ETERNAL COVENANT:

THE TRINITARIAN SHAPE OF AN

HISTORIC BAPTIST DOCTRINE

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Daniel David Scheiderer

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APPROVAL SHEET

ETERNAL COVENANT:

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Daniel David Scheiderer

Read and Approved by:

_____
Stephen J. Wellum (Chair)

_____
Gregg R. Allison

_____
Shawn D. Wright

Date _____

To my blessed bride, Patsy, who represents the church in covenant love

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PREFACE

Having thought about the beauty of three things, I could not help but write upon such a topic as the eternal covenant. First, my love for the triune God and the refulgence of his perfections compelled me to meditate in writing upon a topic that considers him as directly as man could. Second, my love for the relationship this perfect God has drawn believers into with himself—one that is thoroughly covenantal—meant I must know what it means for God to reveal himself to us and draw us to him in this particular way. Third, having been convinced the Bible is structured in covenantal terms, and systematic theology and biblical theology must be in conversation, I was compelled to believe the way we know the ever-beautiful triune God in covenantal terms is by attending to the Word on its own terms.

Therefore, the reasons for writing this dissertation are manifold. It serves as the nexus between my love for the Trinity, my appreciation for covenant theology—itself an intersection between biblical and systematic theology, and my interest in historical theology, especially that of the Reformed scholastics and early Baptists. When beginning doctoral studies, I knew I wanted to write on the Trinity, but the other two items, covenant theology and historical theology, consistently grabbed my attention as well. During a Protestant Scholasticism seminar with Dr. Shawn Wright, I was reminded of the vital doctrine of the *pactum salutis* by examining the arguments of Benjamin Keach. Though I am less concerned with making Keach's specific argument (single-covenant versus two-covenant distinction), his affirmation of the eternal covenant drove me to consider how it is in this beautiful means of covenant that God draws us into communion with and contemplation about the three Persons made known in the salvation of the elect according

to the eternal plan. It has been a joy, during personal trial, to be reminded regularly of the beautiful God who has so worked.

I am thankful for the members of my committee, each of whom has agreed to contemplate the Trinity with me and with those who came before us. Each member of the committee, Drs. Shawn Wright, Gregg Allison, J. V. Fesko, and, especially, my supervisor, Dr. Stephen Wellum, have each profoundly impacted my thinking in ways that I believe are evident in the arguments and citations of the dissertation below. Fallible as I am, I am certain there are things worth correcting in what follows, but whatever good I have written is unquestionably due in considerable measure to their influence on me.

In addition to the influence of the mentors just mentioned, I am indebted to the communion of brothers, the "*ordo theologorum*," with whom I have spent the past several years contemplating God, talking about ministry, praying for welfare, and enjoying cigars. Alex Tibbott, Andrew Sparks, Henry Lyan, and Dr. Randall Johnson have sharpened me, offered clarity, and served as dialog partners in discussing the deep things of God and of life in the world he created. I pray that God will use us, individually and together, for the edification of the saints and the praise of his name.

Finally, great appreciation is given to my children, Analise, Malia, Daniel Jr., and John, who have been the great gifts of God, and to my beautiful wife, Patsy. It has been a great joy to pilgrim our way to the celestial city, not as Christian without Christiana, but as husband and wife together. I am thankful to have reached this point in this season of our lives, and I look forward to seeing what the Lord will do in our lives together. Look unto God, for there you find peace.

<div align="right">Daniel Scheiderer</div>

Chambersburg, Pennsylvania

May 2022

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Over the past twenty-five years, there has been a strong return among
Protestants—Baptists included—to the works of the Protestant Scholastics and their
predecessors. This recovery has been aided by the translation and republication of works
that had not been widely available, for centuries in some cases, as well as the availability
of sources over the internet. The resurgence of primary sources has fueled studies in both
historical and systematic theology, renewing the church's witness and, at times, recovering
concepts, terms, and whole arguments for the present age. One doctrine that has reentered
theological discourse is the *pactum salutis*, particularly through the work of Presbyterian
theologian J. V. Fesko. Though Baptists have affirmed the doctrine in the past and
occasionally reference it now, there has yet to be a recent monograph-length presentation
of the doctrine by a Baptist theologian.

A Brief History

Two landmark historical-theological texts—both of which are mentioned in the
section on *pactum salutis* studies—have already told much of the history of the
development of the doctrine of the *pactum salutis*. The first, Richard Muller's article,
"Toward the *Pactum Salutis*," offers insight into the advent of the doctrine as a distinct
theologoumenon to be treated.[1] The second landmark historical-theological text is J. V.
Fesko's *Covenant of Redemption: Origins, Development, and Reception*, which provides
a thoroughgoing treatment of the doctrine from its first presentation in the seventeenth

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[1] Richard A. Muller, "Toward the *Pactum Salutis*: Locating the Origins of a Concept," *Mid-America Journal of Theology* 18 (2007): 11-65.

century until its modern reception and rejection.[2] Since these are sufficient lengthy

historical treatments on their own, it suffices here to simply introduce the reader to the

origin of the concept in summary and direct the reader to those works for greater details.

Covenant theology has its roots in the earliest works of the church. One might

even connect it to the very notion of a "new covenant" in the New Testament writings

themselves, which also draw from the covenantal language used throughout the Old

Testament.[3] What is usually meant by covenant theology, with its distinctions between

the covenants of works and grace, and the latter outlining the redemptive-historical

outworking of God's plan to save the elect, came into its own in the Reformation and

Post-Reformation eras. During the Post-Reformation era, perhaps the most notable event

for Reformed Christians was the Synod of Dordt, and the debates over Arminianism

surrounding that council have continued.[4]

Approximately two decades after the Synod of Dordt, in 1638, the term

"covenant of redemption" first appears at a General Assembly for the Kirk of Scotland,

uttered by David Dickson. During the assembly, the men who had gathered took up the

question of Arminianism, and one by the name of David Dickson delivered an address on

the issue. Since this will largely be the extent of my interaction with the headwaters of

the concept, I will quote him at length. Dickson said,

> Their [the Arminians'] maine errour is this, (let me speake it with reverence towards
> your learning)—not knowing the Scriptures, and the power of God in the matter of
> the Covenant of redemption betwixt God and Christ; yet there is enough of it in the
> Scripture. They pointed at it themselves, which, if they should have followed, they
> might sein all their in the midst; for the Covenant of Salvation [Grace?] betwixt God
> and man is ane [one] thing, and the Covenant of Redemption betwixt God and Christ
> is ane uther thing. The Covenant betwixt God and Christ was done and endit before

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[2] J. V. Fesko, *The Covenant of Redemption: Origins, Development, and Reception* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprect, 2016).

[3] For an example of covenant theology in the church fathers, see Ligon Duncan III, "The Covenant Idea in Ante-Nicene Theology" (PhD thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1995).

[4] I have written a slightly more developed history of that event, showing its own import for Baptists, in Daniel Scheiderer, "An Eighth Ecumenical Council? Reformed Baptists and the Synod of Dordt," *Puritan Reformed Journal* 13, no. 2 (Fall 2021): 120-39.

ever there was a word of it in the world; but the Covenant betwixt God and man is by meanes of the Mediator, which makes all sufficient, and he is our strenth and bulwarke; and when all their objections are made, we steppe to our Magna Charta, and where we can get any gripping we hold it fast, to wit—the Articles of a Superior Covenant made by Jesus Christ, our Mediator and Advocat, in which there are articles contradictorie to all Arminians, that so there shall be no more possibilitie of the breaking of these Articles, nor of garring God and Christ faill. When an end of a bridge falles, the uther must fall with it; so when our frie-will is the ane end, and Christ the uther, then must it stand; and heir, I say, is our bulwarke. . . . Now for the theses . . .

1. There is a Covenant of redemption betwixt God and the Mediatour Christ, preceiding the Covenant of Grace and Salvation made betwixt God and the faithful Man through Christ, which is the ground of all this treating that God hes [has] with Man in the preaching of the Gospell.

2. In this Covenant of redemption betwixt God and the second persone, designed Mediatour betwixt God and Man, the elect wer designed and condescendit particularlie upon their number and names, with their gifts and graces of grace and glory to be bestowed upon them, and the tyme and meanes to bestow it, was all condescendit and agried upon.[5]

Note, Dickson does not use the term as though it was novel, so readers may safely assume the term's usage does predate the Assembly to some extent. Further, this is a covenant that precedes the covenant of grace, this covenant appearing in eternity "before ever there was a word of it in the world," while the covenant of grace appears in time between God and man for the latter's salvation, though this is through the Mediator. Over the next few decades, theologians wrote on the *pactum salutis* directly or integrated it into their other works such that the notion of an eternal covenant became a standard component of Reformed theological discourse.

Thesis

This dissertation argues that the eternal covenant is the prism through which God determined to manifest his triune glory in the missions of the Son and the Spirit. This dissertation is written against both negative and positive backgrounds. Negatively, there are historic and contemporary reasons for putting forward the *pactum salutis* anew.

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[5] Church of Scotland, "Records of the Kirk of Scotland, Containing the Acts and Proceedings of the General Assemblies from 1638 Downwards" (Edinburgh, 1838), 1:158-59, accessed January 30, 2022, https://archive.org/details/cu31924029475914/.

The doctrine has not been positively argued by a recent Baptist theologian, but it was maintained by Baptists in the past. Though it has not been preserved, the doctrine is part of the Baptist heritage, rather than only the Reformed, so it is a doctrine worthy to be considered for recovery. Further, the current state of Trinitarian theology among Baptists warrants the search for a better model that makes sense of Trinitarian theology—especially the unity of will—and the language of submission in Scripture. The two most widely used baptistic systematic theologies in recent years are those by Wayne Grudem and Millard Erickson. In both works—as well as other books they have published—the theologians have attempted to wrestle with the question of the Son's submission to the Father and the biblical data testifying to such submission. In maintaining the doctrine of the *pactum salutis*, the theologian has a better framework within which he can both affirm the singularity of the divine will and make sense of the Scripture's language of obedience.

Positively, this dissertation is written against the background of four contemporary realities. First, the *pactum salutis* is a biblical doctrine, and for that reason ought not to have been rejected or neglected to begin with. Second, the doctrine does not undermine historic Christian orthodoxy, though that has been claimed by some. Third, the doctrine is fruitful for greater theological construction, not only by putting forward a more satisfying model for maintaining orthodox Trinitarianism while engaging biblical texts that speak of submission, but also by providing the background to baptistic constructions of covenant theology. While this work primarily seeks to construct a positive argument for the *pactum salutis* that could then be built upon by subsequent projects, Baptist theology will be helped by a recovery of the *pactum salutis* in its development of covenant theology. In both Progressive Covenantalism (Wellum/Gentry) and 1689 Federalism (Denault/Barcellos/Renihan), the distinction between the old and new covenants is highlighted. If, as this dissertation argues, the *pactum salutis* is about the missions of the Son and the Spirit, then this will impact the substantial distinction in the *historia salutis* between the era before the missions and the era since the missions. Though

this dissertation does not develop that argument, it will provide groundwork from which that argument can be made. Fourth, Baptist theologians have been making constructive arguments in two fields related to the *pactum salutis* but have not yet presented a monograph-length argument for the doctrine. In the first field, Baptists have sought to recover a covenantal view of redemptive history, represented in the works of Pascal Denault, Richard Barcellos, and Samuel Renihan, the latter two of which have contributed to the related discipline of biblical theology along with Stephen Wellum and Peter Gentry.[6] In the second field, Baptists have also worked to recover a classical theology proper, represented in the works of James Dolezal, Adonis Vidu, Gregg Allison, and Andreas Köstenberger. While there have been passing references to or short treatments of the *pactum salutis*, there has not yet been a substantial treatment of the doctrine by an author sympathetic to both areas of development.

Based on what I have stated here, this dissertation must provide sufficient evidence for two items. First, as this work seeks to demonstrate the Baptist pedigree, it will be important to document the arguments for the *pactum salutis* in earlier generations of Baptists. While other works have demonstrated that paedobaptists affirmed the *pactum salutis*, there has not yet been a treatment of the doctrine among credobaptists. This dissertation makes an important contribution to Baptist historiography by documenting the Baptist reception and retention of the doctrine for the first two hundred years. Second, as this dissertation makes a constructive argument, it will be important to respond to the charges that the *pactum salutis* undermines core Christian theology and lacks biblical testimony, charges that are represented in the work of Robert Letham. He makes six charges, outlined at the beginning of chapter 4, but two of the key theological arguments are, first, that it positively undermines classical Trinitarian theology by dividing the will and tending toward subordinationism, and, second, that it negatively neglects the Spirit.[7]

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[6] Each of these authors will be discussed more in the rest of this chapter.

[7] Robert Letham, *Systematic Theology* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2019), 435-36.

The first of these charges will be addressed in the constructive arguments of chapters 4 and 5 and the latter in the argument of chapter 6. To Letham's claim that the doctrine of the *pactum salutis* is insufficiently grounded in Scripture, one could pursue the question of what substantiates a doctrine as being sufficiently biblical.[8] However, taking Christ as the *scopus* of Scripture and noting his presentation as the covenantal head drives chapter 5 on Christology.

This dissertation does not seek to provide an exhaustive treatment of the history of the concept since that has largely been done by those mentioned in the contemporary setting section below. Nor does this dissertation seek to provide exhaustive interaction with the various *loci* it touches, such as covenant theology as a system, the *ordo salutis*, and other such matters that have also been done. Instead, this dissertation takes the abovementioned charges seriously by demonstrating that, when properly articulated, the *pactum salutis* is neither unbiblical nor detrimental to theology proper. Stated positively, it seeks to provide an argument for the *pactum salutis* that demonstrates its viability as a doctrine consistent with biblical and catholic theology, a point that has been rejected or neglected, and that it is worthy of recovery from the early Baptists.

Method

Based on the needs indicated in the thesis, this dissertation is first historical and then constructive. First, I will demonstrate the historical precedent for this doctrine in Baptist thought by outlining the arguments made by Benjamin Keach (chap. 2) and John Gill (chap. 3), two of its most voluminous Baptist expositors. Second, in contrast to the two charges regarding Christian orthodoxy and biblical warrant, I will demonstrate the Trinitarian (chap. 4), Christological (chap. 5), and Pneumatological (chap. 6) situation of the concept of a supratemporal covenant. Finally (chap. 7), I will summarize the doctrine of the *pactum salutis* in a manner that positively receives biblical teaching and does not

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[8] Letham, *Systematic Theology*, 436. As noted in the section on *pactum salutis* studies, Paul Williamson also makes an exegetical case against the *pactum salutis*.

undermine Pro-Nicene Trinitarianism, reviewing the cumulative case for the *pactum salutis* and possible avenues of further research as Baptists recover the doctrine. Keach and Gill represent Particular Baptist thought near the beginning of the development of both Baptist theology and covenant theology, specifically on the eternal covenant. Thus, Keach will serve as an entry point to the discussion of Baptist reception and contribution to the topic closing out the Puritan era, and Gill will serve as an example of Baptist theological consistency from his time to the end of the nineteenth century. Their respective chapters will give more justification for using these two representatives. Due to the specific charges levied against it, in the Trinitarian, Christological, and Pneumatological chapters, I will turn to demonstrate that the doctrine of the *pactum salutis* coheres with the still older doctrines the church has confessed, particularly the relations in the one God, the two wills of Christ, and the Spirit as Love and Gift. In each of these chapters, but especially in the Christology chapter, I also provide the biblical-theological warrant for the *pactum* and indicate avenues for further research.

Terminological Matters

In expositions of the covenant of redemption, past and present, terms such as eternal covenant, *pactum salutis*, and covenant of peace, among others, are often used interchangeably.[9] Further, another layer of complexity appears when the Baptists and others argued for a singular-covenant model instead of distinguishing between the covenants of redemption and grace. Finally, the covenant of grace between God and man is variously understood by paedobaptists and credobaptists, between the two groups and within each group.[10] For the sake of clarity, while respecting the arguments of singular-

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[9] Sometimes these terms are technically distinguished, while other times they are synonymous.

[10] Pascal Denault, *The Distinctiveness of Baptist Covenant Theology: A Comparison between Seventeenth-Century Particular Baptist and Paedobaptist Federalism*, rev. ed. (Vestavia Hills, AL: Solid Ground Christian, 2017); Samuel D. Renihan, *From Shadow to Substance: The Federal Theology of the English Particular Baptists (1642-1704)*, Center for Baptist History and Heritage Studies 16 (Oxford: Regent's Park College, 2018).

covenant proponents, this dissertation seeks to use the following terms synonymously and theologically: *pactum salutis* and everlasting covenant. The first refers to the covenant of redemption, but the latter seeks to respect singular-covenant proponents' desire to affirm it all under the title "covenant of grace." The phrase "everlasting covenant" will be primarily present in the chapters on Keach and Gill. By contrast, this dissertation will not use the term "covenant of grace" to refer to the eternal compact of the Persons, except in direct quotes. It is assumed throughout the work that the covenant of grace—as distinguished from the *pactum salutis*—is variously understood by the authors who used the term, but precisely arguing for it is not the topic of this dissertation.

Contemporary Setting

Since the doctrine of the *pactum salutis* is situated historically, biblically, and theologically, and since its proponents and opponents have provided much material to the development of doctrine in the church, it would be easy to overextend the ways this doctrine fits into current discussions. Therefore, what I provide here only represents a sample of the scholarship related to studies on the doctrine itself, Baptist treatments of the doctrine and historical treatments of Keach and Gill, and some pertinent Trinitarian, Christological, and Pneumatological developments. Throughout this section, I will note that there is fertile ground for Baptist work on the *pactum salutis*.

Pactum Salutis Studies

Discussion of the *pactum salutis* has been nearly completely consigned to the field of historical theology. For instance, Mark Jones wrote a dissertation a decade ago (2009) about the theology of Thomas Goodwin, which covers much of the same ground, but it is constrained to the thought of one theologian at the beginning of the Puritan era.[11] As mentioned, Richard Muller wrote a crucial article just before that (2007) explaining

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[11] Mark Jones, "Why Heaven Kissed Earth: The Christology of Thomas Goodwin (1600-1680)" (doctoral diss., University of Leiden, 2009).

the development of the doctrine.[12] Prior to that (2005), Carol Williams wrote a dissertation under Muller looking at David Dickson's understanding of the doctrine.[13] Others have considered the doctrine in their treatment of Owen, such as Carl Trueman and Sinclair Ferguson,[14] and Mark Beach wrote an article on the doctrine in the work of Herman Witsius.[15] In 2018, B. Hoon Woo published his dissertation, *The Promise of the Trinity*, in which he explores challenges to the doctrine of the covenant of redemption by looking at the Post-Reformation theologians Witsius, Owen, Dickson, Goodwin, and Cocceius.[16] Though he answers the reprisals of today, his method remains firmly within the realm of historical theology rather than systematic theology in that he provides the answers of Witsius et al. To some extent, this dissertation will complement Woo's as I will give more space to biblical and theological construction and less to the seventeenth-century discussion. Beyond that, this dissertation will differ from his inasmuch as it focuses on Baptist voices.

Some of the voices discussing the doctrine today are critical of it. Recently (2018), Paul Williamson challenged the doctrine's exegetical foundations at a plenary session of the Tyndale Fellowship.[17] John Murray earlier denied the doctrine on

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[12] Muller, "Toward the *Pactum Salutis*," 11-65. He also wrote an article nearly forty years ago that specifically addressed Gill's critique of the *pactum*. Richard A. Muller, "The Spirit and the Covenant: John Gill's Critique of the *Pactum Salutis*," *Foundations* 24, no. 1 (January-March 1981): 4-14.

[13] Carol A. Williams, "The Decree of Redemption Is in Effect a Covenant: David Dickson and the Covenant of Redemption" (PhD diss., Calvin Theological Seminary, 2005).

[14] Carl R. Trueman, *John Owen: Reformed Catholic, Renaissance Man* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 80-92; Sinclair B. Ferguson, *John Owen on the Christian Life* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1987), 25-27.

[15] Mark J. Beach, "The Doctrine of the *Pactum Salutis* in the Covenant Theology of Herman Witsius," *Mid-America Journal of Theology* 13 (2002): 101-42.

[16] B. Hoon Woo, *The Promise of the Trinity: The Covenant of Redemption in the Theologies of Witsius, Owen, Dickson, Goodwin, and Cocceius*, Reformed Historical Theology 38 (Götingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2018).

