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Paul D. Molnar, *Faith, Freedom and the Spirit: The Economic Trinity in Barth, Torrance and Contemporary Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2015), pp. 448. \$40.00.

Paul Molnar rightly has the reputation of being one of the major contemporary trinitarian theologians, largely due to his *Divine Freedom and the Doctrine of the Immanent Trinity* (2005). *Divine Freedom* sought to clear the ground for a proper doctrine of the freedom of God via a critique of much contemporary theology. With the precision of a master theologian, Molnar showed what must and must not be said about the triune God if one is to remain faithful to scripture and informed by the tradition. In this new work Molnar performs the same task, this time with a focus on the work of the Holy Spirit within the economy.

The central thesis running throughout *Faith, Freedom and the Spirit* is that ‘a proper understanding of theology starting from the anthropological side can do justice both to divine and human freedom in a positive way as long as it develops strictly within faith as enabled by the Holy Spirit’ (p. 29). Thus, ‘when the Holy Spirit is allowed to function as the one who both enables faith and unites us to Christ, then we not only come to know God with a definite certitude, but we come to know ourselves in Christ in positive ways that would be closed to us apart from faith and revelation’ (p. 29). One can see the dual roles Molnar takes in this book, that of prosecutor and defender of orthodoxy. Molnar argues that it is the unique and miraculous work of the Holy Spirit who alone brings true knowledge of God the Father by uniting us to the Word through faith. Outside of Spirit-given faith and revelation, one is thrown back upon oneself, and not upon God. Everything else in the book is an attempt to defend these central arguments from their detractors and to explicate these themes for contemporary theology.

The volume concludes with a number of convictions, including:

1. Against pure metaphysics or anthropology, theology proper is revealed by the Spirit through history as attested in the Bible, and supremely in the incarnation of the Son.
2. General revelation and natural theology are no foundations upon which to come to know the triune God, who is revealed exclusively in Christ through his Spirit.
3. A proper doctrine of election must respect God’s freedom both in *se* and in God’s economic actions.
4. Both creation and incarnation must be seen as new actions – even for God – in order to make sense of christology and atonement.

5. The *Logos asarkos* must be affirmed, in opposition to historicised christologies.
6. T. F. Torrance can be used to critique Karl Barth on the obedience of the Son, and on what may be affirmed of the immanent Trinity on the basis of the economy.
7. Human freedom is to be understood in relation to the belief that the Spirit brings true knowledge of the Son and experience of God, such that we must never detach who God is from his being and action in the incarnate Word.

One might describe Molnar's style as a form of theological pugilism: as combatants are introduced and then systematically taken down, Molnar pulls no punches. This level of theological precision and clarity is rare in contemporary theology (albeit somewhat abrasive at points) and provides perhaps the clearest articulation of an orthodox doctrine of divine revelation in recent decades. Molnar's examination of the exclusive work of the Spirit in revealing God by means of the Word is stunning in its grasp of the subject matter and the breadth of learning on display. Barth and Torrance are shown to be strategic dialogue partners in the work of contemporary theology, and in Molnar's hands they are used to good effect to clarify what we may or may not say about the work of the Spirit in the economy of grace. Here we witness a seasoned theologian at his best.

If there is anything disappointing about the volume it is the lack of discussion on the social location of the economic acts of God in the community of faith, and with that, the political implications of the work of the Spirit in the world. Might an exploration of the more participatory aspects of faithfulness have further helped Molnar's case? Or should we expect a third volume, one that focuses on church and world?

On balance this is a landmark volume. The deliberate focus on a robust doctrine of revelation is a much-needed corrective to a lot of thinking today, and the epistemological significance of the Holy Spirit is masterfully explicated. Now for round two as the challengers fight back!

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Laura Callahan and Timothy O'Connor (eds), *Religious Faith and Intellectual Virtue* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), pp. 352. £45.00.