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Pentecost and the Spirit

INTRODUCTION

The traditional trinitarian formula begins with the Father: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. One might naturally think that trinitarian discussion is best served if the same order is followed. If one were to develop a trinitarianism "from above," starting not with human experience but with the being of God, then one might well begin with the Father, for as the term "Father" suggests, in traditional trinitarianism the Father is the primordial person of the Trinity and the eternal source of the other two. However, in a Pentecostal trinitarianism that begins with human experience of God and seeks by way of imaginative analogy to trace back from this to God's own being, then it seems sensible to begin with the Spirit. This policy, it is worth noting, forms the basis of the chapter order as well as the logical order of Yong's trinitarian hermeneutic, *Spirit-Word-Community*.[1] And there is good reason to begin with the Spirit. All our experience of God is, most directly, of the Spirit. In a way this is to state the obvious or to offer a circular argument, for by Spirit we may simply mean God's immanence—God's "with-us-ness."[2] But this observation does not make the statement untrue.

1. Yong, *Spirit-Word-Community*, especially 7, 14, 27; and the order of the chapters.

2. I make no further attempt to define the terms "Spirit" and "spirit," other than to indicate that I use "Spirit" to refer to the third person of the Trinity and "spirit," when God is the focus of my discussion, to refer to the mysterious and incorporeal nature of God as suggested in John 3:8; 4:24.

It might be argued that a Christian's most immediate religious experience is of Jesus or the Father or a set of propositions called the gospel. To take my own Christian story as an example, I am a convert to committed Christianity. The message that was shared with me by concerned friends was about God as Father and about Jesus, not about the Spirit. So surely my first acquaintance, mediated through this message, was with the Father or Jesus? But I can only appeal to the work of the Spirit as a meaningful explanation for how I first came to *experience* God. The occasion, in late 1976, when I accepted the Christian gospel and committed my life to God was not the first time I had heard the gospel. Earlier in my teens I had been offered the same message by one or two other school friends. But on these earlier occasions, the message had not sunk in. I had somehow shrugged it off. I can offer no explanation as to how the message eluded me in earlier years but reached me on this subsequent occasion. That it did finally sink in I can only ascribe to the influence of the Spirit. The message had not changed. I doubt whether I had changed significantly over the course of a year or so. But somehow on this latter occasion the Spirit opened my life to the truth and significance of what I was hearing. I suggest I am not alone in this. Human relationship with God starts with the Spirit.

In the rest of this chapter, I explore first the Spirit's distinctions, considering first both the commonality and the differences between the Spirit and the Father. After passing briefly over the commonality and differences between the Spirit and the Son, for I will cover that in detail in chapter 3, I attend to the same topic concerning the Spirit and created intermediaries. In the subsequent section, I consider both the impersonhood and the personhood of the Spirit. The section thereafter is about the Spirit's kenosis. Finally, I explore the various roles of the Spirit in the life of the Son, before bringing the chapter to a conclusion.

THE SPIRIT'S DISTINCTIONS

I suggested in the introduction to this chapter that my experience of the Spirit convinced me of the fatherhood of God and the lordship of Christ.[3] However, we need to acknowledge that this sort of experience, which many

3. In this book I am not focusing on any distinction between receiving the Spirit in the context of conversion and receiving the Spirit—a baptism in the Spirit, as we Pentecostals tend to call it—in the context of empowerment. For my thoughts on this subject, see my *Baptism in the Spirit*, throughout.

have shared, is not in itself sufficient to persuade all such recipients that the Spirit is distinguishable from the Father whose fatherhood the Spirit declares or from the Son whose lordship the Spirit declares.[4] After all, Oneness Pentecostals seem to have the same experience of the Spirit but reach different conclusions about the Trinity. Thus our own experience alone is not sufficient in determining the relationship between the Spirit and the Father—or indeed the Son. We must turn to the shared experiences and testimonies of the wider community: and the place to turn first is to that witness which emerged closest to the original Christian action—the New Testament—for whatever view we hold on whether the New Testament and the Old Testament are inspired in some way—and I believe they are—we cannot deny that the New Testament contains voices far closer to the events central to the gospel than our own.