[17] It has been subsequently edited and published in their journal, Paul Williamson, "The *Pactum Salutis*: A Scriptural Concept or Scholastic Mythology," *Tyndale Bulletin* 69, no. 2 (2018): 259-81.

terminological grounds; namely, that the biblical text never uses the term and that covenant refers to something temporal.[18] Karl Barth famously called the covenant of redemption "mythology," but his rejection was really a new conception of the doctrine within his own system's structure.[19] Rejecting an eternal covenant on dogmatic grounds, Robert Letham has claimed in several places that the doctrine opens the door to tritheism, as previously noted.[20]

Though there has been much renewed discussion surrounding the doctrine of the Trinity in recent decades alongside Christological and Pneumatological discussions, the doctrine of the eternal covenant is only now being integrated back into theological discourse. After Patrick Gillespie wrote *The Ark of the Covenant Opened* in 1677, only J. V. Fesko has written a monograph-length treatment of the covenant of redemption,[21] though some, including Benjamin Keach, Samuel Petto, and Thomas Boston, did so under the rubric of the singular covenant of grace. Therefore, most dogmatic treatments of the

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[18] John Murray, "The Plan of Salvation," in *The Collected Works of John Murray: Systematic Theology* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1977), 2:130-31. Compared to Williamson, Murray and Letham are less opposed to the concept than the term. In Murray's case, he says it is due to the fact that "covenants" imply temporality while this is clearly a reference to the eternal plan of God. Both Murray's and now Letham's rejections of the term are not entirely a rejection of the concept, so their writing is more irenic in response than Williamson's. For a summary of Murray's arguments as well as those of Herman Hoeksema, see Fesko, *The Covenant of Redemption*, 173-82. Williamson could also be said to make his case terminologically, but it is more substantively connected to his contention that covenantal passages do not entail a pre-temporal covenant, a decree does not entail a covenant, nor does an agreement entail a covenant.

[19] Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics: The Doctrine of God, Part 1*, vol. 4, trans. Geoffrey William Bromiley, ed. Geoffrey William Bromiley and Thomas F. Torrance (London: T & T Clark, 2004), 65. Cf. Fesko, *The Covenant of Redemption*, 184-86. For a "Barthian Critique" similar to Letham's, see R. Keith Loftin, "A Barthian Critique of the Covenant of Redemption," *Trinity Journal* 38, no. 2 (Fall 2017): 203-22.

[20] Letham, *Systematic Theology*, 431-39; Robert Letham, *The Holy Trinity: In Scripture, History, Theology, and Worship*, rev. ed. (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2019), 315-24; *The Work of Christ*, Contours of Christian Theology (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1993), 52-53; *Westminster Assembly: Reading its Theology in Historical Context* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2009), 235-36; "John Owen's Doctrine of the Trinity in its Catholic Context," in *The Ashgate Research Companion to John Owen's Theology*, ed. Kelly M. Kapic and Mark Jones (New York: Routledge, 2016), 194-96.

[21] Fesko has actually written two books on the *pactum salutis*. The first, *Covenant of Redemption*, looks at the historical development and debate surrounding the doctrine. The second, *The Trinity and the Covenant of Redemption* (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2016), includes a summary of the first, and then provides a biblical and dogmatic construction.

eternal covenant have appeared in the context of other works, such as systematic theologies or the first edition of *Kingdom through Covenant*.[22] Fesko's work, by contrast, both exclusively addresses the topic of the covenant of redemption and does so in the field of systematic theology as he looks at both the history and the biblical texts and then provides a dogmatic construction. It serves to recover the doctrine for current usage. However, his work places the covenant in the context of many issues in addition to the Trinity, including predestination, imputation, and the *ordo salutis*.

Baptists

Baptist treatments of the *pactum salutis* are sparse. While it served as an important focus of early Baptists, particularly those who understood themselves to be more substantially situated in the Reformed party of Protestant Christianity, the loss of covenantal theology seems to have included a loss of discussion of the eternal covenant.[23] Neglect is not constrained to those outside Reformed Baptist circles.[24] In his influential work *The Distinctiveness of Baptist Covenant Theology*, Pascal Denault almost wholly overlooks the eternal covenant in his assessment.[25] Micah Renihan and Samuel Renihan also integrate the eternal covenant in their treatment of Baptist covenant theology, but

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[22] Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 656. Upon revision, the discussion of the covenant of redemption was not present, presumably to devote space to the other aspects of their project. Wellum does affirm the *pactum saltuis* in his more recent introductory Christology. Stephen J. Wellum, *The Person of Christ: An Introduction*, Short Studies in Systematic Theology (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2021), 39–40. See also Scott Swain, "The Covenant of Redemption," in *Christian Dogmatics: Reformed Theology for the Church Catholic*, ed. Michael Allen and Scott Swain (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2016).

[23] For the origins of those who would eventually be recognized as "Particular Baptists," see Matthew C. Bingham, *Orthodox Radicals: Baptist Identity in the English Revolution*, Oxford Studies in Historical Theology (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019).

[24] Though the term "Reformed Baptist" could be as narrow as those who hold to the *Second London Baptist Confession (1689)* without qualification, I use it more broadly here to include those Baptists who (1) hold to the so-called doctrines of grace and (2) situate themselves outside Dispensationalism. This is admittedly vague, but it would generally include "1689 Federalists," "Progressive Covenantalists," and possibly "New Covenant Theologians." For a Baptist critique by one who presumably does not identify as a Reformed Baptist, see Loftin, "A Barthian Critique of the Covenant of Redemption," 203-22.

[25] Denault, *The Distinctiveness of Baptist Covenant Theology*.

again, this is in the context of discussing an overall covenant theology.[26] Samuel

Renihan discussed the doctrine further in his published dissertation, *From Shadow to

Substance*.[27] Samuel Renihan also devoted a chapter to the doctrine in the popular-level

Mystery of Christ.[28]

Perhaps more than anything, however, those who have held to the Second

London Confession (1677/89) have at least implicitly affirmed the everlasting covenant.

The most original paragraph in their chapter on covenant theology states,

> This Covenant [of grace] is revealed in the Gospel; first of all to Adam in the promise
> of Salvation by the seed of the woman, and afterwards by farther steps, until the full
> discovery thereof was compleated in the new Testament; and *it is founded in that
> Eternal Covenant transaction, that was between the Father and the Son, about the
> Redemption of the Elect*.[29]

In the following chapter, they maintained the Savoy Declaration's affirmation in 8.1 that

there was a covenant made between the Father and the Son. They confessed that the

covenant of grace, which was revealed to Adam and progressively to others until it came

to its completion in the Incarnation, was grounded on an eternal covenant before the

foundation of the world. Some took this to mean it was a single covenant made in eternity

and revealed in time, while others believed there were two distinct covenants.[30]

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[26] Micah Renihan and Samuel Renihan, "Reformed Baptist Covenant Theology and Biblical Theology," in *Recovering a Covenantal Heritage: Essays in Covenant Baptist Theology*, ed. Richard C. Barcellos (Palmdale, CA: Reformed Baptist Academic Press, 2014).

[27] Renihan, *From Shadow to Substance*. It is worth noting that this, too, is an historical-theological discussion, similar to many of the works mentioned thus far, rather than a systematic-theological work.

[28] Samuel Renihan, *The Mystery of Christ, His Covenant, and His Kingdom* (Cape Coral, FL: Founders, 2019), 152-59. Some New Covenant Theology proponents rejected the covenant of redemption with ease. Dennis M. Swanson, "Introduction to New Covenant Theology," *The Master's Seminary Journal* 18, no. 1 (Fall 2007): 149-63. Tom Wells and Fred G. Zaspel, *New Covenant Theology: Description, Definition, Defense* (Frederick, MD: New Covenant Media, 2002).

[29] *A Confession of Faith Put forth by the Elders and Brethren of Many Congregations of Christians (Baptized upon Profession of Their Faith) in London and the Country* (London, 1677), 7.3, emphasis added. While Letham says the doctrine "has not attained confessional status" because it was not included in the Westminster, one sees here that the doctrine did in fact receive confessional status for Baptists. Letham, *Systematic Theology*, 432.

[30] More on this is laid out in chap. 2 on Keach.

Regardless of the position, they confessed there to be some way of speaking of an eternal covenant grounding the outworking of God's grace in time.

Particular Baptist Benjamin Keach devoted three-hundred fifty pages to the doctrine in a series of published sermons in the 1690s. Four major works have recently been published on Keach. Austin Walker produced a significant revision (2015) to his full biography, *The Excellent Benjamin Keach*, in which he gives some space to his doctrine of the covenant of grace.[31] Jonathan W. Arnold's published dissertation (2013), *The Reformed Theology of Benjamin Keach*, most explicitly focuses on Keach's federalism in one chapter, where he also shows the covenant concept in seventeenth-century Particular Baptists.[32] Arnold was preceded by his major dialogue partner, D. B. Riker. In Riker's published dissertation (2009), *A Catholic Reformed Theologian: Federalism and Baptism in the Thought of Benjamin Keach, 1640-1704*, he attempts to demonstrate the continuity of Keach's thought with the broader Reformed community.[33] Though others have written on Keach, the last worth mentioning for the sake of this project is Thomas Hicks' dissertation (2009) that addresses the specific context in which Keach initially expounded his doctrine of the everlasting covenant.[34] John Gill followed Keach in the pulpit of Horsleydown, Southwark—now Metropolitan Tabernacle—and a cursory glance at the table of contents in his *Body of Divinity* demonstrates the pervasiveness of the doctrine of the eternal covenant for him in that he both devoted sixty-five pages to it exclusively and

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[31] Austin Walker, *The Excellent Benjamin Keach*, 2nd ed. (Ontario: Joshua, 2015), 251-60.

[32] Jonathan Arnold, *The Reformed Theology of Benjamin Keach (1640-1704)*, Center for Baptist History and Heritage Studies 11 (Oxford: Regent's Park College, 2013). While my chapter on Keach's doctrine of the covenant of grace will cover much of the same ground as Arnold here, one key difference will be a focused comparison between Keach and the major expositions of the doctrine of the covenant of redemption (Dickson, Owen, Witsius, Gillespie, Cocceius, Turretin).

[33] D. B. Riker, *A Catholic Reformed Theologian: Federalism and Baptism in the Thought of Benjamin Keach, 1640-1704*, Studies in Baptist History and Thought 35 (Eugene, OR: Paternoster, 2009). Riker compares Keach to English Reformed, while those listed in the previous footnote represent both Britain and the Continent.

[34] Thomas E. Hicks Jr., "An Analysis of the Doctrine of Justification in the Theologies of Richard Baxter and Benjamin Keach" (PhD diss, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2009).

integrated it into the rest of his work.[35] Though there are undoubtedly theological questions

to address due to his association with Hyper-Calvinism and the connection of Hyper-

Calvinism with eternal concepts of salvation, one must still recognize Gill as a figurehead

of Baptist theology for more than a century.[36] In contrast to Keach's publications on the

everlasting covenant, and even Gill's lengthy treatment, there has not been another

monograph-length treatment on the *pactum salutis* (or everlasting covenant) by a Baptist

since then.[37]

Theology More Broadly

        Discussions are understandably vast in the three main theological loci with

which this dissertation interacts—Trinity, Christology, and Pneumatology. In Trinitarian

theology, there have been debates over the proper reception of Nicaea, seen in Lewis

Ayres' monumental *Nicaea and Its Legacy*.[38] In Baptist circles as well, debates are waged

over what constitutes an orthodox presentation of Trinitarian theology, as seen in the semi-

popular debate of 2016, which resulted in the dialogical book *Trinitarian Theology*.[39]

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[35] See especially John Gill, *A Complete Body of Doctrinal and Practical Divinity; or, A System of Evangelical Truths, Deduced from the Sacred Scriptures* (London: Printed for the Author, 1769), 1:340-404.

[36] William Cathcart, ed., *The Baptist Encyclopædia* (Philadelphia: Louis H. Everts, 1881), 452-55.

[37] In Baptist systematic theologies of recent decades, neither Carl F. H. Henry nor Millard J. Erickson offer a treatment of the *pactum salutis*, though Wayne Grudem, whose *Systematic Theology* is baptistic, treats the doctrine only briefly. Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2020), 650-51. Chap.3 of this diss. will take note of Dagg's and Boyce's works of theology.

[38] Lewis Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy: An Approach to Fourth-Century Trinitarian Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

[39] Keith S. Whitfield, ed., *Trinitarian Theology: Theological Models and Doctrinal Application* (Nashville: B & H, 2019). Ware explicitly invokes the *pactum salutis* in his argument, Bruce Ware, "Unity and Distinction of the Trinitarian Persons," in Whitfield, *Trinitarian Theology*, 53, 59. Grudem also invokes the *pactum salutis* in defending his position in *Systematic Theology*, 308. Letham, *The Holy Trinity*, 461ff. Letham associates the *pactum salutis* with the debate as well (463). The debate was sparked by the publication of Bruce A. Ware and John Starke, eds., *One God in Three Persons: Unity of Essence, Distinction of Persons, Implications for Life* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016).

Baptist theologians also contribute to the recovery of classical theology proper and Trinitarian theology, as seen in the works of James Dolezal and Adonis Vidu, though neither has yet offered a substantial treatment of the *pactum salutis*.[40]

Erickson and Grudem. As mentioned in the thesis, the two most widely used baptistic systematic theologies today are those by Millard Erickson and Wayne Grudem. Before moving on to look at the state of studies in Christology and Pneumatology, it is important that I offer a summary of Erickson's and Grudem's Trinitarian theologies respectively since these are the current alternatives to the *pactum*. After biblical and historical surveys of Trinitarian doctrine, Erickson provides six elements he believes are essential to the doctrine of the Trinity: (1) "The unity of God is basic";[41] (2) "The deity of each of the three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, must be affirmed";[42] (3) "The threeness and the oneness of God are not in the same respect";[43] (4) "The Trinity is eternal";[44] (5) "The function of one member of the Trinity may for a time be subordinate to one or both of the other members";[45] (6) "the Trinity is incomprehensible."[46]

Grudem would agree with Erickson on nearly every point. He summarizes the biblical testimony to the Trinity with three statements: "1. God is three persons. 2. Each

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[40] James Dolezal, *All That Is in God: Evangelical Theology and the Challenge of Classical Christian Theism* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage, 2017); Adonis Vidu, *The Same God Who Works All Things: Inseparable Operations in Trinitarian Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2021).

[41] Millard Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2013), 309. Erickson does not affirm classical simplicity in the manner proposed by Dolezal. Erickson says, "It appears that simplicity, in its classical formulation, is at best a problematic attribute, and perhaps not an attribute at all" (269).

[42] Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 309.

[43] Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 309.

[44] Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 309.

[45] Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 309. This fifth point, about the subordination in time, stands in contrast to Grudem's work. I will come back to this in chap. 4.

[46] Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 310.

person is fully God. 3. There is one God."[47] After expounding on these statements and contrasting them with various Trinitarian errors, Grudem then explains the distinctions between the Persons in four steps. (1) The Persons are distinct in the functional roles in creation and redemption.[48] (2) The Son is eternally begotten of the Father.[49] (3) The various roles of the Persons are irreversible.[50] (4) The Son eternally submits to the Father.[51] In Grudem's final point, about the eternal submission of the Son, the lines between he and Erickson are drawn most clearly, which I will come back to in chapter 5.

The doctrine of the Son has been most obviously plagued by kenoticism of various forms and the undoing of Chalcedonian orthodoxy. However, Demetrios Bathrellos's[52] and Thomas Watts's[53] historical works, and the systematic works by Baptists Stephen Wellum[54] and Lucas Stamps,[55] have recalled the importance of dyothelitism. The Reformed community has regularly emphasized the federal headships of Adam and the

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[47] Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 273. Grudem expands on each of these statements in the following pages, 273-83.

[48] Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 292-93.

[49] Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 293-98. Grudem presents this argument in two steps, first asking if it is true that the Son is eternally begotten, and second explaining the meaning of eternal generation.

[50] Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 299-301.

[51] Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 301-19. Grudem further presents an explanation of the manner in which each Person "possess the *whole being* of God" (319, emphasis original) and incomprehensibility of the Trinity (322-23). Grudem's latter point coincides with Erickson's third and sixth points.

[52] Demetrios Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ: Person, Nature, and Will in the Christology of St Maximus the Confessor* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

[53] Thomas Watts, "Two Wills in Christ? Contemporary Objections Considered in the Light of a Critical Examination of Maximus the Confessor's *Disputation with Pyrrhus*," *Westminster Theological Journal* 71 (2009): 455-87

[54] Stephen Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate: The Doctrine of Christ*, Foundations of Evangelical Theology (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016); *The Person of Christ*; *Christ Alone—The Uniqueness of Jesus as Savior: What the Reformers Taught . . . and Why It Still Matters*, The 5 Solas Series (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2017).

[55] Robert Lucas Stamps, "'Thy Will Be Done': A Dogmatic Defense of Dyothelitism in Light of Recent Monothelite Proposals" (PhD diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2014).

Last Adam, and the Presbyterian Brandon Crowe recently published a book showing how the Evangelists explicitly make this connection.[56] Comparing Crowe to Wellum and Gentry, one immediately recognizes the continuity of the concept with Baptist thought, and, comparing the concept to early arguments for dyothelitism, one recognizes the continuity of this concept with the broader tradition. Since the *pactum salutis* is about the Son's mission as the covenant head of the elect who willingly offers obedience as the Mediator, Christology is an area particularly appropriate for developing the doctrine. In doing so, theologians are helped in making sense of the Scripture's testimony to the Son's submission to the Father without modifying classical Trinitarian and Christological doctrine.

Further, as Christ is the focus and fulfillment of the scriptures (Luke 24:27), and as his mission is in the covenantal context of the unfolding redemptive history, it is appropriate to affirm that the *pactum salutis* is the teaching of the Scripture taken as a whole canon. Baptists such as Gentry and Wellum, Thomas R. Schreiner, James M. Hamilton, and Richard Barcellos have done work in biblical theology and covenant theology but have not yet given a substantial treatment of the *pactum salutis*.[57] This absence is especially noticeable in Matthew Barrett's *Canon, Covenant and Christology*. Though the argument he makes coheres very closely with the one made in chapter 5 on Christology, he mentions the *pactum salutis* only once.[58] Thus, Baptist constructive

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[56] Brandon D. Crowe, *The Last Adam: A Theology of the Obedient Life of Jesus in the Gospels* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2017).

[57] Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants*, 2nd ed. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018); Thomas R. Schreiner, *The King and His Beauty: A Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2013); James M. Hamilton, Jr., *God's Glory in Salvation through Judgment: A Biblical Theology* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010); Richard Barcellos, *Getting the Garden Right: Adam's Work and God's Rest in Light of Christ* (Cape Coral, FL: Founders, 2017). To this list could be several of the works published in the New Studies in Biblical Theology series. I mention these in particular due to the influence on the thinking that goes into this dissertation.

[58] Matthew Barrett, *Canon, Covenant and Christology: Rethinking Jesus and the Scriptures of Israel*, New Studies in Biblical Theology 51 (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2020), 256-57.

theology on the *pactum salutis* is again warranted due to the absence of its treatment by others and the presence of other contributing construction.

Various issues in Pneumatology, including particularly the proposals of Moltmann and inclusivist/pluralist soteriology and various forms of Charismatic theology, have also pressed the discussion beyond the classical debates over the *filioque*. Though many have taken up the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, it seems none have addressed the eternal covenant in that context. This includes Presbyterians Sinclair Ferguson and Michael Horton who both discuss the covenant of grace and the new covenant in their works on Pneumatology but fail to relate this to the *pactum salutis* in a substantive way.[59] An example of a Baptist contribution to Pneumatology that is particularly pertinent to this study is *The Holy Spirit* by Gregg Allison and Andreas Köstenberger.[60] Their work incorporates biblical, historical, and systematic theology in a manner that accounts for the progress in biblical theology and the resurgence of classical Trinitarianism. Though it does not reference the *pactum salutis*, it will aid expositing the Spirit's role in the *pactum*.

This dissertation will serve to renew the discussion of the *pactum salutis* between the Father, Son, and Spirit among Baptists specifically, and the Reformed community at large. It will argue that Baptists need to recover the *pactum salutis*, but they can and must do so without compromising other foundational Christian doctrines. It will be distinct from other works in that it will focus exclusively on the three divine Persons in the *pactum salutis* rather than looking at covenant theology at large or covenants in a system of theology. While it will address historical issues and seek to be consistent with catholic doctrine, it will not focus exclusively on the seventeenth-century discussion or the theology of a singular theologian. Further, while Fesko's work places the covenant

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[59] Sinclair B. Ferguson, *The Holy Spirit*, Contours of Christian Theology (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1996); Michael Horton, *Rediscovering the Holy Spirit: God's Perfecting Presence in Creation, Redemption, and Everyday Life* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2017). In chap. 6 on Pneumatology, I show Horton referencing to the *pactum salutis*.

[60] Gregg R. Allison and Andreas J. Köstenberger, *The Holy Spirit*, Theology for the People of God (Nashville: B & H, 2020).

in relation to the doctrines mentioned, this work will be more exclusively concerned with the way this doctrine is situated under the doctrine of the Trinity and the doctrines such as processions, relations, natures, and names, thus responding to the charge that it undermines "historic Christian orthodoxy."[61] Fesko's work shows the doctrine in broader Protestant and Reformed contexts, but this dissertation will demonstrate that it is not only catholic (theologically) but also once an important component of Baptist theology (historically). Indeed, the amount of work it would take to demonstrate the connection of the eternal covenant to Baptist ecclesiology is outside the scope of this work but showing its historicity as a Baptist doctrine and coherency with catholic doctrines will provide a footstool to other works. To clarify at the outset, I do not claim that the doctrine is exclusive to Baptists, as seen in the works previously referenced; rather, it is clear that Baptists have the everlasting covenant in their theological heritage, and there are sufficient reasons for affirming it again today.

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[61] Letham, *Systematic Theology*, 435.

