations of origin. The relations of origin refer to the intra-trinitarian relations of Father, Son and Holy Spirit to one another. The second rule is as follows:

2. The appropriation must not be exclusive. The appropriation of this or that quality or act of God to this or that mode of being must not be made a property of this mode of being or a distinction that is constitutive for it. What is appropriated belongs in fact to all the modes of being and the distinction between them cannot really be achieved by any appropriation, not even in the last analysis by the designation of Father, Son and Spirit.⁹

This rule is grounded upon Augustine's principle *opera trinitatis ad extra sunt indivisa*, the external works of the Trinity are indivisible, which is of fundamental importance to Barth's doctrine of the Trinity. For Barth, appropriations have a relative significance because of the dialectical nature of God's triunity as a unity in trinity and trinity in unity.

Finally, Barth outlines what, according to "Evangelical dogmatics", he considers to be the decisive rule for the doctrine of appropriation:

3. Evangelical dogmatics will have to add as a third and decisive rule that appropriations must not be invented freely. They are authentic when they are taken literally or materially or both from Holy Scripture, when they are a rendering or interpretation of the appropriations found there. If they are this they will certainly not be arbitrary or exclusive.¹⁰

This final rule is an extension of the first rule, that an appropriation is not to be made arbitrarily but must have intelligibility. Now, however, Barth is explaining what he understands this intelligibility to be: the interpretation of the appropriations found in Scripture, according to Barth's conception of Scripture as witness to the Word of God.

2.2. Hermeneutical Process

In his seminal work, *God's Being is in Becoming*, Eberhard Jüngel describes Barth's doctrine of appropriation as a "hermeneutical process"

9. C.D. Vol. I/I, 374.

10. C.D. Vol. I/I, 373-374.

for defining the being of God. It is such a process because it is the possibility of bringing God to speech as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.¹¹ Colin Gunton similarly argues that the doctrine of appropriation is “one part of the hermeneutical design which takes its origins in Barth’s exposition of the doctrine of the Trinity”.¹² The other part of Barth’s hermeneutical design is of course the doctrine of *perichoresis*. Jüngel and Gunton’s definition of Barth’s doctrine of appropriation as a hermeneutical process perspicaciously describes Barth’s understanding of this doctrine. In Barth’s theology, appropriations involve an interpretative process in which descriptions of the trinitarian persons follow the prevenient self-speech of God in revelation. This is what Barth understands to be the “intelligibility” of appropriations. For Barth, the doctrine of appropriation is merely a hermeneutical tool that allows him to move beyond the incomprehensible nature of God as trinity in unity and unity in trinity, and therefore enables him to follow the prevenient self-speech of God in revelation.

The doctrine of appropriation is epistemologically grounded in the principle that God’s revelation is the *self-interpretation of God*.¹³ The self-interpretation of God simply means that revelation corresponds to God’s being. Barth states that when “we are dealing with [God’s] revelation, we are dealing with God Himself and not, as Modalists in all ages have thought, with an entity distinct from Him”.¹⁴ The Father, Son and Holy Spirit revealed in the self-interpretation of God is the Father, Son and Holy Spirit in the “depth of eternity”.¹⁵ There is no knowledge of God behind the revelation of God, because God’s self-interpretation in revelation is God antecedently and eternally in Godself. This implies Barth’s wellknown axiom that statements concerning the immanent Trinity are simply “indispensable premises of the economic Trinity”.¹⁶ Because God *is* what God *does* then what God *does* provides knowledge of who God *is*. This means that theological reflection on the work of God in the particularity of the persons of the Trinity is, for Barth, reflection on God’s being. This is the ontological ground of the hermeneutical process of Barth’s doctrine of appropriation.

11. Eberhard Jüngel, *God’s Being is in Becoming: The Trinitarian Being of God in the Theology of Karl Barth. A Paraphrase* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2001) 49-50.