It is first important to consider whether the New Testament's primary witnesses made any distinctions between the Spirit and the Father and to explore the degree of common ground they found between the two. Thereafter it will be useful as well to discuss whether the Spirit is a created intermediary or truly God. I will not discuss distinctions between the Son and the Spirit until chapter 3, and consider questions about the Father and the Son in chapter 4, so that each chapter contains one aspect of this triad of distinctions.

The Spirit and the Father

It is first important to consider whether the New Testament's main writers on the Spirit made any distinctions between the Spirit and the Father. It might turn out to be the case, for instance, that every reference to the Spirit is simply shorthand for "God the Father by the Spirit." If so, another shorthand term, such as "God," might be exchangeable in a given text without any significant shift in meaning. Certainly, such a substitution could be suggested in many New Testament instances. To offer one such example, "the Holy Spirit said, 'Separate for me Barnabas and Saul'" (Acts 13:2) might have been written, perhaps without undue change in meaning, "God said, 'Separate for me . . . ,'" or even, "the Father said, 'Separate for me . . .'"

4. This is despite Smail's cogent argument that our human but divinely enabled freedom to declare the lordship of Christ is evidence of real distinction between the Spirit in us who enables the declaration, and the Son whose lordship is thus declared (Smail, *Giving Gift*, 68–69). For my discussion of 1 Cor 12:3, see below, pages 90–91.

(cf. Mark 12:26; Acts 7:3, 6; 2 Cor 4:6; 6:16; Heb 5:5). With this observation in mind, clear evidence for distinctions must be sought.

I commence this study with Luke's account of Pentecost. Certainly Luke's explanation of Pentecost, offered through the preaching of Peter, provides no opportunity to confuse the Spirit and the Father.[5] According to Acts 2:33 the Spirit is a promised gift that can be handed by the Father to the Son and then poured out on Christ's followers. This coheres with the content of Joel's prophecy that Peter had just quoted: the Spirit is not so much God's self as something God pours out on all flesh (Acts 2:17). The picture is confirmed elsewhere in the Lukan literature. At Jesus' baptism, after the Spirit descended *to earth* in dove-like manner, the sound was heard of the Father's voice *from heaven* (Luke 3:22). And according to Jesus' promise, the Holy Spirit, or good Spirit, is to be given *by the Father* in divine response to trusting prayer (Luke 11:13).

Yet the picture is not as clear-cut as the evidence presented in the previous paragraph might suggest. Acts 10:38, while stating that God granted anointing to Jesus, also firmly links that *Spirit*-anointing with God *the Father*'s presence.[6] Acts 2:22 indicates that it was *God* who performed signs and wonders through the Jesus who had appealed to his powerful *Spirit*-anointing for his capacity to heal for instance the blind (Luke 4:18; cf. 4:14; 5:17). The *filling of the Spirit* was God's answer to the disciples' prayer that the *Father* would stretch out a hand to heal (Acts 4:30–31). Thus the Lukan picture is somewhat mixed: the Spirit is indeed distinguished from the Father on significant occasions, while at other times, though never so explicitly, the Spirit is closely related to the Father in ways that almost seem to merge their identity.

In Paul's letters a similarly dual picture emerges. One needs to look no further than 1 Corinthians 2:10–11 where, as illustrated by analogy with a human's spirit, God's Spirit is understood as the *only* competent reader of God's innermost being—God's "depths." God's Spirit and God's Spirit alone can trace God's deepest thoughts. The Spirit is not a creature from whom or from which such mysteries remain forever hidden, or hidden until revealed.

5. For discussion concerning why such religious experiences as those described in Acts 2 should have been interpreted as experiences *of the Spirit at all*, see Rabens, "Power from In Between," 146–49.