CHAPTER 2

BENJAMIN KEACH: BAPTIST EXPOSITOR
OF PURITAN DOCTRINE

Introduction

Though not as common among Baptists today, this chapter aims to demonstrate the early Baptist reception and contribution to the discussion of the everlasting covenant by outlining the work of Benjamin Keach as he used the doctrine in debates over soteriology. The reasons for using Keach are manifold, but three stand as primary. First, Keach was the most voluminous writer of the first century of Particular Baptists.[1] Many influential Particular Baptists came before him, both in Britain and the American Colonies, but none wrote and published the great quantity he did. Jonathan Arnold calls him "the most prolific theologian among his group of Dissenters—responsible for more than fifty mostly book-length publications."[2] His output for and reception by the Particular Baptists mark Keach as a key figure in understanding how the everlasting covenant was expressed in the earliest years of the Baptist movement.

Second, Keach fits within the larger Puritan contingent. Great debate certainly surrounds the nomenclature, but there are at least two reasons for placing Keach among

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[1] Matthew Bingham argues that the title "Particular Baptists" is a later historiographical categorization that Thomas Crosby and later historians read back onto what he calls the "baptistic congregationalists" of the mid-seventeenth century. See Matthew C. Bingham, *Orthodox Radicals: Baptist Identity in the English Revolution*, Oxford Studies in Historical Theology (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 25-28. While such an argument weighs upon the notion of a "Pan-Baptist" identity, the monikers "Particular Baptist" and "General Baptist" are retained here for conceptual ease, similar to the nomenclature "Puritan."

[2] Jonathan W. Arnold, *The Reformed Theology of Benjamin Keach (1640-1704)*, Centre for Baptist History and Heritage Studies 11 (Oxford: Regent's Park College, 2013), 1.

the Puritans.[3] First, he substantially agreed with the confessional standard of the Puritans: the *Westminster Confession of Faith* (1647). This confessional statement laid out the doctrinal standard of all who could be reasonably labeled Puritans: Presbyterians, Independents/Congregationalists, and Particular Baptists. From that document, the latter two made modifications to demonstrate both the particular points of difference and the substantial agreement between them and the Westminster Divines.[4] Benjamin Keach was among those who called together the General Assembly in 1689 to reaffirm the 1677 Baptist modification of the Confession, entitled the *Second London Baptist Confession of Faith*.[5] Further, on both occasions in which Keach explicitly leans on the Westminster Standards, the Confession and Larger Catechism, he does so with the implication that they serve a role of some authority.[6]

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[3] John Coffey and Paul C. H. Lim offer this definition of Puritanism: "Puritanism is the name we give to a distinctive and particularly intense variety of early modern Reformed Protestantism which originated within the unique context of the Church of England but spilled out beyond it, branching off into divergent dissenting streams, and overflowing into other lands and foreign churches." John Coffey and Paul C. H. Lim, introduction to *The Cambridge Companion to Puritanism*, ed. John Coffey and Paul C. H. Lim (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 1-2. Similarly, Joel Beeke and Mark Jones explain the differences amongst historians on the identity of Puritanism and its dating. Joel R. Beeke and Mark Jones, *A Puritan Theology: Doctrine for Life* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage, 2012), 1-4. Some further possible definitions are provided in the companion volume, Joel R. Beeke and Randall J. Pederson, *Meet the Puritans: With a Guide to Modern Reprints* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage, 2006), xv-xix. Francis J. Bremer says, "At the simplest level, puritans were those who sought to reform themselves and their society by purifying their churches of the remnants of Roman Catholic teachings and practice then found in post-Reformation England during the mid-sixteenth century, such as using clerical vestments and kneeling to receive the Lord's Supper." Francis J. Bremer, *Puritanism: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 2.

[4] For reasoned debate over the propriety of labelling Baptists "Reformed," see Matthew C. Bingham et al., *On Being Reformed: Debates over a Theological Identity*, Christianities in the Trans-Atlantic World (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Pivot, 2018). For verification of this position, see the "Preface to the Reader" in the 1677 London Baptist Confession of Faith.

[5] James M. Renihan, ed., *Faith and Life for Baptists: The Documents of the London Particular Baptist General Assemblies, 1689-1694* (Palmdale, CA: Reformed Baptist Academic Press, 2016), 19-21.

[6] Benjamin Keach, *The Display of Glorious Grace: or, The Covenant of Peace Opened in Fourteen Sermons Lately Preached, In Which the Errors of the Present Day, about Reconciliation and Justification, are Detected* (London: S. Bridge, 1698), 216-17; Keach, *Gold Refin'd; or, Baptism in Its Primitive Putiry* (London: Printed for Author, 1689), 178. For fuller demonstrations of his context among the English Reformed, see Arnold, *Reformed Theology of Benjamin Keach*; and D. B. Riker, *A Catholic Reformed Theologian: Federalism and Baptism in the Thought of Benjamin Keach, 1640-1704*, Studies in Baptist History and Thought 35 (Eugene, OR: Paternoster, 2010).

The second reason for classifying Keach as a Puritan relates organically to the first. Keach's theology, practice, and passions intersect widely with those most would agree with labeling "Puritans." The label "Puritan," as is evident in the vast definitional distinctions found in the literature, is usually more connotative than denotative. It could legitimately be restricted to those who remained in the Church of England to purify her, but this dissertation takes the definition to refer to those intent on continuing reformation in England during the long seventeenth century.[7] By comparison, it was the English iteration of Reformed Orthodoxy, and by contrast it was distinct from the Lutherans and especially Roman Catholicism.[8] Though the Particular Baptists may be fairly excluded from Puritanism according to some definitions and fairly included according to others, Keach's doctrine must be minimally understood as arising from that context.[9]

The third and most influential reason for using Keach as a representative of Baptist thought is that he wrote directly on the topic of the everlasting covenant. In my research, I have not seen any other Baptist, especially preceding him, who spent nearly

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[7] I use the phrase "continuing reformation" purposely. Those in this stream did not feel they were departing from the fundamental principles of the Reformation but pressing them further into every area of life. In the case of those who were baptistic, they felt they were pressing the notion of congregationalism, covenantal membership, and professed faith to their ecclesiological conclusions. For instance, Bingham states,

> Baptistic congregationalists began as congregationalists; congregationaalists began as puritans; and puritans began as Protestants. In each successive phase of this admittedly oversimplified genealogy, members from within a particular strand of Christian community modified aspects of their faith and practices until reaching a point at which those modifications were constitutive of a new self-identity, each new Christian subculture emerging organically from the larger group in which it already belonged. But, in each of these cases, the men and women involved were motivated by a common underlying impulse: the desire for further "reformation." Such reformation was understood . . . as a sort of salutary regress, a happy reversion to the purer pattern of doctrine and worship established by Christ and his apostles. (Bingham, *Orthodox Radicals*, 130)

[8] To take one example, Beeke and Jones note, "John Owen's massive corpus is strikingly absent of quotes from Lutheran writers, though he seems to quote from almost everyone else!" Beeke and Jones, *A Puritan Theology*, 3. For Keach's own feelings toward Roman Catholicism, see Benjamin Keach, *Sion in Distress, Or, the Groans of the Protestant Church* (London: Printed by George Larkin, for Enoch Prosser, 1682); cf. Austin Walker, *The Excellent Benjamin Keach*, 2nd ed. (Ontario: Joshua, 2015), 117-37.

[9] Contrary to the opinion of some, Baptists like Keach believed they were continuing the Reformation, not departing from it. For a clear example of this mode of Baptist thinking, see Keach, *Gold Refin'd*.

the same amount of space on the topic. Nehemiah Coxe, likely the editor of the Second
London alongside William Collins, mentions the covenant of redemption in the context
of his development of the *historia salutis*, and most others who discuss the doctrine in
greater detail, such as John Gill, lived after Keach.[10] Thus, Keach takes the historical
theologian to the first substantial treatment of the everlasting covenant in the Particular
Baptist tradition.

This chapter will proceed as follows. First, I will provide a short biography of
Benjamin Keach. Second, I will outline Keach's argument for the everlasting covenant,
primarily drawing on his two major works dedicated to the topic but also looking at places
he includes the discussion in other works. Third, I will demonstrate the relationship of his
argument for the everlasting covenant to other theologians of the era, showing ways he
agreed with the Puritan consensus in addition to ways in which he disagreed both
cordially and vehemently with the theologians around him. Fourth, I assess his argument.

Terminology

To summarize, the term *everlasting covenant* is used here to refer to the eternal
aspect of the covenant of grace, which covenant theology typically distinguishes as the
pactum salutis. Keach uses terms such as *covenant of peace*, *covenant of grace*, *everlasting
covenant*, and *new covenant of grace* almost interchangeably. Other than quotes, the term
covenant of grace will be applied nearer to its typical signification of man's covenant with
God. Still, as evident in the discussion in this chapter, these terms are not always so easily
distinguished.

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[10] Nehemiah Coxe, *A Discourse of the Covenants That God Made with Men before the Law*
(n.p.: Printed for J. D., 1681), 36-38, 58, 79, 151-52.

Biography

Benjamin Keach was born February 29, 1640, in Stoke Hammond, Buckinghamshire, the sixth of seven children to John and Joyce Keach.[11] Austin Walker helpfully marks out three phases in Keach's life: his life in north Buckinghamshire (1640-1668), his ministry in Southwark, London (1668-1689), and his time of increased publication (1689-1704).[12] Though his parents were Anglican and he underwent paedobaptism on March 6, 1640, he exercised saving faith, was baptized by immersion in 1655, and thereafter joined the General Baptists.[13] In 1658, Keach began preaching, and by 1664 was facing persecution for his Baptist views, specifically his teaching "that infants ought not be baptized and that laymen may preach the gospel."[14] He was pilloried for this offense and thus remained a marked man, even being arrested again later in 1666.[15] Four years after his first arrest, in 1668, Keach and his family made the trek to Tooley Street in Southwark, London to make a new life there among the greater dissenting community.

In Southwark, Keach transitioned from the General Baptist convictions he had embraced since 1655, to those of a more Calvinistic tenor. On arrival, he took over as the pastor of a General Baptist congregation, whose last known pastor was William Rider. Two years later, in 1670, his wife Jane died. By 1672, when Keach was married to Susannah Partridge by Hanserd Knollys, Keach had come to Particular Baptist

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[11] Much of this biography draws on the careful work of Walker, *The Excellent Benjamin Keach*.

[12] Walker, *The Excellent Benjamin Keach*, 11-12.

[13] Walker, *The Excellent Benjamin Keach*, 19. While admitting the lack of conclusive evidence, Arnold suggests Keach's parents may have in fact been Baptists. Arnold, *The Reformed Theology of Benjamin Keach*, 13.

[14] Walker, *The Excellent Benjamin Keach*, 46.

[15] Keach's sentence included two instances of the pillory, and he famously used the pillory as an opportunity to preach the gospel. The account runs, further, that when the officers had arrived to arrest him, he was nearly trampled to death by horses until an officer "intervened and prevented them from carrying out their murderous threats." Walker, *The Excellent Benjamin Keach*, 72. For information on connections made in the1666 arrest, see Arnold, *The Reformed Theology of Benjamin Keach*, 16-17.

convictions.[16] The congregation built the meeting house at Horsleydown[17] on Tooley Street the same year. Keach wrote various works during this period of his life, including *War with the Devil* (1673), a poem about conversion; *The Glorious Lover* (1679), an epic poem on the story of redemption; *Sion in Distress* (1681), which laments the state of the Protestant church; *Tropologia* (1681), a work on typology and metaphors that is perhaps his most well-known work; and *Travels of True Godliness* (1683), an allegory similar to Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*. Thus, while his output was not as voluminous during this period of his life as in his waning years, Keach's presence in theological discussion was evident.

Finally, as was true for many others, the advent of the Glorious Revolution positively affected Keach's ability to publish. As alluded to previously, this freedom first appears in the calling of the General Assembly of Particular Baptists. Along with William Kiffin,[18] Hansard Knollys, John Harris, George Barrett, Edward Man, and Richard Adams, Keach helped to

> humbly intreet and beseech you [the church at Luppitt, in Devonshire], that you would be pleased to appoint two of your brethren—one of the ministry, and one principal brother of your congregation with him—as your messengers; and send them up to meet with the rest of the elders and and [sic] brethren of the churches in London, on the 3rd of September next.[19]

The Assembly included "representatives from more than 100 churches gathered. Among other decisions they adopted the Second London Confession of Faith, originally drawn up

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[16] Arnold, *The Reformed Theology of Benjamin Keach*, 19. Walker seems to exercise appropriate caution here regarding the extent to which one can precisely mark Keach's move to being identified as a Particular Baptist. Walker, *The Excellent Benjamin Keach*, 94.

[17] Also written, Horse-lie-down, Horsly-down, etc.

[18] Also spelled, Kiffen.

[19] "The Letter Calling for the 1689 General Assembly," in Renihan, *Faith and Life for Baptists*, 20.

in 1677 by William Collins and Nehemiah Cox. . . . In time this confession became the most influential of all Baptist confessions of faith."[20]

The closing decade and a half of Keach's life began with entreating these Baptists to adopt the confession, but the ensuing years included at least three major controversies. In 1689, Keach engaged in debates over infant baptism, which obviously stretched back to his adoption of believer's baptism and the trials connected to his *Child's Instructor* in the mid-1660s. In 1691, the disagreement over singing "manmade" hymns, with Keach being the most notable proponent, reached outright debate, and by 1694 there was no more General Assembly in London.[21] Finally, Keach's enduring theological contribution was his contest with the "Baxterians" over the doctrine of justification, an issue that warrants attention in the section outlining the two-covenant scheme below.[22] Benjamin Keach died on July 18, 1704; his son-in-law, Benjamin Stinton, succeeded him as pastor of the Baptist church at Horsleydown.

<div align="center">

An Everlasting Covenant:
A Doctrine "of the Highest Concernment"

</div>

This chapter now turns to Keach's understanding of and argument for the everlasting covenant. Two key works that explicitly discuss the doctrine will be outlined, followed by looking at the doctrine in his other works. The two major works on this topic are his *Everlasting Covenant* and *The Display of Glorious Grace*. As with other works, these documents are collections of sermons he preached, the first being two sermons and

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[20] Anthony L. Chute, Nathan A. Finn, and Michael A. G. Haykin, *The Baptist Story: From English Sect to Global Movement* (Nashville: B & H, 2015), 51.

[21] See Renihan, *Faith and Life for Baptists*, for the ominous debate in their own words. After introducing the content of the 1692 Assembly, he says, "While the Western Association meeting in Bristol would continue for a century, the London Assembly would not recover from the singing controversy, and would only gather once more—in 1693" (86).

[22] Other notable issues Keach spoke and wrote on were the practice of laying hands on the newly converted and the end of the seventh-day sabbath.

the latter fourteen. Between the two works, Keach spent approximately three-hundred fifty pages arguing for the doctrine of an everlasting covenant.

The Everlasting Covenant

Benjamin Keach preached a funeral sermon on January 29, 1693, for fellow pastor Henry Forty, which he later published.[23] He states his argument:

> I have endeavoured to shew, that the distinction some men make between the covenant of redemption, and the covenant of grace, is without ground, being but one and the same covenant; and, that the covenant of grace, comprehendeth that between God, and Christ for us, as mediator about our redemption, which was full of grace, in the first making of it, as in revelation, and application thereof, according to what was promised thereupon, 2 Tim. 1.9. Tit. 1, 2. Its rise, and constitution, was from eternity, tho' the revelation, and publication, was in time: Christ did not (as one observes) purchase a covenant of grace for us, to enter into with God; for the covenant it self, Christ, and all the grace, and glory thereof, lay in the eternal counsel of God's will, and accordingly transacted with Christ, as the representative of all the elect.[24]

As he closed that statement, Keach hints at a particular notion he has in view. He said, "Christ did not . . . purchase a covenant of grace." By this, he refers to those who viewed the covenant of grace as a covenant so distinct from the covenant of redemption that it becomes a conditional covenant in which meeting the conditions (faith and repentance) merits the reward (eternal life). In this explanation, Keach provides three primary aspects of his argument. First, he aims to challenge the propriety of a distinction between the covenant of grace and the covenant of redemption. Second, he believes the covenant of

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[23] The published work develops what he originally preached rather than it being a mere manuscript. Keach explains,

> The Substance of what is herein contained, you have heard from the pulpit, yet I am persuaded, it will not be unpleasing to you, to see those great truths presented to your view from the press. Some of you know, that I had not time to go through the whole of my work the first time, therefore I insisted again on it, the Lord's Day following; and yet some things I have added, which was at neither of those seasons delivered, the better to perfect the work. (Benjamin Keach, *The Everlasting Covenant, A Sweet CORDIAL for a drooping Soul: Or, The Excellent Nature of the Covenant of Grace Opened* [London: Printed for H. Barnard, 1693], n.p).

The capitalization that was common in writings of the era has been adjusted in this paper to match current practice, though original spelling has been retained.

[24] Keach, *The Everlasting Covenant*, n.p., emphasis removed. It is helpful, further, to note that he primarily seeks to expound this doctrine: "That the Covenant of Grace which is made with Believers in Christ, is an everlasting Covenant, order'd in all things, and sure, and is the only Spring or Fountain of their Salvation, Hope, Desire and Consolation, both in Life and Death" (3, emphasis removed).

grace includes all that the Reformed typically disperse among the covenant of redemption and the covenant of grace. Third, he believes the elect and their covenant head must be so united that they should always be considered together. The following explanation gives more space to the first of these since the latter two logically follow.

Challenging the two-covenant scheme. First, Keach challenged the propriety of distinguishing the covenants of redemption and grace, what I call here the "two-covenant" scheme. Keach's argument about the identity of the covenant of redemption and covenant of grace—a single-covenant scheme—must be contextualized.[25] While this distinction between Keach's view and the "two-covenant" view could be included when considering the relationship Keach's work has to the theologians around him, it helps to address it here since it is the presenting issue that stimulates his work on the topic. At the end of the seventeenth century, there were two ways of talking about the covenants of redemption and grace. The first way some spoke of the covenant of redemption, the way more commonly affirmed today, viewed it as the pretemporal pact between the Father, Son, and Spirit about the redemption of the elect. In the eternal counsel, the Father set out stipulations and the Son took them upon himself by the Spirit, thus formalizing the covenant.[26] In this view, the covenant of grace was the in-time progression of redemption to its fulfillment in the incarnate Son's active and passive obedience. Keach himself claims to have once understood a distinction to exist here, saying,

> I must confess, I have formerly been inclined to believe the covenant, or holy compact between the Father and the Son, was distinct from the covenant of grace; but upon farther search, by means of some great errours sprang up among us, arising (as I conceive) from that notion, I cannot see that they are two distinct covenants, but both

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[25] To be more precise, these would be three- and two-covenant schemes, respectively, since both structures assume the covenant of works as well.

[26] Though this progression seems temporal, or sequential, analogical language is assumed. As parties each agree before a covenant is ratified, so too are the "terms" of the covenant considered as though preceding the covenant itself. Not all theologians have distinguished the "counsel" as something distinct from the covenant. This will be considered more when looking at Gill in the next chapter.

one and the same glorious covenant of grace, only consisting of two parts, or branches.[27]

Though he had previously distinguished them, some errors forced Keach to reassess and revise his doctrine. Even in doing so, Keach does not deny that there are "two parts" to the covenant, so one could argue that it was a difference in language more than a difference in doctrine.

For the second conception of the two-covenant scheme, as stated, some began to say the covenant of redemption was God's particular covenant with the Incarnate Son, and the covenant of grace was the new way in which man comes into relationship with God following the fulfillment of the covenant of redemption. The primary proponent of this latter scheme was Richard Baxter. Baxter writes,

> Q. 14. What are the new laws which he hath made for all?
>
> A. The covenant of grace in the last edition is his law, by which he obligeth men to repent and believe in him as incarnate, crucified, and ascended, and interceding and reigning in heaven, and as one that will judge the world at the resurrection: as one that pardoneth sin by his sacrifice and merit, and sanctifieth believers by his Spirit, and to believe in God as thus reconciled by him, and in the Holy Ghost as thus given by him. And he promiseth pardon, grace, and glory, to all true believers, and threateneth damnation to impenitent unbelievers. And he commandeth all believers to devote themselves thus to God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, by a solemn vow in baptism, and live in the communion of saints, in his church and holy worship, and the frequent celebration of the memorial of his death in the sacrament of his body and blood, especially on the first day of the week, which he hath separated to that holy commemoration and communion by his resurrection, and the sending of his Spirit, and by his apostles. And he hath commanded all his disciples to live in unity, love, and beneficence, taking up the cross, and following him in holiness and patience, in hope of everlasting life.[28]

In Baxter's scheme, the covenant of grace seemed to confuse the typical Reformation law-gospel distinction by making the gospel into law. [29]

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[27] Keach, *Everlasting Covenant*, 6. Though he only includes the Father and Son in this statement, he discusses all three Persons shortly afterward (26-27, cf. 10-11, 14).

[28] Richard Baxter, *The Practical Works of the Rev. Richard Baxter*, ed. William Orme (London: James Duncan, 1830), 19:137-38.