12. Colin Gunton, *Becoming and Being* (London: SCM Press, 2001) 150.

13. C.D. Vol. I/I, 311.

14. C.D. Vol. I/I, 311-312.

15. C.D. Vol. I/I, 479.

16. C.D. Vol. I/I, 479.

2.3. Relations of Origin

Barth maintains that the particularity of the persons of the Trinity, brought to speech in appropriations, corresponds to the eternal relations of origin in God's being. Barth's first rule implies this correlation: "There has to be a manifest kinship, similarity and analogy between the three things signifying and the three things signified, as there manifestly is between Father, Son and Spirit on the one hand and the three relations of origin on the other."¹⁷ According to Barth, the relations of origin are the distinguishing fact of the divine modes of being. The divine modes of being are differentiated not in isolation from one another, but in their self-relatedness. To appropriate a particular work to God in the divine modes of being as the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, will be in accordance with the intra-trinitarian relational structure of God's being. For instance, Barth defines the relation of origin of the Father to the Son and the Spirit in terms of God's fatherhood (*paternitas*). For Barth the Father is only able to be meaningfully described as the Creator because there is an analogy between the work of creation and God's eternal fatherhood.

As the Father, God procreates Himself from eternity in His Son, and with His Son He is also from eternity the origin of Himself in the Holy Spirit; and as the Creator He posits the reality to all the things that are distinct from Himself. The two things are not identical. Neither the Son nor the Holy Spirit is the world; each is God as the Father Himself is God. But between the relationship in God Himself and God's relationship to the world, there is an obvious proportion. In view of this it is meaningful and right to designate God the Father in particular (*per appropriationem*) as Creator, and God the Creator in particular (*per appropriationem*) as the Father.¹⁸

Barth describes the Father as the holy Creator because of the Father's intra-trinitarian role as *arche* in relation to the Son and Spirit. This is why it is appropriate to think of the Father in particular as the Creator.

2.4. Appropriations as Relative Speech about God

Although there is correspondence between the being of God antecedently in Godself and God's self-interpretation in revelation, because God *is* what God *does*, this correspondence is analogical. In Barth's understanding, knowledge of the divine modes of being in their

17. C.D. Vol. I/I, 374.

18. C.D. Vol. III/I, 49.

particularity is not to be confused with the differentiation in the essence of God, even though there is proportional similarity and dissimilarity. For Barth, the doctrine of appropriation is the comprehensibility of the distinctions of the divine modes of being in the truth suitable to human beings. The distinctions in the Godhead in itself, however, do not depend on these distinctions in the truth of the human comprehension of these distinctions. This is the reason why Barth understands the doctrine of appropriation to be “relative” or “improper” speech about God. It is an “improper” understanding of the triune God since God is one in the divine external works. “Improper” means that “it is not an exhaustive understanding, that it is one-sided, that it needs to be supplemented, that we cannot and should not proclaim its exclusive validity, that it must imply what is not actually contained in it as such.”¹⁹ This does not mean that the doctrine of appropriation is to be abandoned as an untrue understanding of the triune God. The theologian must, however, recognise its limitation as improper speech about God.²⁰

It is only an appropriation to the degree that it does not also express the truth of perichoresis, of the intercommunity of Father, Son and Spirit in their essence and work. But it expresses the truth and imparts true knowledge to the degree that with the equation it touches upon and denotes the distinction which there is also in the *opus ad extra*, the order and sense in which God as the Triune is the subject of the *opus ad extra indivisum*. It expresses the truth to the degree that with its specific emphasis on the Father or Creator it points to the affinity between the order of God’s three modes of being on the one hand and that of the three sides of His work as Creator, Reconciler and Redeemer on the other.²¹

This is the limitation of Barth’s doctrine of the Trinity. The incomprehensible truth of God’s triunity can only be spoken about in terms of the dialectic of “unity in trinity” and “trinity in unity”, in which emphasis on the threeness or unity of God is not an exhaustive understanding.

We cannot advance beyond these two obviously one-sided and inadequate formulations. They are both one-sided and inadequate because a slight overemphasis on the unity is unavoidable in the

19. C.D. Vol. I/I, 395. See also Vol. III/I, 49-57; Vol. III/IV, 33-40.

20. C.D. Vol. I/I, 395.

21. C.D. Vol. I/I, 396-397.

first and a slight overemphasis on the trinity is unavoidable in the second.²²

The relativity of the doctrine of appropriation is part of the relativity of all talk concerning the triune God. This truth enables Barth to bring to speech the divine modes of being in their proper location within his doctrines of creation, reconciliation and redemption, while concomitantly recognising the limitation of all speech about the distinctive divine modes of being. This is the context in which Barth's conception of the distinctive work of the divine modes of being is to be interpreted.