6. With the frequent exception of Jesus' own reported use of the term, neither Luke as narrator nor Luke's characters except Peter in Acts 2:33 called God "Father." However, the God who was with Jesus according to Acts 10:38 was the obviously the God whom the Lukan Jesus constantly addressed as "Father."

Thus this Spirit appears to be as innately involved in the being of God as a human spirit is in that human's being. (This heavenly mind reading is reciprocated in Rom 8:27.) Nevertheless, the Spirit can be distinguished from "God"—as also the human spirit can here be distinguished from the human being. The Spirit is the means by which God has acted (2:10—in this case, the action being that of revealing), and can be given to humans such that the Spirit received is the Spirit *from* God (2:12; 6:19).

In Johannine material, too, the Spirit is divinely given (John 3:34; 7:39; 1 John 4:13). In John 14:16–17, it is clearly the Father who gives the Spirit of truth. That the Spirit is thereby distinguished from the Father is made all the clearer in John 14:26, with its use of the verb "send." This Spirit thus "proceeds out from" the Father (John 15:26) and this Paraclete will thereafter have come among Jesus' hearers (John 16:7, 13) while the Father remains in an invisible realm to which Jesus will disappear (John 16:10). Finally, in 1 John 4:2, the Spirit that acknowledges the incarnate Christ is "from" God. The Spirit is thus clearly distinguished from the Father.

However, as with Luke and Paul, the whole story has not yet been told. It would be naive to conclude from John 4:24 ("God is spirit") that in Johannine portrayal the Father equals the Spirit.[7] Nevertheless, some degree of identity is implied elsewhere. John 3:34 has already been referred to. Burge considers whether in this text the Spirit is given by the Father or the Son, and concludes that the former is more likely, with the Son the recipient of the measureless Spirit.[8] If this is so, then the Son's capacity to speak the Father's words is attributed to the Son's reception *of the Spirit*. And yet Jesus' constant testimony was that he spoke as he heard *his Father* speak—and acted as he saw *his Father* act (e.g., John 5:19, 30; 8:28). So some intimate connection between the Spirit and the Father is at least tangentially implied here.

Both these New Testament portrayals—of the Spirit as representing the inner recesses of the Father's being and of the Spirit as distinguishable from the Father, sent out into God's world and people—are in line with the dual understanding we find in the OT. It related the Spirit to God's presence and to God's face (Ps 51:11; 139:7; Ezek 39:29). This suggests the "Godness" of the Spirit. But it also related the Spirit to God's hand and arm (e.g., Isa 63:11–12; Ezek 8:3; 37:1). These texts evoke much more the distinction

7. See Burge, *Anointed Community*, 192.

8. Ibid., 83–84. So too, more briefly, Beasley-Murray, *John*, 54; Turner, *Holy Spirit and Spiritual Gifts*, 59.

to be drawn between God and the Spirit, which was an "extension" of God, representing divine activity in God's world and people.[9]

A further possible piece of evidence for a New Testament distinction (at least after Pentecost) between the Spirit and the Father emerges in the writing of Turner on the subject. Turner points out that as the Pentecostal sending of the Spirit was delegated to the Son (e.g., Acts 2:33), the Son had become "Lord of the Spirit," invested with the authority to grant the Spirit to others. Turner therefore suggests that here the Spirit must be differentiated from the Father, for otherwise these New Testament texts declare that Jesus poured out the Father, which in Turner's view would be a blasphemy.[10]

In conclusion to this section, the New Testament offers a dual presentation of the Spirit: as distinguishable from the Father, most particularly in being given by the Father; and yet also intimately tied to the being of the Father, knowing the Father's mind and conveying the Father's presence. Different models of the Trinity cohere with these two presentations. The presentation that identifies the Spirit with the Father suggests a functional model—an *instrumental* one. The Spirit is an *instrument* of the Father's actions. The Father *functions* by means of the Spirit. On the other hand, the presentation that distinguishes the Spirit from the Father allows for either a social or substantial model: the Spirit is *someone* or *something* distinguishable ontologically from the Father. One can validly speak of the Father's being *and* the Spirit's being, not just of the Father acting *by means of* the Spirit. One can refer to the Spirit *ontologically* as well as *functionally*: the Spirit as an *entity*, whether that entity is a personal one or an impersonal one.