[29] The blending of law and gospel may be all the more evident in another statement:

> God hath not redeemed us by his Son to be lawless. To be without law is to be without government. We are without the law; that is, of works or of Moses, but not without law; Jesus Christ is our ruler, and he hath made us a law of grace. . . . This law hath precepts, promises, and threats. . . . He that

Keach evidences the distinction he has between the two groups:

> By making the covenant of redemption distinct from the covenant of grace, (in respect of what I am now speaking of) I fear it lay a foundation for those errors which are got among us; as if we are to enter into a covenant with God without Christ's undertaking for us, as our surety: for say they, "Christ did perform the covenant of works, but doth confirm, not perform the covenant of grace."[30]

In other words, some teach a two-covenant system, which he disagrees with, but others develop the doctrine in such a way that they can then embrace the erroneous view that the covenant of redemption, or Christ's fulfillment of the covenant of works, simply provides the means by which a new covenant of grace has been introduced into history. In this scheme, the new covenant of grace is simply a milder form of a covenant of works.

Keach believed Baxter and the "Baxterians" had introduced Arminianism into Reformed theology by treating the two-covenant system this way. To the argument that Christ simply fulfilled the covenant of works and confirmed the covenant of grace without performing it, Keach said, "This is the worst of all, and it seems to be calculated to unfold Arminianism, [rather] then to establish sound divinity."[31] Without seeing the greater threat Keach had in view, it would be easy to misconstrue his view as vehement opposition to all two-covenant schemes. Rather, while he certainly disagreed with the necessity of distinguishing between the two aspects of the covenant of grace (everlasting covenant) to the point of speaking of them as two covenants, his more vehement disagreement was aimed at any two-covenant system that would make the covenant of grace conditioned on human will. Keach argued,

> As that blessed compact doth peculiarly respect Christ's Person as Mediator, and as he is so considered in the covenant, I do not say it was a covenant of grace to him,

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performs the condition, and so to whom the reward is due, and not the penalty, is righteous in the sense of this law. . . . So when we are accused to be final unbelievers or impenitent, and so not to have performed the conditions of the new covenant, we must be justified by our own faith and repentance, the performance of that condition; and must plead, not guilty. And so far our own acts are our evangelical righteousness, and that of such necessity, that without it no man can have part in Christ's righteousness, nor be saved. (Baxter, *The Practical Works*, 9:57-58)

[30] Keach, *Everlasting Covenant*, 18.

[31] Keach, *Everlasting Covenant*, 15.

for he obtains all by desert and merit; yet seeing God entered into that covenant with him, for us, as our head, surety and representative, and not for himself singly, considered, it cannot be any thing else but the covenant of grace, as well as the foundation, or primary spring of all that grace, and divine goodness, that the elect had, or ever shall partake of, or receive from God; for 'tis (as I may so say) the opening the sluces or floodgates of all divine love and mercy, to poor lost and undone mankind, nay, the grace of God to us in entering into this covenant with Christ, as our Mediator from before all worlds, is doubtless, ground of the highest admiration to saints and angels.[32]

Christ performs the works necessary to merit all he receives, but Christ also obtained all God's gracious gifts for the elect in the same covenant.

Nothing lost. Second, Keach believed that the everlasting covenant includes everything in an acceptable two-covenant scheme without succumbing to what he felt were the shortcomings, as noted. He maintained,

From the whole, it appears that covenant they call the covenant of redemption, contains the whole summ; even matter and form, condition and promises of the covenant of grace: in that covenant is contained all the grace God hath promised, and which we receive; all is obtained upon the account of Christ's satisfying for our sins, and so all the promises of grace and salvation run to us in him: no love, nor divine goodness is manifested to us but in and through that covenant: therefore not two, but one and the same covenant; so that the covenant of grace it appears, was made by the Holy God, in the person of the Father, with us in the Person of the Son.[33]

What most non-Baxterian presentations of the covenant of redemption included in their exposition, Keach included in the eternal "pole" of the covenant of grace (everlasting covenant). He understood the everlasting covenant to be tightly connected to the decree, so he argued that whether one addresses the eternal aspect or the temporal aspect, the decision or the accomplishment and application, one must consider these as one concept and doctrine, the everlasting covenant.

Always united. Third, and this was a governing principle for his argument, Keach contended that Christ must always be considered as head of the body and the elect as the body united to their head. Keach says,

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[32] Keach, *Everlasting Covenant*, 6.

[33] Keach, *Everlasting Covenant*, 20.

That holy agreement or compact between the Father and Son was the rise, or spring of the covenant of grace, it was made with Jesus Christ, and with us in him; therefore I see no reason to call them two distinct and compleat covenants, but two subjects (as the same author [Samuel Petto] intimates) of the same covenant as with Jesus Christ, it had its constitution from before all worlds, or we had a being, tho' as with us, it has its application in time after we exist, and are actually in Christ, as part of the promised Seed.[34]

One must acknowledge the distinction between the eternal aspect respecting Christ and the temporal aspect respecting the believers, but Keach would have his readers understand that the distinction falls within the single covenant. He asks, "I would know whether in the covenant of grace God is said to enter into covenant with man, simply considered as in himself; or whether 'tis not with Christ, and so in him with us[?]"[35] Common explanations, as seen in such authors as Patrick Gillespie, maintained that the covenant of grace between God and man includes man specifically as the body of Christ.[36] Keach builds on this understanding to argue that distinctions between head and body should also guard against dividing it into two covenants.

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[34] Keach, *Everlasting Covenant*, 8-9.

[35] Keach, *Everlasting Covenant*, 10; cf. 32.

[36] For ease, I changed Patrick Gillespie's use of "Suretiship" to "Redemption" (except where they appear together) and his "Reconciliation" to "Grace." Gillespie said,

> The *Parties* are different [in the covenants of redemption and grace]. In the Covenant of Suretiship and Redemption, the Parties are *Jehovah* and his only Son Christ (as before proved); but in the Covenant of [Grace], the Parties are God the Father, Son and Spirit, and lost Sinners, *2 Cor. 5.19*. . . . The one is stricken betwixt God and Christ *God-man*, a person that is not meer man, considered in a precise notion of [Grace], as betwixt God and meer man, *1 Tim. 2.5*. . . . The one is a Covenant betwixt God and his *only begotten* natural *Son*, Heb. 5.5; the other is betwixt God and *many Sons*, even his adopted Sons, *Heb.* 2.10. the Covenant of Redemption is made with *Christ personal* (as hath been proved); the Covenant of Grace (as it comprehends the whole business of Grace, from the beginning to end) with *Christ mystical*, head and body, *Heb.* 2.13. with him and the children whom God hath given to him; the Covenant of [Redemption] is made with Christ as a *peculiar chosen person*, Psal. 89. 19 . . . who did by that Covenant take upon him a publick capacity, wherein he did ever thereafter act, in heaven and earth; but the Covenant of Grace is made with Christ as a *publick person*, representing many with Christ, as the second *Adam*, who stood and covenantaed for all his seed, *Heb.* 2.13. . . . The Covenant of Redemption is betwixt God and men, who are the work of his hands; not his equals, but his subjects, his servants, &c, and these of the lowest rank and degree, *Heb.* 2.6, 7. . . . The Covenant of Redemption is betwixt God and his Son in favour and friendship with him, who never offended him, *Mat.* 3.17 . . . but the Covenant of [Grace] is betwixt God and his enemies, sinners at variance and enmity with God; and it's made with Christ, only as he took sinners place. (Patrick Gillespie, *The Ark of the Covenant Opened, Or, A Treatise of the Covenant of Redemption Between God and Christ, as the Foundation of the Covenant of Grace the Second Part* [London: Printed for Thomas Parkhurst at the Bible and three Crowns in Cheapside near Mercers Chappel, 1677], 118-19)

God's purpose in the everlasting covenant. Before moving on, it would be helpful to understand what Keach believed about the manifold ways the everlasting covenant applied to Christian life and doctrine. In *Everlasting Covenant*, he provided five things the covenant does. First, the everlasting covenant demonstrated the attributes of God. Second, the everlasting covenant manifests the glory of each Person of the Trinity. Third, the everlasting covenant confounds the works of Satan. Fourth, the everlasting covenant manifests God's upholding his righteous law. Fifth, the everlasting covenant is how God grants the elect all good things.[37]

The Display of Glorious Grace

Five years after *Everlasting Covenant*, Keach published a series of fourteen sermons intended to build upon the earlier work. He claimed the later work, *The Display of Glorious Grace*, was designed "chiefly to refute the new prevailing errors about justification." Indeed, the work was subtitled, *In which the Errors of the Present Day, about Reconciliation and Justification, Are Detected.*[38] Keach believed the mishandling of this doctrine would undermine, and in fact had undermined, the Protestant doctrine of justification. Further, like his contemporary Herman Witsius, Keach maintained that covenant theology touched on multiple doctrines of the faith.[39] He says, "Reader, thou wilt find many of the essential points of the Christian religion are handled in these sermons, (tho but weakly, according to that small gift received)."[40] Though Keach's *The Display of Glorious Grace* was considerably longer than *Everlasting Covenant*, much of the theological structure has been provided previously, so not as much space will be necessary

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[37] Keach, *Everlasting Covenant*, 22-31. All five of these appear in his exposition of how the covenant is "well ordered" from 2 Sam 23:5.

[38] Keach, *Display of Glorious Grace*, vi.

[39] Herman Witsius, *The Economy of the Covenants between God and Man: Comprehending a Complete Body of Divinity*, trans. William Crookshank, 2 vols. (London: T. Tegg & Son, 1837).

[40] Keach, *Display of Glorious Grace*, vi.

here. Instead, something of a bare summary of the fourteen sermons will suffice. He provided an outline of his book, including the doctrine he intended to defend:

> Doct. That there is a covenant of peace[41] made or agreed upon, and it stands firm [in] behalf of all Gods elect. In the speaking unto this proposition, I shall take this method following, viz.
>
> 1. Lay down eight explanatory propositions by way of premise.
>
> 2. I shall endeavour to open the main or chief transactions about bringing in, and establishing of this covenant of peace
>
> 3. I shall open the nature of this covenant of peace.
>
> 4. I shall shew you what is contained, granted or given in this covenant.
>
> 5. Shew the nature of the peace comprehended in this covenant.[42]

First, Keach provided the basic outline of the covenant of peace. He proceeded upon an infralapsarian presentation of the decrees, arguing that God foresaw a fall and entered a covenant of peace (everlasting covenant) with the Son.[43] The fall would be a "fearful breach betwixt himself and lost mankind" by violation of the covenant God made with Adam, and this breach was not able to be overcome by any creature. Though God is just, he reveals his mercy in the covenant of peace made in Christ, which is the everlasting covenant.[44]

Second, Keach spent sermons 2 through the beginning of 8 explaining the transactions in the everlasting covenant.[45] Throughout these sermons, Keach drew connections and defined differences between human covenant treaties and the covenant treaty between the Father and the Son. At each point in the argument, Keach began with a

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[41] This is the same as the everlasting covenant. Keach seems to use all these terms synonymously, at times differentiating his preferred term according to the quality he seeks to highlight.

[42] Keach, *Display of Glorious Grace*, 9, emphasis removed. Keach includes application as a sixth point.

[43] It seems common, whether or not an author affirms supralapsarianism or infralapsarianism in terms of the decrees, the *pactum* appears infralapsarian since it is about the redemption of the elect from their fallen state.

[44] Keach, *Display of Glorious Grace*, 9-22.

[45] Keach, *Display of Glorious Grace*, 23-171.

particular commonality between what occurred in eternity between the Father and the Son and what occurs in human treaties, but he quickly moved on to emphasize the distinction. The two titles he sought to fill out most specifically are "Mediator" (esp. "Sermon II") and "Surety" (esp. "Sermon IV"). These sermons focused particularly on the Person and work of Christ, defining his two natures and threefold office. Keach's process clearly followed the development from eternal transactions to Christ's fulfillment of them in time to the final publication of this mystery in the preaching of the gospel.[46]

Third, having demonstrated the parties of the covenant, or the "transactions," Keach began to define the covenant itself in sermons 8 through 10. First, he explained "that the covenant of peace may be considered as twofold, or a mixt covenant."[47] Christ has his part, in which he obeys the law perfectly and completely, while "whatsoever we receive by virtue of this covenant, it is wholly in a way of free grace and favour, through his merits, or through that redemption we have by his blood."[48] This point in his work provided him the opportunity to address the Baxterian errors most explicitly. Since the covenant is wholly of grace for the believer, Keach argued that Christ fulfilled all the conditions and all the logical requirements placed on the believer are wrought in the believer by the Spirit. God requires faith and repentance, but it is not as though "the creature can do either of these himself, but to shew he [God] will work faith and repentance in all whom he will save, or as he hath ordained to the end, so he hath also ordained the means."[49] Further, it is "not that either of these are procuring, or foederal conditions of the covenant blessings, or of salvation, because all the graces of the Spirit are contained in the covenant as part of it."[50] Not only are faith and repentance requisite to salvation in the manner of a condition

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[46] Keach, *Display of Glorious Grace*, 131-69.

[47] Keach, *Display of Glorious Grace*, 172.

[48] Keach, *Display of Glorious Grace*, 172.

[49] Keach, *Display of Glorious Grace*, 172.

[50] Keach, *Display of Glorious Grace*, 186-87.

of connection rather than a federal and causative manner, but the covenant Christ fulfilled also purchased faith and repentance. "We must distinguish," said Keach, "between the covenant in its absolute tenure, and the ministry thereof, which is conditionally dispensed, according to the connexion, order, and dependance of good things contained in the promise."[51] In "Sermon IX," Keach repeated much of his work from *The Everlasting Covenant*, emphasizing the granting of peace in the covenant. In "Sermon X," Keach notably demonstrated that the Westminster Larger Catechism, Questions 30 and 31, affirm only two covenants, of works and of grace.[52] Further, Keach's presentation of the everlasting covenant included all the doctrine of Gillespie's *Ark of the Covenant Opened* without what he saw as the attendant dangers introduced by separating the covenant of grace into two covenants, one of redemption and the other of grace.

Fourth, Keach explained the "gifts, grants, and blessings" given in the covenant. First, man receives God himself, which Keach demonstrated by looking at the goodness of God in his attributes.[53] Second, Christ "our Peace" is given in the covenant.[54] Third, "the Holy Spirit is given to unite us to Christ, to quicken us, to illuminate our minds, and to renovate our soul, to be our guide, our comforter, and to dwell in us for ever, and to seal all covenant blessings to us."[55] Thus, the fourth and fifth categories of blessings, such as love, humility, adoption, and perseverance, are given when the Spirit is given to the

[51] Keach, *Display of Glorious Grace*, 187-88.

[52] Proponents of the covenant of redemption who affirm the Westminster Standards sometimes point out that the Confession implies something of the doctrine, especially when read in light of the fact that "a number of proponents of the *pactum* were members of the Westminster Assembly including: Samuel Rutherford (1600-61), Thomas Goodwin (1600-80), and Obadiah Sedgwick (ca. 1600-58)." J. V. Fesko, *The Covenant of Redemption: Origins, Development, and Reception* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprect, 2016), 9-11; Guy M. Richard, "The Covenant of Redemption," in *Covenant Theology: Biblical, Theological, and Historical Perspectives*, ed. Guy Prentiss Waters, J. Nicholas Reid, and John R. Meuther (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2020), 48.

[53] Keach, *Display of Glorious Grace*, 225-37.

[54] Keach, *Display of Glorious Grace*, 237-38.

[55] Keach, *Display of Glorious Grace*, 238.

believer. Keach devoted the following two sermons to the free blessings that flow from God to his covenant people.

Closing out the series, Keach expounded on the peace that appears in the covenant. God is no longer an enemy but a friend who loves his people. "God takes the soul into an everlasting covenant of peace, and the soul also takes God to be his God in the same everlasting covenant."[56] This peace spreads outward to peace in the soul itself, peace with the angels, and peace with one another. It is the peace that rules in the heart by the Holy Spirit given by the Son which "opens the way to communion with God." "Hereby," Keach said, "we come to have the honour to walk with God, as Enoch did three hundred years; can two walk together except they are agreed?"[57] The covenant between the Father and the Son, who represents his people as their mediator and surety, brings peace to all those who have Christ as their head.

Other Works

Because Keach's understanding of the everlasting covenant encompasses many other aspects of theology, one could write a monograph connecting each part of the everlasting covenant to his other doctrines. However, for brevity, here I will consider just two of the points at which the doctrine makes an appearance: justification and perseverance.

One important work Keach published was *The Marrow of True Justification*.[58] It was a two-sermon piece that addressed the Baxterian view of justification. Though the work has been read by some recently, particularly as the Reformation doctrine of justification has continued to face challenges from the so-called "New Perspective on Paul," properly understanding Keach's *Marrow* requires the reader to also look at Keach's

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[56] Keach, *Display of Glorious Grace*, 287.

[57] Keach, *Display of Glorious Grace*, 290.

[58] Benjamin Keach, *The Marrow of True Justification, Or, Justification without Works* (London: printed for Dorman Newman, 1692).

works on the everlasting covenant. The first clue that this is the case appears in the fact

that Keach wrote/preached *The Marrow of True Justification* in 1692, just a year—or

perhaps even months—before he preached *Everlasting Covenant*. In this work, Keach

claimed that the Protestant doctrine of justification

> tends so much to the honour of God, and the magnifying of his infinite wisdom, and
> his free grace, and mercy in Jesus Christ, and also to the abasement of the creature:
> Was it not the exaltation of the glory of God in all his attributes and blessed
> perfections, which was the result of that glorious counsel, held above between the
> Father and the Son, before the world began, in the bringing in and establishment of
> the covenant of grace?[59]

Though it is not clear at this point whether Keach affirmed the single covenant, since he

says the covenant of grace results from the eternal counsel, the latter of which may be

synonymous with the *pactum salutis*, he clearly believed the connection between the

covenant of grace and the eternal counsel was key to the doctrine of justification.

As the first sermon developed, Keach outlined seven false views of justification.

The final view, before his sermon outlining his own, was the longest. He says,

> There are others of late, as well as formerly, who by too many are looked upon to be
> true preachers of the gospel, and orthodox men, who are strangely tainted with that
> poysonous notion, which brings sincere obedience unto the gospel, as joyning it with
> faith in point of justification. Thus I find they express themselves, viz. that faith and
> obedience are conditions of the gospel, or of the covenant of grace, as perfect
> obedience was of the covenant of works; and that Christ hath purchased by his death,
> that this new covenant should be made with us, viz. That if we would believe and
> obey the gospel, we should be pardoned and saved.[60]

The challenge Keach addressed here, again, was the presentation of the covenant of grace

as a softer form of a covenant of works. In the Baxterians' view, according to Keach, the

covenant of redemption Christ fulfilled simply provided the grounds for "a new and milder

Law of Grace, or Terms of Life" that Keach pointed out "clearly tends in a great measure

to destroy, or make void the Law, instead of making it honorable, by Christ's perfect

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[59] Keach, *Marrow of True Justification*, 2.

[60] Keach, *Marrow of True Justification*, 11.

Conformity to it, in our Nature and Stead."[61] To this claim, Keach responds, "Now such, who have always been looked upon as sound in this great fundamental point of justification, believe and teach, 'Christ came not to destroy the Law, but to fulfil it,' and in our nature, and stead as our head representative and surety, to do and perform the terms thereof."[62] The division of covenants of redemption and grace in the manner of Keach's opponents undermines the law, the imputation of Christ's righteousness, and the doctrine of justification as understood by the reformation theologians. The rest of Keach's *Marrow* positively applied Christ's work as the fulfillment of all righteousness to the believer.

In his *Golden Mine Opened*, Keach applied the doctrine of the everlasting covenant to the saints' final perseverance. Though he integrated the doctrine at various points in his series of sermons, in his ninth sermon he explicitly spent time incorporating the everlasting covenant as the fourth in his arguments for the saints' final perseverance.[63] There are ten components to his argument for perseverance from the everlasting covenant/covenant of grace, each of which he expounded briefly. However, at the end of the sermon, he listed the ten components as follows:

> (1.) If the New Covenant be a Covenant of Grace, and not of Works; if it be not according to the first Covenant that was made with *Adam*, but of a quite contrary Nature.
>
> (2.) If it be made with Christ for all his Elect, and in him with them, before the World began.
>
> (3.) If Christ is the Surety of the Covenant, and hath ingaged or obliged himself in this Covenant to the Father, to perform all the federal Conditions proposed to him, and undertaken by him on their behalf, namely to work out perfect Righteousness according as the Law requires, (of all that can be justified with God) and to die in their room, to satisfy for their Breach of the Law, and to quicken, renew, sanctify and preserve them all unto Eternal Life.

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[61] Keach, *Marrow of True Justification*, 16. Keach says the same thing almost verbatim in *A Golden Mine Opened, or, The Glory of God's Rich Grace Displayed in the Mediator to Believers and His Direful Wrath against Impenitent Sinners* (London: Printed, and sold by the author, 1694), 95.

[62] Keach, *Marrow of True Justification*, 12.

[63] In "Sermon VIII," Keach argued from election and the love of the Father, and earlier in "Sermon IX" he expounded on the love of the Son.