3. YOU WONDER WHERE THE SPIRIT WENT

3.1 Binitarian Theology

Barth's doctrine of the Holy Spirit is perhaps the most criticised doctrine of the *Church Dogmatics*. A recurring criticism of Barth's pneumatology is that he does not adequately present a distinctive work of the Holy Spirit – a criticism best represented by Robert Jenson. Jenson argues, apparently with the near-unanimity of a meeting of the Karl Barth Society of North America, that “long stretches of Barth's thinking seem rather binitarian than trinitarian”.²³ This statement captures the putative weakness of Barth's pneumatology: you wonder where the Spirit went in Barth's trinitarian theology! Jenson states that in Barth's trinitarian theology the work of the Spirit is simply the continuation of the work of Jesus Christ. He maintains that for Barth salvation history is the one coming of the One who has come before and continues to come in differing forms, Jesus Christ.²⁴ Reinhard Hütter concurs with Jenson's criticism by arguing that what is lacking in Barth's pneumatology is a distinct trinitarian “identity” and a distinct economy of the Holy Spirit.²⁵ Joseph Mangina succinctly describes this weakness of Barth's pneumatology.

The Spirit illuminates with the powerful, self-involving knowledge of Jesus Christ; but does its activity *take up time and space* in the created order? And if the Spirit does not enter into the travail of history – history that includes the stories of Israel, the nations, and

22. C.D. Vol. I/I, 368.

23. Robert Jenson, “You Wonder Where the Spirit Went”, *Pro Ecclesia* 2/3 (1993) 296-304.

24. Jenson, “You Wonder Where the Spirit Went”, 300.

25. Reinhard Hütter, *Bound to be Free: Evangelical Catholic Engagements in Ecclesiology, Ethics, and Ecumenism* (Grand Rapids IL: Eerdmans, 2004) 48.

that strangely ambiguous reality we call the church – then are we justified in confessing him as “the Lord and giver of life?”²⁶

The concern of the above scholars, and many more, is that Barth’s close identification of the Spirit with Jesus Christ, especially in his doctrine of reconciliation, what George Hunsinger describes as Barth’s Christ-centered pneumatology,²⁷ too often reduces the distinctiveness of the Spirit’s work in the economy of salvation.

Although the doctrine of appropriation is the conceptual framework for the distinctive works of the divine modes of being in the *Church Dogmatics*, as the first two sections explained, it remains noticeably absent from the accounts of Barth’s distinctive work of the Spirit. For instance, Jenson argues that Barth’s thoroughly Western trinitarian thinking is the problem underlying his pneumatology. According to Jenson, Barth’s use of the Western doctrine of the Spirit as the *vinculum caritatis* results in an “I-Thou trinitarianism”, in which the Father and the Son are unproblematically understood as persons in mutual converse, but the Spirit is not a “party” to this converse between the Father and the Son.²⁸

The “inner-divine” fellowship of Father and Son in the Spirit is explicitly described as “two-sided,” since the Spirit is the fellowship itself. Precisely this merely two-sided fellowship is then the eternal ground for there being fellowship between God and humanity, first between God and the Son Jesus and then between God in Jesus and Jesus’ sisters and brothers. But that is to say that this merely two-sided fellowship is the eternal ground of all salvation-history. Moreover, the way this grounding works is that each two-sided fellowship is the *archetype* of the thereby next grounded such pairing, so that the two-sidedness reproduces itself at every ontological level.²⁹

This two-sided fellowship between the Father and the Son, as Jenson describes it, is seen in Barth’s doctrine of election and creation in which Barth primarily describes the work of the Spirit as ensuring the unity between the Father and the Son.³⁰ Jenson’s point is that Barth struggles

26 Joseph Mangina, “Bearing the Marks of Jesus: The Church in the Economy of Salvation in Barth and Hauerwas”, *Scottish Journal of Theology* 52:3 (1999) 269-305, see p. 300.

27. George Hunsinger, *Disruptive Grace: Studies in the Theology of Karl Barth* (Grand Rapids IL: Eerdmans, 2000) 157-160.

28. Robert Jenson, *Systematic Theology: Volume I The Triune God* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997) 155.

29. Jenson, “You Wonder Where the Spirit Went”, 300-301.

30. C.D. Vol. II/II, 101; C.D. Vol. III/I, 56-59.

to present an adequate account of the distinctive work of the Spirit in these doctrines precisely because of his difficulty in conceiving the distinctive immanent work of the Spirit.