The Spirit and the Son

Again it must not simply be assumed that the New Testament writers distinguished clearly or consistently between the Spirit and the Son, any more than they did between the Spirit and the Father. Comments made in the previous section about references to the Spirit potentially being shorthand for "God the Father by the Spirit" apply as much to the Son. Thus if the example used previously, Acts 13:2, were understood to be shorthand for "Jesus by the Spirit said . . . ," then again no significant alteration in meaning might here be discerned (cf. Acts 18:9). Clearly, this is a most important

9. This continued to be the general Jewish understanding up to, including, and beyond the New Testament era. See the summary in Turner, "Spirit of Christ," 422–23.

10. Turner, *Holy Spirit and Spiritual Gifts*, 170, 176.

topic that needs careful discussion. It could appear in this chapter, or equally it could appear in the following chapter under the section title, "The Son and the Spirit." Simply for the sake of balance, I include it in chapter 3.

The Spirit and Created Intermediaries

That Paul did not regard the Spirit as a created entity has already emerged in discussion of 1 Corinthians 2:10–11, above. In apocalyptic literature, the picture was far less clear. The ways that the Spirit and creatures such as angels were portrayed means that potential confusion between them exists. In the case of Revelation, such was the apparent glory of angels that the narrator was tempted to worship one (Rev 19:10; 22:8–9). It is not entirely clear, too, whether the "seven spirits" in Revelation 1:4 were the seven angels to whom the seven letters were addressed (Rev 2:1—3:14) or whether the reference was to the Spirit of God, however understood.[11]

With Luke, the picture seems initially to be similarly confusing but on closer inspection offers a uniquely exalted pneumatology that clearly distinguishes the Spirit from such beings as angels. At times, Luke brought the function of angels and the function of the Spirit into such close narrative apposition as to suggest initially that he offered no clear conceptual distinction between them, as if for him the Spirit might simply be an angel. This suggestion is clearest in Acts 8:26–29. An *angel* of the Lord told Philip to go south (Acts 8:26) and as a consequence he met an official. The *Spirit* then told Philip to approach the man (Acts 8:29) and as a result Philip was able to speak about Christ. Here we see no apparent functional difference between the voice of an angel and the voice of the Spirit. Indeed, in isolation this passage might well suggest that the Spirit *was* the angel. While this is the clearest example, it is not the only one. Throughout Acts, both angels and the Spirit are involved in enabling, guiding, strengthening and reassuring the mission of the earliest church. In both cases, this involves their doing God's works and speaking God's words, thereby acting as God's

11. See discussion in Waddell, *Spirit of the Book of Revelation*, 9–21. In the second century *Vision of Isaiah*, the Spirit was repeatedly called "the angel of the Holy Spirit" (e.g., *Martyrdom and Ascension of Isaiah* 9:36, 40). However, this designation did not indicate that the Spirit was a created angel: the Spirit was *worshiped* by the heavenly gathering, *including by the angels* (*Martyrdom and Ascension of Isaiah* 9:34).

agents. The similarity is such that certain passages, heard alone, might suggest confusion of identity between the Spirit and angels.[12]

However, Luke's account indicates various ways in which he did clearly distinguish between the Spirit and created intermediaries such as angels. These distinctions emerge when consideration is given to their respective roles involving miracles, divine speech, divine apparition, human inspiration, and their relation to Christ. I will survey these aspects in turn.