(4.) If it be an everlasting Covenant, well ordered in all things, and sure, for the Salvation of all that are given unto him, it being made upon the unchangeable Decree and Counsel of God.

(5.) If the Execution of all things that are required of Believers, in order to their Interest in this Covenant, and their perseverance to the End, be put into the Hands of the Holy Ghost to work in them, and for them.

(6.) If the Covenant is confirmed by such infallible Witness [the Persons of the Trinity]; if it be ratified and confirmed by the Blood of Christ.

(7.) If it is also confirmed by God's Promise and Holy Oath [to Christ and those in Christ].

(8.) If the Earnest of Salvation is given to them.

(9.) And they are sealed unto the Day of Redemption by the Holy Spirit.

(10.) And if 'tis an absolute Covenant like that of *Noah:* Then they all, and every one of them, shall certainly be saved, and none of them can fall away so as eternally to perish. But all this is true, and evidently so, therefore they shall all be saved.[64]

Replete throughout these grounds for the saints' perseverance is the conviction that salvation finally and ultimately depends upon God. Man cannot thwart the certainty of salvation, nor is it ultimately secured by man, but instead depends solely on the triune God working salvation in the Son by the Spirit. Keach said,

As they [the elect] are in the Father's hand, so he hath, you heard, put them into Christ's hand as their great sponsor, mediator and surety; and that before the world began, in that covenant and blessed compact the Father and Son entered into, in order to the eternal salvation of all his saints: And the Holy God hath fixed on such ways and means, and in such manner that the thing designed cannot miscarry.[65]

From before the beginning, through the accomplishment and application, to the final result, Keach believed the everlasting covenant was crucial for maintaining sound Christian doctrine and nourishing faith.

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[64] This section is a clear example of the way Keach views the "eternal pole" of the everlasting covenant (i.e., *pactum salutis*) as inseparable from the effects upon elect in those aspects that would normally be considered under the covenant of grace. Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 210-11. The expansion on each point begins on p. 202. The ten parts of the argument often run into one another such that the expansion on Keach's seventh point is found in his eighth point, and the actual statement about "the Earnest of the Inheritance" appears in his ninth point.

[65] Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 274.

Everlasting Covenant among the Puritans

One purpose of this dissertation is to demonstrate the roots of the doctrine of the *pactum* among Baptists. In this early formulation of the *pactum*, Keach was contributing to the conversation in the broader reformed community, associating himself with some, distinguishing himself from others, and distancing himself from still others. Though one could compare Keach's doctrine to various other writers of the seventeenth century, I will take three examples in this section in order to demonstrate his relationship to the broader reformed community of his time. First, I will note the argument of Samuel Petto, from whom Keach seems most to have drawn his understanding of the everlasting covenant. Second, a few points from Stephen Charnock will be compared to Keach's response. Charnock presented a version of the covenant of redemption that Keach felt was particularly dangerous in that it provided the content for the Baxterians' doctrine. Third, I will look at John Owen. Owen's doctrine of the covenant of redemption would fit comfortably within that category Keach simply thought was unnecessary, as noted in the previous section on "Challenging the two-covenant scheme."

Samuel Petto

Mark Jones explains, "Samuel Petto (c. 1624-1711) was among the ejected ministers with the passing of the Act of Uniformity (1662)."[66] Among other works, he was a Congregationalist minister who wrote against those among his ecclesial compatriots who had adopted credobaptism. In 1673, he wrote *The Great Mystery of the Covenant of Grace*, which included a letter to the reader by John Owen, though Owen himself held to the two-covenant scheme. Early in the work, Petto made arguments against the two-covenant scheme. He said, "There is no Scripture Evidence for making these two Covenants, one of Suretyship or redemption with Jesus Christ, and another of grace and

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[66] Mark Jones, introduction to *The Great Mystery of The Covenant of Grace: Or the Difference Between the Old and New Covenant Stated and Explained*, by Samuel Petto (Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire, England: Tentmaker, 2007), 10.

reconciliation made with us."[67] Though "the same Covenant of grace, may be distinguished, as it is made with Jesus Christ, and as with us," he continues, "yet not to intimate two distinct and compleat Covenants, but two Subjects of the same Covenant."[68] Later, Petto addressed the "dating" of the covenant:

> If it be inquired when the covenant of grace was made between God the Father, and Jesus Christ the Son? it must be answered—it was from eternity, it was an eternal covenant. Indeed, the actual giving him for a covenant was not till his incarnation: it is mentioned as a future thing, he was promised before, but given then . . . the first revelation of it was, Gen. iii.15. . . . So as the first declaration of the covenant of grace was there, but the constitution, or making of it, was before all time, even from *eternity*.[69]

Petto then provides five scriptural arguments for the eternality of the covenant.[70] My purpose in pointing this out is simply to mark that the single-covenant scheme, rather than the two-covenant scheme of distinguishing between the *pactum* and the covenant of grace, was neither invented by the Particular Baptists nor precluded from theological discourse among the Reformed Orthodox.[71] That Owen would recommend a book that takes a different position seems to demonstrate that the distinction was, in his mind, an internal debate.

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[67] Samuel Petto, *The Difference between the Old and New Covenant Stated and Explained with an Exposition of the Covenant of Grace in the Principal Concernments of it* (London: Printed for Eliz. Calvert, 1674), 19.

[68] Petto, *The Difference between the Old and New Covenant*, 20.

[69] Petto, *The Difference between the Old and New Covenant*, 79, emphasis original.

[70] The five arguments are (1) mutual operations of the Persons of about the redemption of man, (2) Christ's mediatorial work being designated before the foundation of the world (Eph 1:4), (3) the salvation of the Old Testament saints, (4) the giving of particular Persons from the Father to the Son (Jn 6:37), and (5) the promises of grace being "before the world began" (2 Tim 1:9; Titus 1:2). Petto, *The Difference between the Old and New Covenant*, 48-52.

[71] It is worth noting, also, that the single-covenant scheme was included in the catechism of another local church at Horsleydown. Five questions in the catechism deal with the "everlasting covenant of grace." The catechism was printed in 1700 and was mentioned by a Joseph Jacob. It could not have been the same congregation that Keach pastored since the catechism also advocates for paedobaptism. Horsly-Down, *The Catechism, or, Brief Instruction in the Faith and Order of the Gospel for the Church of Christ Meeting at Horsly-Down in Southwark* (London: Printed for the use of the Church, 1700), 13-15.

Stephen Charnock

In addition to addressing Baxter, Keach clearly addressed what he saw as errors

in Stephen Charnock's articulation of the covenant of redemption. Charnock says,

> 4. Christ is the mediator of the covenant of grace, Heb. 12:24, but not the mediator
> of the covenant of redemption, but a party. He was the surety of the covenant of
> grace, Heb. 7:22. The covenant of redemption had no surety; the Father and the Son
> trusted one another upon the agreement. The covenant of grace is confirmed by the
> blood of Christ; but we cannot say that the covenant of redemption was confirmed
> properly by that blood, any more than as the shedding of his blood was a necessary
> article in that covenant.[72]

Keach responded directly to this statement in a lengthy argument built on the fact that

Charnock seems to have misunderstood the relationship between Christ and his people

since Christ was a "publick person."[73] Next, Charnock says, "5. Christ performed his part

in the covenant of redemption; and by virtue of this mediatory covenant, performed the

covenant of works; but he did confirm, not perform, the covenant of grace."[74] This

statement served as one of those addressed in *Everlasting Covenant*.

In addition to responding to the Baxterian developments from these statements,

Keach reasserted against Charnock's statement that Christ was a surety for "the compleat

accomplishment of the covenant of grace entered into between the Father and the Son in

behalf of the elect. Yet all the good we receive through the applicatory part of the said

covenant, are but the effects, fruits or product of the same covenant as it was made with

Christ for us."[75] Keach did not disagree with distinctions absolutely; he disagreed with

distinctions that reached the point of making two covenants. "The distinction lies not in

two distinct covenants essentially differing from each other, but in the distinct parts of the

said one intire covenant."[76] Keach thought Charnock's presentation of the covenant of

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[72] Stephen Charnock, *The Complete Works of Stephen Charnock* (Edinburgh: James Nichol, 1865), 3:375.

[73] Keach, *Display of Glorious Grace*, 213-15.

[74] Charnock, *The Complete Works of Stephen Charnock*, 3:375.

[75] Keach, *Display of Glorious Grace*, 214.

[76] Keach, *Display of Glorious Grace*, 215.

redemption differed from Gillespie's in that it made too hard of a division between the two covenants, and at those points where they differ, Charnock introduced the dangers coopted by the Baxterians while Gillespie simply included a sharper distinction than Keach preferred. Remembering the two ways of explaining the covenant of redemption referenced earlier in this chapter, Keach would categorize Gillespie among those with whom he had a simple disagreement, while he would classify Charnock among the more dangerous on this point.

John Owen

In continuity with the larger Reformed Orthodox community, John Owen argued that there were in fact two distinct covenants with differing parties. He says in his Hebrews commentary, "we must distinguish between the covenant that God made *with men concerning* Christ, and the covenant that he made *with his Son concerning* men," the former being the covenant of grace and the latter—though not explicitly called such until volume 7—the covenant of redemption.[77] In the covenant of redemption, the parties are God the Father and God the Son; in the covenant of grace, the parties are God and the elect sinner. There are three particular items to consider in Owen's formulation of the covenant of redemption: (1) the conditions, (2) the promises, and (3) Christ's suretyship. These are especially important because of how Keach responds to the formulation and challenges each area. By way of paraphrase, Owen narrates the covenant of redemption: "'My will,' says God the Father, 'is, that thou have a body, and that that body be offered up; and that to this end, that the children, the elect, might be sanctified.' Says the Son to this, 'Lo, I come to do thy will;'—'I accept the condition, and give up myself to the performance of thy will.'"[78]

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[77] John Owen, *Hebrews*, ed. William H. Goold (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1991), 2:78, emphasis original. Cf. Owen, *Hebrews*, 7:475-76.

[78] John Owen, *Vindiciæ Evangelicæ; Or, The Mystery of the Gospel Vindicated and Socinianism Examined*, in *The Works of John Owen*, 12: 498, said in relation to the text of Heb 10:7. For a summary of

Conditions. The *pactum salutis*, as a covenant, has five conditions, each of which correlates with common conditions in all other covenants. (1) Two parties agree "voluntarily together in counsel and design for the accomplishment and bringing about some common end acceptable to them both" which they are not somehow already obliged to do.[79] (2) The promiser, or "principle engager," requires something at the hand of the other, and (3) provides the support necessary for the one undertaking to accomplish the covenant.[80] (4) The other party addresses himself to the demands expecting the promises, and thus (5) the common end "be brought about and established."[81] Therefore, there are multiple parties, each voluntary and capable of particular actions.

In the covenant of redemption, "the part of the enjoiner, prescriber, and promiser, whose will in all things is to be attended unto is on the Father,"[82] while the Son "freely undertook to do and suffer whatever on his part was required."[83] The end is that, by the gracious salvation of the elect, there be a special manifestation of the glory of one and the other.[84] The prescribed manner of fulfilling this covenant is the Son's assuming the nature of those he came to save, obedience to the commands of the Father, and atonement for those who had become obnoxious to God by their sin.[85] Each party in the covenant agrees to fulfillment of particular actions.

Owen's covenant of redemption, cf. Richard W. Daniels, *The Christology of John Owen* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage, 2004), 153-67.

[79] Owen, *Vindicæ Evangelicæ*, 498. Owen, *Hebrews*, 2:82.

[80] Owen, *Vindicæ Evangelicæ*, 499. Owen, *Hebrews*, 2:83.

[81] Owen, *Vindicæ Evangelicæ*, 499. Owen, *Hebrews*, 2:83.

[82] Owen, *Hebrews*, 2:86.

[83] Owen, *Hebrews*, 2:87. Alan Spence, *Incarnation and Inspiration: John Owen and the Coherence of Christology* (London: T & T Clark, 2007), 28-30.

[84] Owen, *Hebrews*, 2:90.

[85] Owen, *Hebrews*, 2.94-95. Carl R. Trueman writes, "Owen emphasizes that Christ's death is a sacrifice with salvific value only because it is offered in the context of the covenantal arrangement

For Keach, in its pretemporal aspect of the covenant, there are simply the Father and Christ, with the elect in proleptic form. "God first chose his Son as the representative, covenanting head and surety of his elect, and then treated with him about the terms of our peace."[86] As in other covenants, in which both parties agree to accomplish things peculiar to their role in the covenant, in this covenant the Father agreed to prepare for the Son a body and the Son to take a body. The stipulations grant the Son a three-fold promise: (1) justification of many, (2) a seed, and (3) the union to himself of those justified and pardoned forever.[87] Thus, the everlasting covenant is made between the Father and Son, and with the elect in the Son.

Promises. For Owen, the promises extend from the Father, as principle engager, to the Son as the party who fulfills the covenant. These promises are made "to Christ personally and in his capacity as Mediator."[88] They include assistance in accomplishing the difficult task of redemption, exaltation, and the deliverance of those for whom he took on flesh.[89] Hence, the Son is the recipient of promises with respect to his future Incarnation in that he will be assisted in his work of obedience and these promises are fulfilled in time as he takes on the role of Mediator between God and man in the execution of his priestly office.

between the Father and the Son." Carl R. Trueman, *John Owen: Reformed Catholic, Renaissance Man* (Aldershot, England: Routledge, 2007), 89-90; see esp. 90fn83; Carl R. Trueman, "Atonement and the Covenant of Redemption: John Owen on the Nature of Christ's Satisfaction," in *From Heaven He Came and Sought Her: Definite Atonement in Historical, Biblical, Theological, and Pastoral Perspective*, ed. David Gibson and Jonathan Gibson (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013), 201-23; Sinclair B. Ferguson, *John Owen on the Christian Life* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1995), 25-27.

[86] Keach, *The Display of Glorious Grace*, 27.

[87] Keach, *The Display of Glorious Grace*, 28.

[88] Ferguson, *John Owen on the Christian Life*, 25.

[89] Owen, *Hebrews*, 2:93-94. For an outline of the connection between the natures of Christ and his work as the Mediator, cf. Spence, *Incarnation and Inspiration*, 71-79.

For Keach, the plan of the covenant is that the Son would come to earth to perform all things for the salvation of the elect and receive all the promised to himself. As noted, this plan is for (1) the display of God's attributes, (2) a display and glorification of each Person of the Holy Trinity, (3) the defeat of Satan, (4) the honor of the Law, and (5) the good of the elect.[90] God's work of redemption, his sending forth the Son as the mediator and head of the elect, is for the full display of God's glory in the world through the salvation of the elect.

Suretyship. Owen argues that suretyship is founded upon, though separate from, the covenant of redemption. This distinction is important because Keach cannot see why these two should be separated. Thus, while up to this point I have been looking at Owen's doctrine of the covenant of redemption in outline, here I transition to a short explanation of his doctrine of suretyship.

A surety is one who stands in the place and stead of another to vouch for them. Speaking in terms of cause and effect, Christ was predestined (cause) for the grace and glory that attend the office of his human nature (effect).[91] Through his example, double imputation, and his glorification, the grace and glory proper to the Person of Christ is communicated to the elect in him. Thus, "he was the *surety* of it, in that he undertook unto God whatever by the terms of the covenant was to be done *for* man, to accomplish it in his own person, and whatever was to be done *in* and *by* man, to effect it by his own Spirit and grace; that so the covenant on every side might be firm and stable, and the ends of it fulfilled."[92] These actions are predetermined in the *pactum salutis*, though they are distinct. To put it most clearly, the covenant of grace terminates on man with Christ as man's surety, and the *pactum salutis* terminates on the Son and includes man in its content.

[90] Keach, *Everlasting Covenant*, 22-31.

[91] John Owen, *The Doctrine of Justification by Faith*, in *The Works of John Owen*, ed. William H. Goold (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1965), 5:179.

[92] Owen, *Hebrews*, 2:78, emphasis original.

For Keach, each Person of the Trinity is involved in the performance of the covenant, and men and God perform acts peculiar to their role in the covenant. God the Father is the "primary and efficient cause" who sent forth his Son as a surety, preparing him a body and covenanting with man in him.[93] It is he who is the offended party, and thus it is he who is the one to set the terms of man's salvation. Christians must never forget, in praising the glory of the Son, that "the Father chose us in Christ, as well as gave him for us, and commanded him to lay down his life to redeem us."[94]

The Son fulfills the covenant. He voluntarily accepts the design of the Father to carry out the covenant in his incarnate work. He takes on flesh, keeps the law, defeats the enemies, creates peace with God, intercedes for Christians, and receives glory from all creatures. Christ "is the Covenant it self, our Head, our Mediator, our Priest, our King, our Prophet, our Surety, our Shepherd, our Captain."[95] Though he does not do so here, Keach would no doubt affirm that since Christ's incarnation is the fulfillment of the covenant, there must be a substantial change between the era before his advent the era since.

The Spirit unites man to the covenant and thus fulfills the covenant in man. He convicts of sin, gives life to the elect seed promised to Christ, renews the image of God, instills holy habits, and unites the elect to Christ, thus fulfilling the promises of the covenant from the Father to the Son.[96] Keach's development of the way the covenant manifests each Person provides him the opportunity to circumvent the charge that some level against the *pactum salutis*, namely, that the *pactum* neglects a robust Pneumatology.

In much of Keach's discussion of this topic, man's role in the covenant is passive. Man (i.e., the elect) is primarily included in the covenant as the body of Christ

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[93] Keach, *Everlasting Covenant*, 24.

[94] Keach, *Everlasting Covenant*, 24.

[95] Keach, *Everlasting Covenant*, 25.

[96] Keach, *Everlasting Covenant*, 26-27, cf. 10-11, 14.

since the covenant is with him. First, man is chosen by God, covenanted to be his people in the eternal compact of the Father with the Son, and purchased by the Son's blood in time.[97] Next, the Spirit regenerates them and makes them God's people, which results in the final aspect of man's place in the covenant, when "by the Spirit we are united to Christ, and do believe in him, close in and imbrace [sic] him, and enter into an actual covenant with God in and by Jesus Christ."[98] Man is responsible to believe and repent in order to properly enter the covenant. If this is the means by which man enters the covenant, then Keach would agree that baptism as a sign of entrance into the covenant of grace ought not to precede his exercise of faith by the Spirit.

In Keach's understanding, the covenant is one large movement from eternity when the Persons of the Holy Trinity covenanted together to bring about a redeemed people. The Father, Son, and Spirit are glorified and considered in relation to particular aspects of the outworking of the covenant. Though chosen in Christ before the world began (2 Tim 1:9), man must be finally united to Christ by the Spirit through faith.

Though Keach was utilizing the work of paedobaptist Samuel Petto, he would surely agree that this construction also favors a credobaptist ecclesiology. If the covenant of grace is singular and connected to the mission of the Son as Mediator, and if man properly enters the covenant by faith, then it would be inappropriate to apply the sign of the covenant to one who was not yet in the covenant. While Keach explicitly made his arguments in the context of the debates over justification, he no doubt also believed his view of baptism was most consistent with this understanding of the covenant of grace.

Evaluation

Before moving on, a series of important aspects of Keach's doctrine of the everlasting covenant of grace must be noted. Since Keach's main contention is with those

[97] Keach, *The Display of Glorious Grace*, 243-46.

[98] Keach, *The Display of Glorious Grace*, 246.

who distinguish between the covenants of redemption and grace, it would seem appropriate to evaluate that critique. However, since Gill adopts the same single-covenant scheme, that will be saved until the end of the next chapter. Instead, here I note the theological threat Keach had in mind when he took up his pen on this issue.

Keach believed the two-covenant scheme threatened the certainty of sovereign grace since it threatened to sever the objective and complete work of Christ from the application of that work in the heart of the elect. As Dickson originally invoked the *pactum salutis* in the debates with Arminians in the Kirk of Scotland, noted in the previous chapter, so too did Keach believe others' division of the covenants of redemption and grace amount to adopting Arminianism. He felt it would undermine the doctrine of justification by faith alone by making faith and repentance meritorious works fulfilling the covenant of grace. Instead, Keach argued the everlasting covenant was properly made with Christ and the elect were simply recipients of the grace promised in the covenant between God and the Mediator. In this model, while an elect individual does truly believe and thus enter the covenant at the appointed time, they are, in that case, examples of the work of the Spirit according to the promise of the Father to the Son. They do not enter some covenant other than that between the Father and the Son as Mediator, but instead enter the same covenant, called a covenant of grace because of what they receive.

While Keach's concern led to his dismissal of the distinction between the two covenants, those who disagree with the one-covenant scheme should not overlook his concern. Presentations of the *pactum salutis* ought not to sever the work of Christ from the work of the Spirit, nor the promises of one covenant from the other. Making theological distinctions always runs the risk of dividing what is only distinct, and, at least in Keach's judgment, this danger had been realized by his theological opponents.