Jenson rightly argues that Barth does at times conflate the work of the Spirit with the work of Jesus Christ to such an extent that the Spirit appears only to disappear as the operation between the Father and the Son or as the Spirit of Christ. Barth's description of the Spirit as "pure receiver"³¹ and his insistence that the Spirit is the "common factor"³² or operation between the Father and the Son, gives the impression that the work of the Spirit is subsumed into the operation or event between the Father and the Son. Since in Barth's theology, *God is what God does* there is great significance in his conception of the Spirit as the "common factor" between the Father and the Son. Jenson states the problem as follows:

In Barth's theology, Western trinitarianism's common difficulty in conceiving the Spirit's specific immanent initiative in God must become a difficulty in conceiving the Spirit's entire salvation-historical initiative.³³

Because Barth understands the Spirit as the common factor or essence of the relation between the Father and the Son *ad intra*, it becomes quite difficult for him to speak adequately of the particularity of the Spirit *ad extra*.

Although Jenson has a cogent argument vis-à-vis Barth's conception of the Spirit's immanent initiative and therefore economic initiative, more needs to be said about why Barth does not think that he ought to conceive of a distinctive work of the Spirit in every doctrine. The doctrine of appropriation offers an answer to this question.

4. ON INTERPRETING BARTH'S PNEUMATOLOGY

4.1. Dialectic Strategy of Juxtaposition

In Barth's doctrine of appropriation, it is both "proper" and "improper" to speak about the particular works of the divine modes of being, insofar as knowledge of the distinctions of the modes of being refers to the truth suitable to human beings. But this is not to be confused with the distinctions in the essence of God. It is for this reason that Barth is not hindered in accentuating the work of one divine mode of being in different doctrines, such as his doctrine of creation for the

31. C.D. Vol. I/I, 364.

32. C.D. Vol. I/I, 469.

33. Jenson, "You Wonder Where the Spirit Went", 300.

Father and doctrine of reconciliation for Jesus Christ, because he maintains that it is not possible to think simultaneously of God's trinity in unity and unity in trinity. Barth's doctrine of appropriation operates in a similar fashion to what George Hunsinger describes as his "dialectic strategy of juxtaposition". Hunsinger convincingly argues that Barth employs a "dialectic strategy of juxtaposition" to describe the inconceivability of the incarnation. The reference here is to Barth's dialectical christology, in which he maintains that it is impossible to think simultaneously of the divine and human natures of Jesus Christ. Hunsinger avers that Barth deliberately switches between an "Alexandrian idiom" and an "Antiochian idiom" without dissolving the antithesis.³⁴ The dialectic strategy of juxtaposition explains why, in certain passages of the *Church Dogmatics*, Barth's christology appears to be Alexandrian in character, while in others it appears to be Antiochian. Just as Barth deliberately switches between an "Alexandrian idiom" and an "Antiochian idiom" in his christological discussions, he likewise sees no problem with a one-sided discussion of the work of one divine mode of being in his various doctrines because of the incomprehensibility of God's trinity in unity. For Barth, all talk about the distinctive modes of being is incommensurable with the essence of God, but analogically appropriate to human comprehension. Because of this, he deliberately juxtaposes the works of the divine modes of being by thinking about one person in different doctrines, giving the impression that he has neglected the other parties to this work. This is why he does not think that he ought to conceive of a distinctive work of the Spirit where you would ordinarily expect the Spirit to come to the fore.

The implications of this for interpreting the particular work of the Spirit are considerable because Barth did not get round to beginning an explicit and developed doctrine of the work of the Holy Spirit: the doctrine of redemption. The doctrine of redemption was to expound the future of reconciliation as the particular saving work of the Holy Spirit. Hunsinger describes Barth's understanding of the redemptive work of the Spirit in this way:

Redemption as the peculiar and proper work of the Spirit represented the consummation of all things, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal life in communion with God. It was the absolute future which would at once reveal and impart Jesus Christ in his inexhaustible significance for the whole creation. Whereas from the standpoint of reconciliation, the work of the Spirit served the work

34. George Hunsinger, "Karl Barth's Christology: Its Basic Chalcedonian Character", in John Webster (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Karl Barth* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000) 127-42.

of Christ; from the standpoint of redemption, the work of Christ served the work of the Spirit.³⁵

If Barth's strategy in the *Church Dogmatics* is to speak particularly of the divine modes of being in different doctrines, then it should not be surprising that the Spirit disappears exactly where you would ordinarily expect the Spirit to appear in his doctrine of reconciliation. The difficulty for the reader of the *Church Dogmatics* is that Barth did not begin his distinctive doctrine of the Spirit. In the *Church Dogmatics* he operates within a strategy of juxtaposition without the appearance of the final side: the doctrine of redemption. This leaves the reader of the *Church Dogmatics* with a one-sided³⁶ presentation of the work of the Spirit from the perspective of christology, without a corresponding presentation of the work of Jesus Christ from the perspective of pneumatology.