There is superficial resemblance between the ministries of angels and the Spirit with regard to miracles: both performed them. However, angelic miracles, which were rare, were recorded as being performed by the angel (Luke 1:20–22; Acts 5:19; possibly 12:9–10, 23). Angels *never enabled people to perform miracles*. In contrast, the only miracles which Luke regarded as performed by the Spirit directly rather than through people were the conception of Jesus and the translation of Philip (Luke 1:35; Acts 8:39): the Spirit typically *empowered people* to perform miracles (e.g., Luke 4:18; Acts 4:30–31; 10:38; 13:9–11).[13] This suggests that the Spirit and angels are not equivalent as intermediaries between God and humanity. The agency of an angel creates a three-step procession: the God who sends; the angel who performs; and the person who benefits. The agency of the Spirit, however, creates a four-fold procession: the God who sends; the Spirit who enables; the person who performs; and the person who benefits. So an angel who performs miracles is to be more closely associated with a person who performs them than with the Spirit who enables miracles.

Turning now to Luke's depiction of divinely originated speech, the picture is similar: angels characteristically spoke, while the Spirit characteristically enabled people to speak. In fact, angels seem hardly ever to have been silent when they appeared to people: there are remarkably few records of an angel's appearance on earth in the narrative of Luke-Acts that do not involve a record of that angel's words (Luke 22:43; Acts 12:23). They acted as God's mouthpiece, bringing God's message. There is no record of angels directly enabling human speech, either by giving words or boldness, although they did occasionally offer guidance concerning future speech (Acts 5:20; 10:5, 22). In the case of the Spirit, the situation is more complex.

12. For fuller discussion, see Atkinson, "Angels and the Spirit."

13. Menzies' important thesis that the Lukan Spirit of Prophecy, like the intertestamental one, was not directly involved in miracles (*Empowered for Witness*, e.g., 102, 227) does not stand, as has been ably demonstrated by Turner (*Power from on High*, e.g., 138, 224–25, 256–64); for further discussion of this point, see my *Baptism in the Spirit*, 73–77, and the sources cited there.

As discussed above in relation to Philip, the Spirit did sometimes speak to people (Acts 8:29; 10:19; possibly 13:2; 16:7). Characteristically, however, the infilling of the Spirit enabled people themselves to become God's mouthpieces, bringing God's message (Luke 1:15–17, 41–42, 67; 2:27–28; 4:18; 10:21; 12:12; Acts 1:8; 2:4, 17; 4:8, 31; 6:10; 10:44–46; 13:9; 18:25; 19:6). These Spirit-filled people, then, rather than the Spirit, became functionally equivalent to angels as God's messengers on earth.

The next area to consider is that of divine apparition. Angels were often visible (whether in vision or "physically" was not always clear to the onlookers: e.g., Acts 12:9); the Spirit only was once or twice (Luke 3:22; [and Acts 2:3?]). The Spirit was assumed to be generally invisible. Also, while angels were sometimes thereby the objects of visions (e.g., Luke 24:23; Acts 10:3), the Spirit never was: the Spirit was the giver of visions (Acts 2:17). This places the Spirit and angels in a subject-object relationship with one another. The Spirit is the subject, regarded as acting upon angels, in that a Spirit-inspired vision might involve an angel. Angels were never presented by Luke as subjects acting upon the Spirit.[14]

In the case of human inspiration, it seems likely that Luke intended to convey the idea that those who were visited by angels and thereby guided, reassured, and informed were "inspired" as a result. The visitation itself was at least sometimes numinous enough to inspire fear or amazement (Luke 1:12, 29–30; 24:5; Acts 7:30; 10:4). However, when discussion turns to the Spirit, it is of course possible to use the word "inspiration" in a far more technical sense. The Spirit was sent by God to be in, or upon, people (Luke 1:15, 41, 67; 2:25; 4:18; Acts 1:8; 2:4; 4:8, 31; 6:3, 5; 7:55; 9:17; 10:44; 11:24; 19:6). Thus the picture is consistent: angels were external to people, whereas the Spirit was available to reside and work within.[15] The Spirit is further distinguished from angels by the widespread availability of the Spirit to be within people (Acts 2:17, 38–39). The universality of this availability implies omnipresence—a characteristic never ascribed to angels.

