

BARTH, ORIGEN,
AND UNIVERSAL
SALVATION

Restoring Particularity

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Introduction

1 NATURE OF STUDY

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

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

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

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

2 MOTIVATIONS FOR STUDY

The motivations for this study are several.

(a) Questions about soteriology

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

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

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

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

(b) Questions about the place for particularity

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

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

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

(c) Questions about the study of Barth

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

¹¹ *IV/2*, 713.

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

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

(d) Questions about the study of Fathers

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

3 METHOD

(a) Approach

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

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

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

(b) Why Barth and Origen?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

i. History and time

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

ii. Being overly systematic

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

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

iii. Being overly creative

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

iv. Language

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

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

v. What counts as Origen's corpus?

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

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

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

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

²³ *De Princ.* Pref.2.

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

vi. What about the Father?

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

²⁴ E.g. I/1, 393 cf. *De Princ.* I.1.

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

4 ARGUMENT

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

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

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

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