Conclusion

Though the doctrine of an everlasting covenant has a long pedigree, and though it most explicitly makes its debut under the name of *pactum salutis* in the mid-

seventeenth century, Keach represents the inclusion of this doctrine among the Particular Baptists. To adopt the doctrine is consistent with at least one stream of Baptist roots, demonstrating that it was not originally thought to be particular to paedobaptists. In fact, even the minority position of a single covenant that Keach held alongside Samuel Petto became dominant on both sides of the baptism debate over the next century, though Keach would no doubt affirm the further claim that this view favors credobaptism. It would favor credobaptism in that it sees the unity of the covenant as inviolable. Since the covenant of grace is made between the Father and the Son and the Spirit, and since it is manifest in the Son's incarnate work and the Spirit's regenerating and uniting work, the sign of the covenant—baptism—ought not to be applied to those who were not incorporated into the covenant. Keach's view of baptism would cohere best with his understanding of the covenant of grace. The next chapter will look at how the early Baptist affirmation of the everlasting covenant remained intact in the succeeding generations and incorporated into broader Baptist theology. Whether a theologian adopts the one-covenant scheme of Keach or opts instead for the two-covenant distinction by the Baptist Nehemiah Coxe, and others, it is nevertheless true that Baptists' affirmation of the eternal covenant between the Father and Son goes back to a stream early in their history.

CHAPTER 3

JOHN GILL: CONTINUING BAPTIST AFFIRMATION
OF THE ETERNAL COVENANT

Benjamin Keach served an important role in interacting with the Puritan, or

Reformed, doctrine of the everlasting covenant and his desire to defend the doctrine against

the neonomian tendencies in those in the latter seventeenth century. I turn here to consider

how the continuing Baptist tradition integrated the doctrine. This chapter uses John Gill

as the primary example of Baptists expounding on and defending the doctrine of the

everlasting covenant with theological rigor, and then documents later affirmations of the

doctrine in the broader Baptist community.

The chapter proceeds with a brief introduction to the identity and importance of

John Gill. Next, the majority of this chapter will present the doctrine of the everlasting

covenant in Gill's three major works: *A Body of Divinity*,[1] *The Cause of God and Truth*,[2]

and his commentaries.[3] Presenting the doctrine this way demonstrates to the reader Gill's

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[1] John Gill, *A Body of Doctrinal Divinity; or, A System of Evangelical Truths, Deduced from the Sacred Scriptures* (London: Printed for the Author, 1769). For ease of reference, I provide two different citations for Gill's *Body of Divinity*, for which an explanation may be warranted. Gill's work was originally publish in three volumes, the first two on "doctrinal divinity" and the third on "practical divinity." All quotations and the initial citation come from those original editions (cited Vol.Book.Chapter.Page). However, the commonly accessible edition, produced in 1839 and published presently by The Baptist Standard Bearer, occurs in a single, unabridged volume. Citations for Baptist Standard Bearer's work are given after the originals as a simple page number after the semicolon.

[2] John Gill, *The Cause of God and Truth. In Four Parts*, 4th ed. (London: Printed for G. Keith in Gracechurch Street, 1775).

[3] Quotes of the commentaries are taken from the editions published in his life, but citations are simply "ad loc." to provide for the reader's ease of reference since Gill's commentaries are readily available online and in printed format. John Gill, *An Exposition of the Old Testament, in which are Recorded The Original of Mankind, of The Several Nations of the World, and of The Jewish Nation in particular: The Lives of the Patriarchs of Israel; The Journey of that People from Egypt through the Wilderness to the Land of Canaan, and their Settlement in that Land; Their Laws Moral, Ceremonial and Judicial; their Government and State under Judges and Kings; their several Captivities, and their sacred Books of Devotion. In the*

statement of the doctrine on its own and then how he used it in theological discourse and biblical exposition.[4] After looking at Gill's exposition and integration of the doctrine of the everlasting covenant, the chapter offers a demonstration of subsequent Baptists affirming this doctrine, and I close by providing an evaluation of Gill's argument. My evaluation interacts more with the affirmation of a singular covenant of grace. Importantly, though it might appear Gill was novel in his affirmation of a singular covenant, as seen from the previous chapter, Gill follows the trajectory set by Keach and others.[5] Thus, whatever problems theologians discover in Gill's presentation, one must also admit Gill was not idiosyncratic in this regard, so his arguments ought to be addressed seriously and carefully.

Exposition of which, It is attempted to give an Account of the several Books, and the Writers of them; a Summary of each Chapter; and the genuine Sense of every Verse: And throughout the Whole, the Original Text, and the Versions of it are inspected and compared; Interpreters of the best Note, both Jewish and Christian, consulted; Difficult Places at large explained; Seeming Contradictions reconciled, And Various Passages illustrated and confirmed by Testimonies of Writers, as well Gentile as Jewish, vols. 2-3 (London: printed for the author; and sold by George Keith, at the Bible and Crown in Grace-Church-Street, 1769); *An Exposition of the Books of the Prophets of the Old Testament. Both larger and lesser*, vol. 2 (London: printed for the author; and sold by G. Keith, at the Bible and Crown, in Grace-Church-Street; and by J. Robinson, at Dock-Head, Southwark, 1758); *An Exposition of the New Testament, in three volumes: in which The Sense of the Sacred Text is given; Doctrinal and Practical Truths are set in a plain and easy Light, Difficult Places Explained, Seeming Contradictions Reconciled; Whatever is Material in the Various Readings, and the several Oriental Versions, is observed. The Whole illustrated with Notes taken from the most ancient Jewish Writings*, vols. 1-3 (London: printed for the author; and sold by Aaron Ward, at the King's-Arms in Little-Britain, 1746-1748).

[4] Treatment of Gill's doctrine of the eternal covenant in this chapter is not chronological. This is important, for instance, in his exposition of Zech 6:13 since his interpretation of that text changed between his exposition in the commentary and *Doctrine of the Trinity* and his later *Body of Divinity*.

[5] For example, beginning his section on Gill, Fesko says, "In contrast to earlier models that distinguished between the *pactum salutis* (between the Father and the Son) and the covenant of grace (between God and elect but fallen sinners), Gill combines these two covenants." J. V. Fesko, *The Covenant of Redemption: Origins, Development, and Reception* (Gottingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2016), 111. On first reading, this initially makes Gill look like an innovator, though Fesko then says, "Gill's structure represents a common pattern in eighteenth and nineteenth-century iterations of the *pactum*, which appear in the expositions of John Brown of Haddington (1722-87), Thomas Boston (1676-1732), and A.A. Hodge (1823-86)" (112). Note, however, that each of the individuals listed write after Keach and Petto.

Biography

In 1697, John Gill was born to Dissenting parents in Kettering, Northamptonshire.[6] He was well known for his academic interests at a young age, such that a proverb developed that something was as certain as "John Gill is in the bookseller's." Due to their dissenting stance, matters required that his parents pulled him from school when he was twelve, but Gill's intelligence proved to be something of a hindrance to attaining further formal education. Due to his intelligence, it was said that he would finish his course of study before he was old enough to attain meaningful employment. Thus, Gill continued his autodidactic ways, devouring whatever he had the opportunity to read. Eventually, the University of Aberdeen recognized him for his learning when awarded him the Doctor of Divinity in 1748.

On November 1, 1716, just three weeks before his nineteenth birthday, Gill gave his public profession of faith, was baptized, and the following Sunday was added to the church in Kettering. The night he joined the church, some members were pleased with his expository reading of Scripture in one of their homes and asked to hear him preach the following Lord's Day. For the next year and a half, Gill assisted in preaching for his church and the church of a nearby town called Hingham-Ferrers. It was at Hingham-Ferrers that he met his future wife, Elizabeth. They were married forty-six years until she died in 1764. John Rippon, Gill's successor, recounts,

> By this amiable woman he had many children, all of whom died in their infancy, except three. Elizabeth, "a most lovely and desirable child, for person, sense, and grace," died May the 30th, 1738, in the thirteenth year of her age. . . . Mary, who was a member of her father's church, was married to Mr. George Keith, a bookseller in Gracechurch-street, and died in January, 1773. [Gill's son] John was a goldsmith, who lived many years in the same street, till he retired from business to Walworth, about

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[6] The most substantial biography written about Gill is George M. Ella, *John Gill and the Cause of God and Truth* (Durham, England: Go, 1995). Shorter biographies include John Rippon, *A Brief Memoir of the Life and Writings of the Reverend and Learned John Gill, D. D.* (London: John Bennett, 1838), which is also available at the beginning of Gill's commentary set; Thomas J. Nettles, "Bridge over Trouble Waters," in *By His Grace and for His Glory: A Historical, Theological and Practical Study of the Doctrines of Grace in Baptist Life*, rev. ed. (Cape Coral, FL: Founders, 2006), 21-54; Robert Oliver, "John Gill (1697-1771): His Life and Ministry," in *The Life and Thought of John Gill (1697-1771): A Tercentennial Appreciation*, ed. Michael A. G. Haykin (New York: Brill, 1997), 7-50. Due to his influence, most works on Baptist history will generally include some mention of Gill.

a mile and a half from London, where he departed this life, May 22, 1804, in the 78th year of his age. Both these children were a great happiness to their parents, and the family had always reason to be thankful to God for their domestic comfort, peace, and harmony.[7]

In 1719, the church meeting at Horsleydown—at that time named Goat Yard Church—called Gill to fill the pulpit and finally pastor their church, following in the ministries of Keach and, more recently, Keach's son-in-law, Benjamin Stinton. Though his calling was initially fraught with various internal political difficulties, even leading to the formation of another congregation called Unicorn Yard, in a relatively short time, Gill was running a course that would last some fifty-one years. In these years, he would exercise such influence that one church historian said he was "almost oracular among the Baptists."[8] This attribution is understandable in light of Gill's vast theological and expositional output over those years. His works include, most famously, a commentary that covered the entire Bible, polemical works advocating for Calvinism and the Trinity, his defense of the Dissenters, works defending credobaptism, a confession of faith for his church, and his systematic theology. In addition to his interaction with the church fathers through the reformers to his eighteenth-century theological contemporaries, his knowledge of Hebrew gave him access to the vast rabbinical literature he interacts with throughout his commentaries. He was, in short, the dogmatic defender of orthodoxy for the Particular Baptists in the eighteenth century until his death in 1771. Though much maligned on this side of the Hyper-Calvinism debates, Gill was admired throughout his life as the paragon and defender of protestant orthodoxy during a time when Arminianism, Unitarianism, and rationalism were ascendant.

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[7] Rippon, *A Brief Memoir*, 10-11. Note, George Keith is listed as Gill's bookseller in many of his publications.

[8] Joseph Ivimey, *A History of the English Baptists: Comprising the Principle Events of the History of Protestant Dissenters from the Revolution in 1668 Till 1760; and of the London Baptist Churches, During that Period* (London: Printed for B. J. Holdsworth, 1823), 3:272.

Gill's Works

In the following pages I survey the three major works Gill produced: *A Body of Divinity, The Cause of God and Truth*, and his commentaries.

Body of Divinity

Gill's articulation of the covenant of grace occupies considerable space in his *Body of Divinity*. Due to three key facts, it would far extend the constraints of this chapter to comprehensively define how Gill makes use of this doctrine; indeed, it would occupy the entirety of a dissertation. First, Gill follows Keach in arguing for one covenant of grace made in eternity. Thus, what many theologians would distinguish as the *pactum salutis* from the covenant of grace, Gill includes in his exposition of the covenant of grace. Second, Gill believes the covenant of grace was manifested in time, beginning in Genesis 3:15. From here, a student of Gill's theology might interact with his work on the temporal aspect of the covenant of grace. In many ways, this examination of the covenant of grace concerns itself more with the field commonly known as biblical theology, to be only slightly anachronistic.[9] Third, Gill integrates the covenant of grace with his treatment of

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[9] Gill begins this section after his treatment of the fall of Adam into sin, saying,

I have considered the covenant of grace in a former part of this work, as it was a compact in eternity, between the three divine persons, Father, Son, and Spirit; in which each person agreed to take his part in the oeconomy of man's salvation: and now I shall consider the administration of that covenant in the several periods of time, from the beginning of the world to the end of it. The Covenant of Grace is but one and the same in all ages, of which Christ is the substance; being given for *a covenant to the people*, of all the people of God, both Jews and Gentiles, who is *the same* in the *yesterday* of the Old Testament, and in the *to-day* of the New Testament, and *for ever;* he is *the way*, *the truth*, *and the life*, the only true way to eternal life; and there never was any other way made known to men since the fall of *Adam*; no other name under heaven has been given, or will be given, by which men can be saved. The patriarchs before the flood and after, before the law of *Moses* and under it, before the coming of Christ, and all the saints since, are saved in one and the same way, even *by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ;* and that is the grace of the covenant, exhibited at different times, and in divers manners. For though the covenant is but one, there are different administrations of it; particularly two, one before the coming of Christ, and the other after it; which law the foundation for the distinction of the *first* and *second*, the *old* and the *new* covenant, observed by the author of the epistle to the *Hebrews*, chap. viii. 7, 8, 13. and ix. 1, 15. and xii. 24. for by the *first* and *old* covenant, is not meant the covenant of works made with *Adam*, which had been broke and abrogated long ago; since the apostle is speaking of a covenant waxen old, and ready to vanish away in his time: nor was the covenant of works the first and most ancient covenant; the covenant of grace, as an eternal compact was before that; but by it is meant the first and most ancient administration of the covenant of grace which reached from the fall of *Adam*, when the covenant of works was broke, unto the coming of Christ, when it was superseded

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various doctrines throughout both parts of his *Body of Divinity*, doctrinal and practical. Thus, one might especially consider the way Gill rests his treatments of Christology, soteriology, eschatology, Christian spirituality, and the doctrine of baptism on his particular understanding of the covenant of grace. Rather than attempting such a feat, this section will simply offer a survey of the sixty-five pages in which he treats the aspect of the covenant of grace that typically falls under the heading of *pactum salutis*. Gill has three main parts to his exposition: the eternal council, the names and properties of the covenant, and the parties of the covenant.

  The everlasting council. As he begins treating the "council and covenant of God, respecting the salvation of men," Gill intimates that he has at this point finished his treatment of the internal and immanent acts in the divine mind. He admits that the two—council and covenant—"are generally blended together by divines; . . . but I think they are to be distinguished, and the one [council] to be considered as leading on, and as preparatory and introductory to the other [covenant], though both of an eternal date."[10] In speaking of a "council," he clarifies that God is not missing some bit of knowledge, nor is he seeking to increase his knowledge in some way, nor is the Father lacking some knowledge the Son and Spirit subsequently provide him, nor, finally, ought someone to consider the council as a temporally sequential event.[11] Rather, theologians speak of a

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and vacated by another administration of the same covenant, called therefore the *second* and *new* covenant. The one we commonly call the Old Testament-dispensation, and the other the New Testament-dispensation. (Gill, *Body of Divinity*, 2.I.I.551-52; 345-46).

From such an understanding, especially when one accounts for his commentaries, it is difficult to concur with D. Rathel that Gill falls prey to Webster's warning about making history a "mere shadow" by reducing everything in creation history to no more than the shadow of a high object. David Mark Rathel, "John Gill and the History of Redemption as Mere Shadow," *Journal of Reformed Theology* 11, no. 4 (2017): 379-80. John Webster, "'It Was the Will of the Lord to Bruise Him," in *T & T Clark Reader in John Webster*, ed. Michael Allen (New York: T & T Clark, 2020), 132-34.

  [10] Gill, *Body of Divinity*, 1.II.VI.340; 209.

  [11] Gill, *Body of Divinity*, 1.II.VI.340-41; 209-10. On the last point, he says, "Counsel with him is as quick as thought, yea, it is no other than his thought, and therefore they go together" (1.II.VI.341; 210).

council, and of counsel, in reference to God's salvation of man to indicate the importance of the decision—the fact that it is an expression of God's wisdom, and the fact that all three Persons are in agreement.[12]

After addressing the terminology of "council/counsel," Gill presents various texts to demonstrate Scripture's consistent testimony that there was such a council/counsel. He argues from such texts as Ephesians 3:10-11, Acts 20:27, 2 Corinthians 5:19, Genesis 1:26, and Zechariah 6:13 to show that everything done in creation and redemption happens according to God's foreordination and that the "consulting, contriving, and planning the scheme of it [redemption] . . . contains the sum of what we mean by the council of peace."[13] Next, he emphasizes that "none but the blessed Three in One were of this council, and fit to be of it," so neither angels nor men were consulted.[14] Finally, Gill explains what was addressed. He says the council concerns the manner in which the elect would be saved rather than who would be saved since the latter was determined in the decree of election.[15]

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[12] Gill, *Body of Divinity*, 1.II.VI.341-42; 210. He says,

> (1.) not things of trifling, but those of importance, are what men consult about and deliberate upon; such is the work of mens salvation of the greatest moment, not only to men, to their comfort and happiness here and hereafter, but to the glory of God. . . . (2.) . . . schemes, which are the fruit of consultation and deliberation, are generally the most wisely formed, and best succeed: in the scheme of salvation by Christ, God has abounded in all wisdom and prudence. . . . (3.) This being the effect of a council between the three divine persons, shews their unanimity in it; as they are one in nature, so they agree in one; and as in every thing, so in this, the salvation of men. (1.II.VI.341-42; 210)

[13] Gill, *Body of Divinity*, 1.II.VI.342-44; 210-12. There are two items to note. First, Gill uses several texts, rather than solely those listed, to make his argument here. Second, he admits that several different interpretations of Zech 6:13 are possible, and that he previously (i.e., in his commentary) held to a different interpretation of the text (the reconciliation is between Jews and Gentiles), but by the time of his writing the *Body of the Divinity*, he has grown more willing to accept that the verse applies to the eternal council. As one would expect, he also affirms the previous interpretation in his earlier treatment of the Trinity. John Gill, *The Doctrine of the Trinity, Stated and Vindicated. Being the Substance of several Discourses on that important subject; Reduc'd into the form of a Treatise* (London: Printed and Sold by Aaron Ward, at the King's-Arms in Little-Britain; and H. Whitridge, at the Royal Exchange, 1731), 65-68.

[14] Gill, *Body of Divinity*, 1.II.VI.344-45; 212-13.

[15] Elsewhere, Gill says,

> [The covenant of grace] springs from the everlasting love of God to his people: that is the source of it. . . . The basis and foundation of this covenant are, the purposes, decrees, and counsels of the most High; for he does all things after the counsel of his own will; and it may be depended on as a most sure and certain thing, that an affair, of so much importance as the covenant of grace is, could not be

Instead, the council concerns the manner in which the elect would be saved. The Father determined to save man in the Son, "who readily agreed to it . . . and the holy Spirit expressed his approbation of him, as the fittest person to be the Saviour, by joining with the Father in the mission of him," by forming a human nature and filling him with "gifts and graces without measure."[16] Thus, all three Persons—and they alone—were the parties of a council, which simply expresses the eternal determination of how the elect would be saved, and each of the parties agreed to that manner of salvation.

The names and properties of the Covenant of Grace. "The council before treated of," says Gill, "is the basis and foundation of the covenant of grace, and both relate to the same thing and in which the same persons are concerned. In the former, things were contrived, planned, and advised; in the latter, fixed and settled."[17] Gill's treatment of the covenant of grace begins and ends by looking at the various aspects of the covenant, while the large middle portion considers the roles of each party in the covenant. Since the parties occupy such a large portion of his argument, I treat it separately in the following subsection. First, Gill considers the term "covenant" in Scripture and theological discourse. He opens by outlining various etymological proposals for *berith* and *diatheke*. His treatment of the etymology of *berith* provides a glimpse of his method in general, whether in his commentaries or theology. He says some, "called Hutchinnsonians," have suggested that the word comes from "*Barrar*, which signifies, to *purify*." Admitting their point about Christ being the Purifier, Gill is not keen to accept that etymological proposal for *berith* in particular. Rather, he provides two others: "bara"

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made any otherwise than after the counsel of his will, and depends upon that counsel; and his counsels of old are faithfulness and truth. (John Gill, "Sermon 11: The Stability of the Covenant of Grace," in *Sermons and Tracts of John Gill: God's Everlasting Covenant* [Paris, AR: The Baptist Standard Bearer, 1999], 14015)

[16] Gill, *Body of Divinity*, 1.II.VI.346; 213.

[17] Gill, *Body of Divinity*, 1.II.VII.347; 214.

(ברא) and "barah" (ברה). He prefers the latter, but Gill is only concerned that all three

roots signify "select" and "choose." This word

> well agrees with a covenant, into which persons, of their own will and choice, enter;
> choose the persons to be concerned with them, the terms and conditions on which
> they covenant with each other, and the things and persons they covenant about; all
> which entirely agrees with this federal transaction, or covenant of grace we are
> about to treat of.[18]

Gill then makes six points he finds important about covenants that appear in

Scripture. He says a covenant may refer to (1) an ordinance or precept, (2-3) a mere

promise, (4) a situation in which man and man are involved in stipulation and

restipulation—(5) which could never be the case between man and God, and (6) the

covenant of grace between God and Christ. Significantly, points 4 and 5 state that a

covenant between man and man with stipulation and restiputlation (4) cannot occur

between God and man (5) since man already owes God anything God might require of

him. He asks, "What can man restipulate with God, which is in his power to do or give to

him, and which God has not a prior right unto?"[19] On the terms applied to this particular

covenant (of grace) in Scripture and theological discourse, Gill includes four terms:

covenant of life (Scripture), of peace (Scripture), of grace (theology), and of redemption

(theology), and says the latter two are simply one and the same.[20] Gill argues,

> [Distinguishing them] is very wrongly said; there is but one covenant of grace, and
> not two, in which the Head and Members, the Redeemer and the persons to be
> redeemed, Christ and the elect, are concerned; in which he is the Head and
> Representative of them, acts for them, and on their behalf. What is called a covenant

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[18] Gill, *Body of Divinity*, 1.II.VII.349; 215.