14. Whether Rev 17:3 indicates that an angel can "affect" the Spirit is moot. Various scholars see "in spirit" here, as elsewhere in the book (Rev 1:10; 4:2; 21:10), as denoting John's state of mind (what some call "ecstatic") rather than as a reference to the Spirit of God. See discussion in Waddell, *Spirit of the Book of Revelation*, 31, 138.

15. The only possible equivalents to this indwelling in Luke-Acts have to do with the realm of evil. Satan entered people (Judas—Luke 22:3; Ananias—Acts 5:3); demons were "in" people (e.g., Luke 4:33–36). However, there is no internal evidence that Luke regarded Satan or demons as part of the angelic realm, whatever the wider literary context might suggest.

Finally and most importantly, angels and the Spirit were clearly distinguished in their possible mediating of the presence of the ascended Christ. Terminologically, angels were related to God in a way that superficially mirrors the Spirit's relation to God ("angel of the Lord," "Spirit of the Lord"; "holy angel," "Holy Spirit"). When, however, their relation to the risen Christ is observed, no similarity is to be found. The coming one promised by John the Baptist was to be one who granted the Spirit (Luke 3:16). After the ascension, Jesus was indeed given the Spirit by the Father to grant (Acts 2:33). Thereafter, the Spirit could rightly be called the Spirit of Jesus (Acts 16:7), for not only could the visions the Spirit granted convey an appearing of Jesus to their recipients (Acts 7:55), but, more generally, the Spirit's whole ministry to the church offered them continuing experience of Christ. The comparison with angels is simple and clear. As Conzelmann observes, angels in Luke-Acts were never "the angel of Christ."[16] Some association (of glory) between the Son of Man and angels can be noted (Luke 9:26). However, there is no sense at all that angels appearing to people were conveying the presence of Christ. In this respect, as in the others surveyed, Luke *did not* confuse the identity of the Spirit with that of angels, and thereby did not suggest that the Spirit is a created heavenly intermediary. Rather, the contrasts that have been brought out indicate that the Spirit stands in a relationship to the created order *with* the Father and the Son.

THE SPIRIT AND PERSONHOOD

As I suggested in chapter 1, we may discover in the course of our explorations that either the Father, the Son, or the Spirit has some personal characteristics and some impersonal ones. In the case of the Spirit, we find, the impersonal seems to outweigh the personal. However, in this instance we find a further complication: the Spirit can be conceived as not even an entity, but as a function of God. I will consider each of these matters in turn, beginning with the question of ontology before moving on to consider both impersonal and personal ways of appreciating the Spirit.

16. Conzelmann, *Acts*, 41.

The Spirit Seen Functionally

In isolation, Acts 2:33 does not state what Jesus poured out, beyond characterizing it in rather puzzling fashion as "what you both see and hear." However, the context is plain: what the audience most immediately "saw and heard" and what it commented on (Acts 2:6–13) was people speaking in a wide range of human languages, declaring the glory of God. The audience did not comment on seeing any*thing* poured out at all. They referred to seeing a particular *behavior*. One is thus justified in immediately taking "poured out what you see and hear" as a functional statement, indicating metaphorically that God had so acted upon these people that they were behaving in a certain way. No *entity* may have been poured out at all. No "pouring out" as such may have occurred. But more can be said: Acts 2:3–4 declares that those whose behavior was so vividly visible and audible to the gathered crowds had just been "filled" with the Spirit, and that it was this Spirit's "arrival" that enabled their vivid behavior. Therefore one might conclude that this "Spirit" is a metaphor for the action of God that produced this behavior. Could it be, then, that there is no such thing as the Spirit?—that to say "God did such-and-such by the Spirit" is no more or less than to say that "God did such-and-such spiritually"?