4.2 Jesus as Prophet and the Work of the Spirit

An example of this is Barth's discussion of the prophetic work of Jesus Christ, which has been used to support the argument that his theology has binitarian tendencies. Barth discusses the revelation of reconciliation in terms of the prophetic work of Jesus Christ. This work is the establishment in time of knowledge of the objective participation of all people in the reconciling work of Jesus Christ. In this discussion he focuses on Jesus Christ as his own self-witness, rather than the Spirit in and through the Christian community making known the gospel. Jenson argues that it is at this decisive point that the Holy Spirit is denied a salvific historical work. Although Barth is correct to argue that the hearing of the gospel itself is a salvific work of God, it is this in the Pentecostal coming of the Spirit. Barth locates the objectivity of the proclamation of the gospel in the prophetic work of Jesus Christ, exactly where the work of the Spirit ought to come to prominence.³⁷

Jenson rightly argues that the Spirit fails to appear where we would expect treatment of the particular saving work of the Spirit, and that this

35. Hunsinger, "Karl Barth's Christology", 178.

36. This does not mean that there is not a developed pneumatology within the incomplete *Church Dogmatics*. Recent scholarship has pointed to the substantial pneumatology of the *Church Dogmatics*: see, for example, George Hunsinger, "The Mediator of Communion: Karl Barth's Doctrine of the Holy Spirit", in *The Cambridge Companion to Karl Barth*, 177-94; Eberhard Busch, *The Great Passion: An Introduction to Karl Barth's Theology* (Grand Rapids IL: Eerdmans, 2004); Adam J. McIntosh, "The Doctrine of Appropriation as an Interpretative Framework for Karl Barth's Ecclesiology of the Church Dogmatics" (Dissertation, D. Theol, Melbourne College of Divinity, 2006). This present study is concerned with the interpretative framework of Barth's pneumatology, rather than whether or not Barth has a substantial doctrine of the Holy Spirit in the *Church Dogmatics*.

37. Jenson, *Systematic Theology: The Triune God*, 154.

is a deficit in the *Church Dogmatics*. However, the reason that Barth does not think that the Spirit should appear, at this decisive moment in his doctrine of reconciliation, can be partly explained by his doctrine of appropriation. Barth's doctrine of appropriation allows him to emphasise the prophetic work of Jesus Christ in one context – in his doctrine of reconciliation – while in other places he particularly describes the Spirit as the “revealedness” of revelation, or the impartation of the human knowledge of God.³⁸ The context in which he accentuates the work of Jesus Christ as the revelation of reconciliation is his discussion of the particular prophetic work of Jesus Christ. In his doctrine of appropriation, it is not a matter of evenly distributing the works of all persons of the triune God in every doctrine, but of bringing God to speech in the particularity of the divine modes of being in different doctrines, while recognising the improper nature of this speech about God.

CONCLUSION

This is not to say that the interpretative framework of the doctrine of appropriation removes all problems from Barth's pneumatology. His description of the specific immanent function of the Spirit as the “common factor” between the Father and the Son remains problematic and would need to have been clarified in his doctrine of redemption. However, this problem is secondary to Barth's decision to conceptualise God's triunity in terms of unity in trinity and trinity in unity. What I want to stress is that his pneumatology must be interpreted within the framework that Barth himself establishes: the doctrine of appropriation – a point that has not been adequately considered in interpretations of his pneumatology. Barth's methodological decision to make use of the doctrine of appropriation explains his often one-sided account of the Spirit. Because Barth's doctrine of the Spirit did not come to prominence in the incomplete *Church Dogmatics*, one is left to wonder where Barth might have taken his pneumatology had he completed a treatment of the doctrine of redemption.

38. C.D. Vol. 1/1, 324-330.