[19] Gill, *Body of Divinity*, 1.II.VII.350; 216.

[20] The name, "covenant of grace," is proper

since it entirely flows from, and has its foundation in the grace of God: it is owing to the everlasting
love and free favour of God the Father, that he proposed a covenant of this kind to his Son; it is owing
to the grace of the Son, that he so freely and voluntarily entered into engagements with his Father;
the matter, sum and substance of it is grace; it consists of grants and blessings of grace to the elect in
Christ; and the ultimate end and design of it is the glory of the grace of God. (Gill, *Body of Divinity*,
1.II.VII.351-52; 217).

Though this statement only includes the Father and Son, he clearly includes the grace from the Spirit
throughout his treatment.

of redemption, is a covenant of grace, arising from the grace of the Father, who proposed to his Son to be the Redeemer, and from the grace of the Son, who agreed to be so; and even the honours proposed to the Son in this covenant, redounded to the advantage of the elect; the sum and substance of the everlasting covenant made with Christ, is the salvation and eternal happiness of the chosen ones; all the blessings and grants of grace to them, are secured in that eternal compact; for they were blessed with all spiritual blessings in him, and had grace given them in him before the world was; wherefore there can be no foundation for such a distinction between a covenant of redemption in eternity, and a covenant of grace in time.[21]

Following the reasons employed by Keach, Gill argues against any supposed reasons for distinguishing between the covenants of redemption and grace since the singular eternal covenant provides everything needed for both.[22] The covenant made with Christ before the foundation of the world provides all the blessings of grace that apply to the elect. He sees no reason, then, to distinguish the two.

Closing his treatment of the "everlasting covenant," after treating the parties of the covenant, Gill provides seven properties of the covenant of grace (Book II, Chapter XV).[23] The covenant is eternal—which he distinguished from everlasting, meaning its commencement (if we can speak that way) is from eternity; each Person freely entered it; and it is unconditional on man's part, complete, holy, and certain. Finally, it is everlasting, meaning it "will never be antiquated, nor give way to, nor be succeeded by another," in contrast to the covenant of works and to the way the old covenant administration gave way to the new.[24]

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[21] Gill, *Body of Divinity*, 1.II.VII.352; 217.

[22] Benjamin Keach, *The Everlasting Covenant: A Sweet Cordial for a Drooping Soul, Or, the Excellent Nature of the Covenant of Grace Opened in a Sermon Preached January the 29th, at the Funeral of Mr. Henry Forty, Late Pastor of a Church of Christ, at Abingdon, in the County of Berks, Who Departed this Life Jan. 25th 1692/3 and was Interr'd at Southwark* (London: Printed for H. Barnard, 1693); *The Display of Glorious Grace, Or, the Covenant of Peace Opened in Fourteen Sermons Lately Preached in which the Errors Of the Present Day about Reconciliation and Justification are Detected* (London: Printed by S. Bridge, 1698).

[23] Gill, *Body of Divinity*, 1.II.XV.398-404; 247-50.

[24] Thus, Gill does affirm that "though these two administrations [old and new covenant] differ in some things, as to some external circumstances and ordinances; yet the matter, sum and substance of them is the same, even Christ, who is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." Gill, *Body of Divinity*, 1.II.XV.401-2; 250.

Parties of the covenant. Before looking at each Person's work in the covenant in individual chapters, Gill provides six points about the parties in general. First, they are distinct Persons which, following Scripture and the tradition, certainly does not mean they are divisible.[25] Second, the covenant refers to the distinct personal acts of the unified will:

> As they are distinct Persons, so they have distinct acts of will; for though their nature and essence is but one, which is common to them all, and so their will but one; yet there are distinct acts of this will, put forth by and peculiar to each distinct Person . . . there is the Father's distinct act of will notified in the covenant, that it is his will and pleasure his Son should be the Saviour of the chosen ones; and there is the Son's distinct act of will notified in the same covenant, he presenting himself, and declaring himself willing, and engaging himself to be the Saviour of them; which distinct acts of the divine will thus notified, formally constituted a covenant between them; and as the holy Spirit dispenses his gifts and grace, the blessings of this covenant, *severally as he will,* 1 Cor. xii. 11. this is pursuant to an agreement, to a notification of his will in covenant also.[26]

Third, none of the Persons were compelled to covenant, and fourth, each only committed to what he was capable of performing.[27] Gill's fifth point is of particular interest. He says,

> As in all convents, however the persons covenanting may be equal in other respects, yet in covenanting there is an inequality and subordination; especially in covenants, in which there is service and work to be done on one side, and a reward to be given in consideration of it on the other; of which nature is the covenant of grace and redemption; and though the contracting parties in it are equal in nature, perfections, and glory, yet in this covenant-relation they voluntarily entered into, there is by agreement and consent a subordination . . . this oeconomy and dispensation of the covenant, thus settled in subordination among themselves by agreement and consent, is done with great propriety, beauty, and decency, suitable to their natural relations they bear to each other, as equal divine Persons.[28]

In the elided text, Gill leverages the fact that the Father is called the Son's "Lord and his God," the Son "is called by the Father his Servant," and the Spirit is sent by the Father

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[25] See Gill, *Body of Divinity*, 1.I.XXVI.220; 130. "We are not baptized into three names or characters, but in the one name of three persons distinct, though not divided from each other." Gill, *The Doctrine of the Trinity*, 75.

[26] Gill, *Body of Divinity*, 1.II.VII.353; 218. As other examples of distinct acts of the Persons in the unified divine nature, Gill mentions the fact that each Person knows and understands and loves the others.

[27] Gill and others assume that a covenant is only valid insofar as the parties involved are capable of fulfilling the duties required. "If one man enters into a covenant with another, and agrees to do what is not in his power, and which he knows it is not, when he enters into covenant, this is a fraud and an imposition on him, with whom he covenants." Gill, *Body of Divinity*, 1.II.VII.354; 218.

[28] Gill*, Body of Divinity*, 1.II.VII.354-55; 218-19.

and Son to perform his works. Gill maintains a distinction here between the natural relations and the covenantal relations manifested in the economy, but the comment is noteworthy in light of claims that the arguments for the *pactum salutis* "veer toward either subordinationism or tritheism."[29] Gill's final point about the eternal covenant of grace itself is that "God's end in all things, in nature, providence, and grace, is his own glory, so it is in this covenant, even the glory of Father, Son, and Spirit."[30]

With the groundwork laid, Gill presents a seven-chapter explanation of each Person's part in the covenant. He considers the Father's and Spirit's roles in a chapter each and places a five-chapter treatment of the Son's part between them. Much of what he says covers the same ground, so I will consider this large section more briefly.

The Father makes proposals and promises in the covenant. He proposes that the Son redeem the elect, assume a human nature and obey the law, die for the elect, and feed the flock. If he accomplishes the proposed items, then the Father promises things for the Son and for the elect in him. First, he promises the Son to equip him with all he needs to accomplish these tasks, glorification, titles (Prophet, Priest, and King), and a promised seed. Second, for the elect, he promises deliverance and all those graces connected to the *ordo salutis*.[31] In short, all those things associated with man's salvation were proposed and promised from the Father to the Son in the eternal council and concluded in the eternal covenant of grace.[32]

For the Son's part, Gill opens with a preliminary chapter in which he says the Son agreed to the proposal of the Father. Gill then expounds on how the eternal covenant

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[29] Robert Letham, *The Holy Trinity: In Scripture, History, Theology, and Worship*, rev. ed. (Philipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2019), 319.

[30] Gill, *Body of Divinity*, 1.II.VII.355; 219.

[31] The elect would be delivered from sin, Satan, and the curses of the law, justified, forgiven, adopted, regenerated, they would know God and the law and the gospel, would be equipped to walk in obedience, persevere, and finally, be glorified.

[32] Gill, *Body of Divinity*, 1.II.VIII.356-66; 219-26.

of grace includes Christ as Head, Mediator, Surety, and Testator, the third being a subset

of the second. As Head, he represents the people before God as a public person, of whom

Adam was a type.[33] As Mediator, "Christ is a mediator of reconciliation in a way of

satisfaction; reconciliation in this way is Christ's great work as mediator; this is what was

proposed in covenant, and what he therein agreed to do, and therefore is called the mediator

of the covenant."[34] Further, "Reconciliation supposes a former state of friendship, a breach

of that friendship, and a renewal of it. . . . It should be observed, that the elect of God are

considered in the covenant of grace as fallen creatures; and that Christ being a mediator

of reconciliation and satisfaction for them, suppose them such."[35] Thus, Gill situates the

covenant of grace logically after the fall of man since those whom the Mediator represents

are considered after a breach in their relationship to God.[36] To meet the qualifications of

nearness necessary to stand between God and man, this mediator must be both God and

man in one Person.[37] As surety, which "is a branch of his mediatorial office," Christ

engaged on "their [the elects'] behalf, to do and suffer whatever the law and justice of

God required, to make satisfaction for their sins."[38] To demonstrate that Christ is the

[33] Gill, *Body of Divinity*, 1.II.IX.366-68; 227-29.

[34] Gill, *Body of Divinity*, 1.II.XI.372; 230.

[35] Gill, *Body of Divinity*, 1.II.XI.372-73; 230. He later states explicitly, "[God] consulting with Christ his Son, and with him contriving the scheme and method of reconciling to himself the world of his elect, considered as sinful fallen creatures in *Adam*" (1.II.XI.380; 235).

[36] Gill explains the decree in both supra- and sub-lapsarian terms, the former with regard to the ends and the latter with regard to the means. Richard Muller notes, "The eternal council of Father, Son, and Spirit in which the covenant received its form stands contingent (from the point of view of human logic) upon the end of God's glory and provides the means of saving those who had been determined as elect in the decree. The covenant thus coincides with the sublapsarian decree of the means." Richard A. Muller, "The Spirit and the Covenant: John Gill's Critique of the *Pactum Salutis*," *Foundations* 24, no. 1 (1981): 8.

[37] Gill, *Body of Divinity*, 1.II.XI.375-81; 232-36. Importantly, Christ accomplishes these things in time, and so Gill should have connected the reality of justification to time more directly as well rather than placing it in eternity as an immanent act. For a distinction between the way Gill discusses justification in eternity and the way those before him did, see Mark Jones, "Thomas Goodwin and Johannes Maccovius on Justification from Eternity," in *A Puritan Theology: Doctrine for Life* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage, 2012), 143-48.

[38] Gill, *Body of Divinity*, 1.II.XII.383; 237.

testator, Gill shows that the covenant of grace is a testament. As a testament is the freely exercised will of a testator, so the covenant "is founded on the will of God, and is the pure effect of it."[39] In his will, God dispenses what is his, sealed by the blood of Christ and the Spirit, witnessed to by the three divine Persons, and testified to in Scripture.[40] Finally, "the death of Christ is necessary to put this will in force, to give strength unto it, that it may be executed according to the design of the maker of it."[41]

Though "this covenant is commonly represented as if it was only between the Father and the Son," Gill argues that the Holy Spirit "was not a mere by-stander, spectator and witness of this solemn transaction, compact and agreement, between the Father and the Son, but was a party concerned in it."[42] The Spirit must have assented to the covenant since he works in bringing the covenant into execution in time. Such is the case in particular with the salvation of the elect, the application of the promises—of which he is the foremost, and in the gifts he gives, such as righteousness, pardon, and adoption.[43] Gill further expands on this with particular examples from the economy of redemption, some with respect to Christ and some with respect to the redeemed. With respect to Christ, the Spirit formed his nature, filled the human nature of Christ with all gifts and graces, and was at work in the crucifixion and Christ's glorification. With respect to men, he says the Spirit has worked publicly and privately. To those in public office (e.g., prophets, apostles, and ordinary ministers of the word), he endows, confirms, and makes effectual their words. In a private capacity, the Spirit convicts men of sin, righteousness, and judgment,

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[39] Gill, *Body of Divinity*, 1.II.XIII.389; 241.

[40] Gill, *Body of Divinity*, 1.II.XIII.389-91; 241-42. Gill subsequently argues more specifically that "The Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, may be considered as the testator of the covenant of grace, as it is a will or testament." 1.II.XIII.391; 242-43.

[41] Gill, *Body of Divinity*, 1.II.XIII.392-93; 243-44.

[42] Gill*, Body of Divinity*, 1.II.VII, XIV.352, 394; 217, 244.

[43] Gill, *Body of Divinity*, 1.II.XIV.394-96; 244-45.

regenerates them, gives them the gift of faith, comforts them, and sanctifies them.[44] These works of the Spirit, says Gill, demonstrate his approbation of the covenant of grace since otherwise he would not have done them.

The section on the covenant of grace occupies a large portion of his *Body of Divinity*. Gill retraces the entire path of redemption several times, each time showing how a particular Christian truth, whether the distinct relations of the Trinity, the two natures of Christ, or the consequent *historia salutis*, flows directly from the will of God through the covenantal lens provided by Scripture. The salvation of the elect has occurred as the immediate result of the Trinity's decision. Having consulted no creature—neither angel nor man—God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, determined in time to bring fallen man back from the dead. Gill's recurring reference to the same aspects of the doctrine throughout his treatment of the covenant of grace gives the sense of looking at a singular great object from differing angles in order to afford a greater appreciation of what God has done. And what has he done? God has eternally determined to glorify himself in the salvation of his elect. It is no wonder, then, that Gill refers to the covenant of grace through the rest of his *Body of Divinity* and in other works as well.

The Cause of God and Truth

Having looked at Gill's statement of the doctrine of the eternal covenant on its own, we turn here to consider his important work, *The Cause of God and Truth*, as an example of how he employed his understanding of the doctrine in theological discourse. According to Gill, this work grew out of a Wednesday night study in "about the year 1733 or 1734" as a response to the republication of Daniel Whitby's (1638-1726) work *Discourse on the Five Points*.[45] The book consists of four parts, so each year, 1735-1738,

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[44] Gill, *Body of Divinity*, 1.II.XIV.396-98; 245-46.

[45] Gill, *Cause of God and Truth*, iii-iv. Two editions, both of which are cited by Gill throughout his work, are available on Eighteenth Century Collections Online (ECCO). The second edition available on that website was published in 1735 rather than 1733 or 1734. The full title of the work, shortened for obvious

Gill published the next part of his response until the work was complete. *The Cause of God and Truth* aims at a comprehensive defense of the five points of Calvinism on behalf of his church and any who might encounter his work. Each part of the work deals with the contested doctrines uniquely. Parts I and II are exegetical. In Part I, Gill handles sixty passages that seem to present difficulties to the adherent of the "Calvinistical" system. In Part II, he presents several verses he interprets as vindicating Calvinistic soteriology, collated according to the doctrines of reprobation, election, particular redemption, efficacious grace, the corruption of human nature and spiritual impotence of the will, and perseverance.[46] In Part III, Gill makes his case by presenting the various doctrines through theological argumentation.[47] Finally, in Part IV, Gill aims to show the antiquity of each doctrine by accumulating evidence from pre-Augustinian authors, again collated according to doctrine. In all, Gill presents a thorough one-man defense of the doctrines of grace in the face of opposition by Daniel Whitby. For our purposes, a brief explanation will be

reasons, is Daniel Whitby, *A discourse concerning, I. the true import of the words election and reprobation; and the things signified by them in the Holy Scripture. II. The Extent of Christ's Redemption. III. The Grace of God; where it is enquired, Whether it be vouchsafed sufficiently to those who improve it not, and irresistibly to those who do improve it; and whether Men be wholly passive in the Work of their Regeneration? IV. The Liberty of the Will in a State of Tryal and Probation. V. the perseverance or defectibility of the saints; with some Reflections on the State of Heathens, the Providence and Prescience of God. By Daniel Whitby, D. D. and Chantor of the Cathedral Church of Sarum* (London: Printed for John Wyat, at the Rose in St. Paul's-Church-Yard; printed for Aaron Ward, at the King's Arms in Little Britain, and Richard Hett, at the Bible and Crown in the Poultry, 1710; 1735). Citations below use Gill's shortened version. Perhaps the most well-known response to Whitby was Jonathan Edwards' *Freedom of the Will*, though Edwards addressed others in his work as well, such as Thomas Chubb (1679-1747) and Isaac Watts (1674-1748), whereas Gill exclusively responded to Whitby. For a brief introduction to Edwards's response to Chubb, Whitby, and Watts, see Paul Ramsey, editor's introduction to *Freedom of the Will*, by Jonathan Edwards, ed. Harry S. Stout and Paul Ramsey, rev. ed., vol. 1, *The Works of Jonathan Edwards* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009), 66-118. D. Rathel's comfortable minimizing of Keach's singular-covenant model due to "his opposition to Baxter" should afford Gill a more sympathetic reading as well. Gill lived at a time when the Trinity was denied and Arminianism, rationalism, and the emphasis on human autonomy were all threatening the theology embraced in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Rathel, "John Gill," 397-98, see esp. n65.

[46] For instance, Part II begins with "Chapter I: Of Reprobation," which has five "sections," each engaging a particular biblical text.

[47] In addition to covering the same doctrines as in the preceding part, here he also engages the notion of man's free will, God's prescience and providence, and "the state and case of the heathens."

provided on how he integrates the covenant of grace into this work of particular importance.

Throughout the work, Gill mainly encounters the question of the covenant of grace in the context of questions about how an individual enters into this covenant. In light of the doctrine of the effectual call, Whitby says, "It is intimated, that such who are in the *Calvinistical* way of thinking, say, that God promises pardon and life to the non-elect, on condition of their faith and repentance."[48] Gill responds,

> The promise of pardon is a promise of the covenant of grace, and which is made to none but to such who are in that covenant . . . though the gospel-declaration of pardon is made in indefinite terms, to every one that believes; the reason is, because to all those who are interested in the covenant of grace, and for those whom Christ died, God does, in his own time, give faith and repentance, and along with them forgiveness of sins.[49]

Here Gill argues that the benefit of pardon occurs within the context of the covenant of grace, so it would be inappropriate to say absolutely that those outside the covenant are blessed with the benefit of pardon. Instead, pardon is stated indefinitely in gospel declarations since God grants faith and repentance "in his own time." Later, he argues that the command to repent does not contradict "its being a free-grace gift of God; nor its being a blessing in the covenant of grace."[50] Dealing with the doctrine of individual election in light of the statement in 1 Timothy 2:4 that God wills all men everywhere to be saved, Gill says the salvation Paul means is "a real, certain, and actual salvation, which he has determined they shall have, has provided and secured in the covenant of grace, sent his Son into this world to effect, which is fully effected by him."[51] The covenant of grace ensures the salvation of those whom God wills to be saved. On the doctrine of the saints' preservation, he says,

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[48] Gill, *Cause of God and Truth*, 44; cf. Whitby, *Discourse on the Five Points*, 243; 237.

[49] Gill, *Cause of God and Truth*, 44-45.

[50] Gill, *Cause of God and Truth*, 73.

[51] Gill, *The Cause of God and Truth*, 102.

Christ, when he had offered himself, and shed his precious blood, whereby the covenant of grace was ratified and confirmed, was, through the blood of that covenant, brought again from the dead, and declared to be the Son of God with power, and being set down at God's right-hand, ever lives to make intercession for us; which is the other part of his priestly office he is sanctified by his own blood to accomplish.[52]

The covenant of grace, ratified in the blood of the cross, now finds one of its principal applications in the priestly intercession of Christ.

In Part II, Gill presents texts that favor his position. Of note are his arguments for the doctrine of election. He states,

God made a covenant with [Christ], as the head of the election of grace; in which he gave his chosen people to him as his seed, his spouse, his sheep, his portion and inheritance, and to be saved by him with an everlasting salvation. This was done before time: otherwise, how could these persons be blessed with all spiritual blessings and have grace given to them in Christ, before the world began; if their persons had not also been given to Christ, and secured in him?[53]

In light of the eternal covenant of grace made with Christ in which he receives his people and saves them and the fact that these individuals are blessed with spiritual blessings in the covenant of grace and union with Christ, it must mean that these same individuals were chosen (elect) in eternity. Since they are chosen and given from the Father to the Son from eternity "in eternal election, and in the everlasting covenant of grace," he says, "In time [they] are enabled to believe on him [Christ] for life and salvation, concerning whom the will of God is, that Christ should lose none of them."[54] Thus, in light of the eternal covenant of grace, Gill maintains that effectual calling and the perseverance of the saints are guaranteed.

Finally, one particular aspect of the covenant of grace appears in the third part.[55] Whitby says,

[The doctrine of a disabled will] is also inconsistent with the *New Covenant of Grace*, established in the Blood of *Jesus*, and tendred to all to whom the Gospel is

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[52] Gill, *The Cause of God and Truth*, 119-20.