Moving beyond Pentecost to the ongoing effects of the Spirit in believers' lives, many of the "actions of the Spirit" that look not only ontological but also personal at first sight can be well understood as actions of God by means of the Spirit. Turner rightly notes that "it is quite inadequate, methodologically, to build a case for the divine personhood of the Spirit in the New Testament from those places where the Spirit is said 'to teach' (Lk. 12:12); 'to give utterance' (Acts 2:4); 'to say' (Acts 8:29 . . .); 'to send' (Acts 13:4); 'to forbid' (Acts 16:16); 'to appoint as overseer' (Acts 20:28), or whatever. All these could simply be shorthand for '*God*, as Spirit (or "by his Spirit"), said, . . .' etc."[17] What Turner does not point out is that his argument here against an easy assumption that the Spirit is a person is also an argument against a similar assumption that the Spirit is any*thing* at all!

So we face an awkward question: can the word "is" be used of the Spirit? Is the Spirit an entity, or simply the mode or quality of an action or attitude of someone or something *else*? In other words, can there be an ontology of the Spirit? Smail's study of the Spirit's personhood offers only two alternatives: the Spirit is a person or the Spirit is the mode of action of

17. Turner, *Holy Spirit and Spiritual Gifts*, 172.

another person.[18] By this reckoning, if the Spirit is not personal then, for example, to describe the Spirit as speaking on a particular occasion is only to indicate something about the *way* God spoke then. In this framework of thought, no ontological questions can be asked of the Spirit but only functional ones. "Spirit" in this context is not really a noun but in practice an adverb.

It might be counter-argued, in reference to Acts 2:33, that a more straightforward reading of the reference to Jesus "pouring out" is that an entity was given rather than a functional, non-ontological Spirit. Only limited evidence can be offered towards this counter-argument, however. Little if any weight can be placed on the verb "pour out," for in the wider context of the New Testament, God could pour out love (Rom 5:5). Neither can much help be gained from the verb "fill." Turner notes that such phrases as "full of the Spirit" are paralleled in Luke-Acts by "full of leprosy" (Luke 5:12) and "full of anger" (Acts 19:28).[19] We are not in a position to know whether Luke thought of either leprosy or anger as a substance, however we might understand these. That Jesus received this promised Spirit from the Father does not assist: one can receive love as well as pour it out. Amassed, the language of receiving, pouring, and filling does not suggest any more than that Jesus enabled an activity at Pentecost; he "poured out" the Spirit as a function.

I offer these reflections on Acts 2 as a starting point for the suggestion that it is useful as part of one's trinitarian thinking to regard the Spirit functionally. One of the ways that I will want to characterize the Trinity is as functional or instrumental. In this picture, the unity of God is highlighted. There is one God who speaks words by means of breath out-breathed. This God is the Father. His word is the Son; his breath is the Spirit. In fact, this is not the only way in which the Trinity can be regarded functionally. I will return to this picture later, in chapter 3.

The Spirit Seen Impersonally

In the previous section I explored the possibility of conceiving of the Spirit functionally. That is not the only choice. As I remarked, Luke's presentation of Peter's speech was about Jesus pouring out "what you see and hear" and I suggested that the most immediate phenomenon that the crowd had

18. Smail, *Giving Gift*, 42.

19. Turner, *Power from on High*, 167.

seen and heard was human behavior: the disciples speaking in unlearnt languages. However, it is also possible to view what was seen and heard as including tongue-like flames and a roaring wind (Acts 2:2–3).[20] Whether these are understood as visionary phenomena or as something naturally seen and heard, the implication leans now more towards some*thing* coming "down" from heaven (however insubstantially flames and wind were understood by Luke). This impression is all the stronger in the case of the dove descending on Jesus. While Mark's account was of Jesus *seeing* (in a vision?) the heavens open and a dove come down after his baptism (Mark 1:10), Luke's account if anything heightens the physicality of the event: he wrote rather that the heaven opened and the dove came down *in bodily form* (Luke 3:21–22).[21]

More generally throughout the canon, the entity of the Spirit is referred to in metaphors that suggest a fluid, whether this is a liquid like water (rain water—Isa 32:15; flowing "river" water—John 7:38–39) or oil (anointing oil—Luke 4:18), or *possibly* a gas such as wind (John 3:8) or breath (Ezek 37:5–6, 14; John 20:22). One must be cautious: these are of course metaphors. Indeed, in the case of the last metaphor, "it is doubtful whether the Hebrew Bible conceives of the wind as a (material) substance at all."[22] Nevertheless, I want to suggest that these biblical hints at least open up for us the possibility that ontological questions can be asked—and answered—regarding the Spirit without resorting at this point to considerations of the Spirit's personhood.[23]

When I wrote at the beginning of this chapter that I experienced God's Spirit in the events surrounding my conversion to committed Christianity, I do not mean to suggest that I encountered the Spirit as a *person* to whom I spoke or who spoke to me. If anything, the person I was meeting was Jesus.

20. This is Walton's understanding ("Whose Spirit?" 47).

21. Nolland surprisingly and implausibly reads the difference between Mark and Luke the other way round, so that where "the Markan text could be taken as speaking of the Spirit 'incarnated' as a dove, Luke stands over against this possibility." If anything, to use Nolland's language, it is Luke rather than Mark who gives an impression of the Spirit "incarnated"—though reference to a "pneumatophany" might be more helpful than the use of incarnational language (Nolland, *Luke* 1:1—9:20, 161).

22. Rabens, *Holy Spirit and Ethics*, 37.

23. I do not mean to suggest that biblical authors conceived of the Spirit as a *material* entity. For discussion of the use of metaphor in this context, see Rabens, *Holy Spirit and Ethics*, 37, 43–46. For discussion of the Stoic view of a material Spirit and its contrasts with Jewish views, see Rabens, *Holy Spirit and Ethics*, 25–79; see also Levison, *Filled with the Spirit*, e.g., 138–40.

Like many a Christian, I do not regularly pray to the Spirit or sing to the Spirit. I probably make no clear semantic distinction in everyday practice between "the Spirit said" and "Jesus said." We Christians are told by the creeds that along with the Father and the Son the Spirit is to be worshiped and glorified[24] but we do not often make any attempt to relate personally to the Spirit. In the Pentecostal circles in which I move, immediate experience of the Spirit is often termed as experiencing God's anointing and is described quite often in physical terms, whether this be characterized by analogy as electricity, heat, or some other earthly phenomenon. At other times the description might be of being "urged" to prophesy or so forth.[25] I am not sure that I have ever heard anyone testify to a vision in which they have *seen* the Spirit as an otherwise apparently human person (in the way that I have heard of visions of Jesus). This experienced impersonality of the Spirit is mirrored in the New Testament. I explore the New Testament's witness to the impersonhood of the Spirit in two halves. In the latter half of this subsection I will consider the Spirit's involvement in the world and especially the living world as one way of gaining understanding of the impersonal Spirit within the Trinity. Before reaching that point, however, I will explore the Spirit's impersonal involvement specifically in the lives of Christians as a starting point for imagining the impersonal Spirit in the Trinity.

I begin this part as usual with Pentecost and its explanation centered on Acts 2:33. The Spirit is portrayed here as impersonal. A person is not poured out. People are not filled (Acts 2:4) with a person. This presentation is typical of biblical language and concepts. One must acknowledge that the biblical accounts of the Spirit's involvement in God's people are usually in terms that suggest the Spirit is impersonal. Furthermore, the ways that this Spirit affects recipients is often impersonal. This was true on the day of Pentecost. The narrative in Acts does not suggest that the disciples met a new person on that day but that they were inwardly influenced in ways that led to their unexpected behavior: some onlookers thought they were filled with an intoxicating substance, sweet wine, not with a person (Acts 2:13). And the heavenly manifestations in Luke's presentation were of flames and of wind—hardly personal!

24. Expanded Nicene Creed, issued by the Council of Constantinople in 381.

25. See, e.g., Dye, *Revival Phenomena*; Dixon, *Signs of Revival*; Deere, *Surprised by the Voice of God*, throughout.