[53] Gill, *The Cause of God and Truth*, 180.

[54] Gill, *The Cause of God and Truth*, 276.

[55] As Part IV presents pre-Augustinian theologians, it will not be considered here.

vouchsafed. For they who are excluded from the Benefits of that Covenant, Remission of Sins and Salvation, and by a *Decree of Preterition*, are left under a Disability to perform the Conditions of that Covenant, Faith, Repentance and Obedience.[56]

Gill's contention with Whitby's argument at this point is that the covenant of grace is not "tendered" to people. He says that even though some do speak of offering Christ and the gospel, "the offer or tender of the new covenant, is what I never met with in other writers."[57] The reason, says Gill, is that the covenant is established in Christ's blood, and the covenant meets all that is necessary, including grace to believe and obey. Earlier, he says,

> [God] did, from all eternity, really make a covenant of grace with Christ, on the behalf of the elect; but did not decree to offer to man a new covenant of grace, nor make one promising pardon and salvation to them, upon condition of their faith, repentance, and sincere obedience, but upon condition of the perfect obedience and sufferings of Christ.[58]

In Gill's view, Whitby is mistaken because he thinks the covenant of grace between God and man is purely conditional and that man must therefore be capable of agreeing to the terms of the covenant—faith, repentance, and obedience. Others who would generally agree with Gill's Calvinism would have responded that faith and repentance were *conditio, sine qua non* rather than procuring conditions, "that is, a condition apart from which nothing can occur, which however does not pertain to the essence of the matter itself."[59] On the other hand, Gill argues that the covenant is between God and Christ, and the elect are recipients of the benefits of that covenant—including faith, repentance, and obedience—which is why it is called the covenant of grace.

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[56] Whitby, *Discourse on the Five Points*, 308.

[57] Gill, *The Cause of God and Truth*, 379. Note, Gill is not disagreeing at this point with offering Christ to someone; he disagrees that people speak of offering a covenant to someone. One could wish that Gill stated more positively that we do offer Christ. Still, à Brakel seems to offer a better example, including an exhortation to enter the covenant. Wilhelmus à Brakel, *The Christian's Reasonable Service: God, Man, and Christ*, ed. Joel R. Beeke, trans. Bartel Elshout (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage, 1992), 1:427-59.

[58] Gill, *The Cause of God and Truth*, 334.

[59] à Brakel, *The Christian's Reasonable Service*, 1:441. Cf. Keach, *A Display of Glorious Grace,* 185-87; Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology* (New York: Scribner, Armstrong, 1877), 2:365.

Commentaries

In light of Gill's exposition and application of the doctrine outlined, here we turn to look at some key passages in which he integrates the doctrine of the eternal/everlasting covenant into his commentaries. Like his *Body of Divinity*, Gill so integrates the covenant of grace in his commentaries that a thorough explanation would require a monograph-length work.[60] Instead, I provide a mere sampling here. Gill affirms four main parts to the covenant of grace: eternal engagement, historical promise, historical ratification, and end-time consummation. His comments on Zechariah 1:8, in which a man appears to the prophet riding on a red horse, represent this movement in Gill's thinking and interpretation. He says,

> Christ, who here appears as a man, was ready and forward, in the council and covenant of grace, to agree to become man, and be the surety of his people, and die in their room and stead, in order to save them: his frequent appearances in an human form, before his Incarnation, shew how willing and ready he was really to assume the human nature; and as soon as the time appointed for it was up, he tarried not; when the fulness of time was come, God sent him, and he came at once, and immediately; and as soon as possible he went about the business he came upon, took delight and pleasure in it, was constant at it till he had finished it; and even his sufferings and death, which were disagreeable to nature, considered in themselves, were wished and longed for, and cheerfully submitted to by him: and he is quick in all his motions to help his people in all their times of need; nor can any difficulties prevent him giving an early and speedy relief; he comes to them leaping on the mountains, and skipping on the hills; and at the last day he'll come quickly to put them into the possession of salvation he has wrought out for them; and will be a swift witness for them, and against wicked men that hate them, and oppose them.[61]

In this passage, the "council and covenant of grace" are the origin of all that subsequently happens in the history of redemption, from the promise and hope of the old covenant to the Incarnation and Christ's work to the final day of judgment. A few passages are worthy of being mentioned due to their relationship to the arguments for the *pactum salutis*.

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[60] A simple search of the phrase "covenant of grace" in his work returns more than five-hundred results between his Old and New Testament commentaries.

[61] ad loc.

Second Samuel 23:5. The reader will remember that Keach used this for his first publication on the subject, *The Everlasting Covenant*.[62] Gill does not ignore the immediate historical context of the passage. About the covenant which David mentions, Gill says,

> The covenant by which the kingdom was settled on *David* and his seed was a covenant that would continue for ever, and be kept, *observed*, and *preserved* in all the articles of it, and so be sure to his seed, particularly to the *Messiah* that should spring from him, in whom it was fulfilled, *Luke* i. 32, 33. and the covenant of grace made with *David*'s antitype.[63]

According to Gill, David hoped in a covenant that really took the historical development seriously, but the covenant itself was not made in history. The covenant was made "with *Christ* the head of the church, and the representative of it, and so with all his people in him." It "is an everlasting one: it was made with *Christ* from everlasting, as appears from the everlasting love of God, the source and spring of it; the earliness of the divine counsels on which it is formed . . . and from *Christ* being set up as the Mediator of it from everlasting." Since David says the covenant is "ordered in all things," Gill says it is ordered "to promote and advance the glory of the three Persons in the Godhead, Father, Son, and Spirit; to secure the persons of the saints, and to provide every thing needful for them for time and eternity." David says the covenant is "sure," and Gill says this secures believers even when there are infirmities and backslidings. In Gill's explanation here, David's kingdom is grounded on the everlasting covenant of grace made "from everlasting" with David's seed, Jesus Christ, and the grounding of the kingdom on that covenant means assurance for David.

Psalm 2:7-8. In Gill's thought, this *locus classicus* for discussions about the eternal generation of the Son also includes some important statements about the eternal

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[62] In this instance, Gill did not appeal to a text which "had not been cited in earlier discussions of the *pactum salutis*" if it is admitted that Keach's work is among those discussions. Fesko, *The Covenant of Redemption*, 114. Fesko cites it as 2 Sam 22:5, but he clearly means 23:5.

[63] ad loc., emphasis original.

covenant. First, the statement in verse 7 about the decree—which does not refer to generation since generation is natural and not dependent "on the decree and arbitrary will of God"—is about the covenant with Christ, "who is the covenant itself." Importantly, the *munus triplex* "is not the foundation of his sonship, but his sonship is the foundation of his office." Thus, Gill insists that expositors ought not to interpret the eternal relations in any way depending on the decree and works of God in creation and salvation. Second, in this covenant, Christ

> asked many things [in v. 8] of his Father, which were granted; he asked for the persons of all the elect to be his bride and spouse, and his heart's desire was given him . . . he asked for all the blessings of grace for them; for spiritual life here, and eternal life hereafter; and all were given him, and put into his hands for them . . . [and] God's elect among the Gentiles, and who live in distant parts of the world; which are Christ's other sheep, the Father has given to him as his portion.[64]

To Gill, following the reasoning of the adherents to the *pactum* that preceded him, these verses refer to the eternal council and covenant between the Father and the Son.[65]

Psalm 40:6-8. In his comments on this passage, Gill again pulls together the themes of the eternal covenant and the historical promise of its manifestation in time. Indicative are his opening words to verse 7: "*Then said I* &c.] As in the council and covenant of peace, when and where he declared his willingness to come into the world, and make satisfaction for the sins of his people; so when the fulness of time was come for

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[64] ad loc. In his exposition of v. 9, Gill explains that the destruction of the nations does not refer to the elect Gentiles, "but the stubborn and rebellious ones among the heathen, and in the several parts of the world, who will not have him [Christ] to reign over them." He says this destruction was fulfilled against unbelieving Jews "in their destruction by the *Romans*, and will have its accomplishment in the antichristian nations at the latter day."

[65] Patrick Gillespie, *The Ark of the Covenant Opened, or, A Treatise of the covenant of Redemption Between God and Christ, as the Foundation of the Covenant of Grace the Second Part* (London: Printed for Tho. Parkhurst, 1677), 10-11, 19; David Dickson, *A Brief Explication of the First Fifty Psalms* (London: Printed by T. M. for Ralph Smith, 1655), 10-12; Herman Witsius, *Of the Economy of the Covenants between God and Man: Comprehending a Complete Body of Divinity*, trans. William Crookshank, vol. 1 (London: Printed for R. Baynes, 1822) 2.2.10 (p. 171); Stephen Charnock, "A Discourse of God's Being the Author of Reconciliation," in *The Works of Stephen Charnock* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1986), 3:380. Of course, one should remember that Gill insists on including the Spirit in the covenant in his *Body of Divinity*.

his appearance in human nature he repeated the same."[66] What Christ says in time as the fulfillment of the promises declared in the Old Testament reflects something of the eternal will of the Son to come from the Father as surety of the elect.

      Zechariah 6:13. This passage plays a particular role in defenses of the *pactum*, but at the time of his commentaries, Gill interprets the passage in reference to the offices of Christ. Gill says the words "between them both" refer to neither

> priestly and kingly offices of Christ; nor the council of peace between the Father and the Son, concerning the salvation of the elect; for that was past in eternity; but better the gospel of peace, called the whole counsel of God, which in consequence of Christ being a priest on his throne was preached to both *Jews* and *Gentiles*; which brought the glad tidings of peace and salvation by Christ to both, and was the means of making peace between them both.[67]

As mentioned in an earlier footnote, Gill modifies his interpretation of this passage by the time he publishes his *Body of Divinity* so that he did eventually interpret it as a reference to the eternal covenant. Regardless, it is notable that Gill does affirm the eternal council; his objection is that the council is in the past while the passage seems to reference something future.

      Luke 22:29. Like Gill's interpretation of Zechariah 6:13, his interpretation of Luke 22:29 is interesting because he does not apply the verse to the eternal covenant. He interprets Christ's appointing of a kingdom to the disciples as a spiritual kingdom in which they as apostles have particular authority, though in common with the rest of the saints, they are a kingdom of priests, and, in the end, they will reign with Christ. However, when he arrives at the statement "as my father hath appointed unto me," he says the authority cannot be a reference to the Son's divine authority since he has that essentially, but to his authority as Mediator. He says the Father gave Christ this authority "here on earth in the days of his flesh" and extends through the gospel dispensation to the millennium "and

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[66] ad loc.

[67] ad loc.

last of all triumphantly to all eternity."[68] Again, what is notable about Gill's treatment here is that he makes no reference to the eternal covenant.

Titus 1:2. Finally, in this text on the proclamation of the gospel, which was promised before the world began, Gill says it was made "as early as the choice of God's elect in Christ." Not only that, it is "as early as the covenant that was made with him, and he was set up as the mediator of it; who was present to receive this promise as their head and representative for them, and to whom it was made as federally considered in him, and in whom it was secured for them."[69] Since Christ was present before the world began, and he was present on behalf of his elect, Christ was the recipient of the promise on our behalf.

Relationship to Other Baptist Theologians

At this point in the chapter, I will simply note various Baptist theologians who also affirmed the doctrine of the eternal covenant. While the previous section demonstrated how one particular, influential Baptist theologian integrated the eternal covenant into his theological work, here appears a summary sketch of his successors. In providing considerable space to the reaffirmation of the same content, I aim to demonstrate that the doctrine was not peculiar to one congregation (Horsley-down) nor one place (London).[70]

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[68] ad loc.

[69] ad loc. Gill then refers his readers to 2 Tim 1:1.

[70] Here, I admit that a search through the works of notable and influential Baptists returned several individuals who either (1) do not mention the covenant in their written works, (2) make such a passing statement that it is not worth inclusion, or (3) the reference is too vague to assert that the particular theologian affirmed it. For example, Andrew Fuller compiled a memoir and extracts of the works of Samuel Pearce. In one letter, Pearce says, "All is well, for time and eternity. My soul rejoices in the everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure." Based on the works of Keach and Gill, I think one can safely assume Pearce's reference to 2 Sam 23:5 is based on the assurance found in the everlasting covenant of grace in Christ. This demonstrates both the "passing statement" and "insufficient clarity" problem in sources that might be leaned on. Andrew Fuller and Samuel Pearce, *Memoirs of the late Rev. Samuel Pearce, A.M. minister of the gospel in Birmingham; with extracts of some of his most interesting letters. Compiled by Andrew Fuller* (London; Bristol; Birmingham; Edinburgh: printed by J. W. Morris, 1800), 204. For an example of another London Baptist, one might consider Keach's and Gill's successor, Charles H. Spurgeon, who preached a sermon on October 2, 1859, called, "The Blood of the Everlasting Covenant," in *New Park Street Pulpit*, vol. 5, sermon 277. This sermon is available through a variety of websites in addition to the collection volumes. In the

Instead, Baptists affirmed the doctrine of the eternal covenant for a substantial length of the initial history of their movement. To further demonstrate the breadth of the doctrine's reception, more space is given to Baptists in America. This section includes two main forms of affirmation: assumption and articulation. In the first, reference is made to the eternal covenant in some other doctrinal context. In the second, an author gives lengthy treatment to the doctrine itself.

Assumption

This section provides four samples in which Baptists assume the eternal covenant from the 1750s to the end of the nineteenth century. I show a representative distribution of the doctrine among the generations following Gill in these examples. The authors considered are Isaac Backus, who influenced the Baptist movement in eighteenth-century New England; Andrew Fuller, known for his advocacy of the gospel call; the Philadelphia Baptist Association, which was particularly important within the broader movement of Baptists in America; and James P. Boyce, the founder of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and two-time president of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Isaac Backus. Due to the Great Awakening in the American Colonial context, many were converted to faith and subsequently took up Baptist convictions. Among these was Isaac Backus (1724-1806), who would be an important figure in defending religious liberty in the establishment of America, helped coordinate Baptist efforts, and wrote the first work on Baptist history in America. At the beginning of his time as a Baptist, he preached and published a sermon on Galatians 4:31 that compares the bond and slave

sermon, Spurgeon walks through many of the same points articulated by his predecessors and contemporaries. Another influential Baptist who incorporated the doctrine within his broader work was Abraham Booth. See Abraham Booth, *The Reign of Grace from its Rise to its Consummation*, 2nd ed. (London, 1771), 36-41; *A Charge and Sermon together with an Introductory Discourse and Confession of Faith delivered at the Ordination of the Rev. Mr. Abraham Booth, Feb. 16, 1769, in Goodman's Field* (London: Printed for G. Keith, 1769), 19-20.

women mentioned by Paul. For our purposes, however, he makes an important statement near the beginning of his treatise concerning the eternal covenant:

> By this [the free-woman] I understand, first the glorious covenant of grace, made between the Father, and the Son, before the world began. Therefore God says, *I have made a covenant with my chosen,—I have laid help upon one that is mighty; I have exalted one chosen out of the people.* Psal. lxxxix. 3, 19. The sum of which covenant (for I cannot be large in describing of it) is, That the Son of God should assume our nature, and in that nature perfectly obey the law which we have broken, and bear thee punishment due unto us for sin, and so make reconciliation for iniquity, and bring in an everlasting righteousness, thro' which God could be just, and yet justifier of the ungodly:—As the fruit of which, the Father engaged by the influences of the holy Spirit, effectually to draw many of the sons of men to Christ; work faith in their hearts, justify and sanctify their souls, and keep them by his power, thro' faith unto eternal salvation: *Heb. 2.9-17. Psal. 40.6-8. Dan. 9.24. John 16.7-13. Rom. 8.29, 30. I Pet. 1.2-5.*[71]

Though Backus would not spend much of his sermon describing the eternal covenant between the Father and the Son, he assumes it is the covenantal foundation of the makeup of the new covenant community. Immediately after the quote above, he says the free woman is "the gospel-church in her pure standing" and that it includes

> All the saints in heaven and earth, [who] make but one catholic church: but it is in the gospel church here below that God appears to publish his grace, and to draw others in. . . . In short, by the free-woman, we may understand the glorious plan of salvation, laid in the eternal mind from everlasting, which in time has been made manifest, first by gradual discoveries thereof in the old testament, and then by Christ's actually coming in the flesh, and working out salvation, which he began to preach himself, and 'twas afterwards confirmed unto us, by them that heard him, whereby the gospel church was gathered, and increased.[72]

Like Gill, Backus understands the covenant between the Father and the Son as that which is manifested progressively in the promises of the Old Testament and conclusively revealed in the Incarnation and ingathering of the church.[73] Though he does not devote a treatise to the eternal aspect of this covenant, he explicitly assumes it.

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[71] Isaac Backus, *A Short Description Of the difference between the Bond-woman and the Free; As they are the two Covenants, with the Characters and Conditions of each of their Children: Considered in a Sermon, Delivered in Middleborough* (Boston: Printed by Green & Russell, 1756), 7-8.

[72] Backus, *A Short Description*, 9.

[73] Elsewhere, Backus says, "All the blessings of salvation were provided by covenant in Christ, before the world began; but the only way for any to enjoy them, is by receiving them freely by faith." Isaac Backus, *The doctrine of universal salvation examined and refuted. Containing, a concise and distinct*

Andrew Fuller. At one point in Andrew Fuller's (1754-1815) famous *Gospel Worthy of All Acceptation*, he argues that the gospel "virtually requires" obedience even though it is not technically law.[74] To support his point, he compares it to an embassy that requires rebels to lay down their arms and cites biblical texts that speak of obeying the gospel (e.g., Rom 1:6). Another Baptist, William Button, responded to Fuller's argument here. He said the gospel is not a declaration that

> God *can* and *will*, but a publication of a way wherein he *has* made peace. . . . The work is done. And this is the sum and glory of the gospel; and to preach the gospel, is to publish and proclaim peace and reconciliation made by the blood of the cross, as the fruit of everlasting love, and the ancient settlements in the council and covenant of peace, and not proposing peace to men on certain conditions to be performed by them, or an "offering through Christ, a reconciliation to the world, and promising them who would believe in him an absolution from their past offences," as Dr. Whitby expresses it, and as Mr. F[uller]'s words seem to intimate.[75]

Following Gill's argument against Whitby, Button says the eternal covenant militates against Fuller's argument for duty-faith. Rather than denying the eternal covenant, Fuller agreed but said he disagreed with Button's conclusion. "I rejoice with him in the doctrines of everlasting love, and the eternal settlements of grace," says Fuller, "But as the covenant between the Father and the Son before time does not supersede a believer's actually covenanting with God in time; so neither, as I apprehend, does peace being made by the blood of Christ's cross, supersede a peace taking place between God and us on our believing."[76] Though he agrees that peace was secured in eternity in the covenant between

answer to the writings of Mr. Relly, and Mr. Winchester, upon that subject (Boston: Printed and sold by John Carter, 1782), 10.

[74] Andrew Fuller, *The gospel of Christ worthy of all acceptation: or the obligations of men fully to credit, and cordially to approve, whatever God makes known. Wherein is considered the nature of faith in Christ, and the Duty of those where the Gospel comes in that Matter* (Northampton, England: printed by T. Dicey, 1785), 57-58.

[75] William Button, *Remarks on a treatise, entitled, the Gospel of Christ worthy of all acceptation; or, the obligations of men fully to credit, and cordially to approve whatever God makes known. By Andrew Fuller* (Printed for J. Buckland, Pater-noster Row; W. Ash; J. Dermer; and J. James, Hammersmith, 1785), 49-50.

[76] Andrew Fuller, *A defence of a treatise, entitled, The gospel of Christ worthy of all acceptation; containing a reply to Mr. Button's remarks, and the observations of Philanthropos* (Printed by T. Dicey, 1787), 35.

the Father and the Son, Fuller argues that such eternal peace does not remove the need for peace between God and man to occur in time. My purpose is not to dive into the debates about Fuller's theology; rather, one sees in this excerpt from the exchange that both sides of the debate saw the eternal covenant as a non-negotiable component of Particular Baptist theology.

The Philadelphia Baptist Association. A few decades after Backus incorporated the eternal covenant in his treatise on the makeup of a new covenant church in New England, the Baptists in the mid-Atlantic states did the same in their treatise on the doctrine of justification. William Rogers (1757-1824), writing on behalf of the Philadelphia Baptist Association, said, "Faith and repentance are graces bestowed by the Spirit of God, they are blessings flowing from that covenant which is ordered in all things and sure."[77] Thus, the receptive instruments of faith and repentance are gifts given by the Spirit according to the eternal covenant.[78] The elect are those from the mass of humanity

> who are unworthy and guilty in themselves, but in the everlasting covenant elected and beloved, have that righteousness whereon their justification is founded, not only exhibited to them by the gospel, but brought nigh by the Holy Ghost, these are the "purchased possession," this is the "bride" the lamb's wife; between whom and the Lord Jesus, an union not only now exists but hath existed, ancient as eternity itself, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee," Jer. Xxxi. 3.[79]

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[77] William Rogers, *A Circular Letter on the All Important Doctrine of Justification, Addressed by the Philadelphia Baptist Association in North America to the Several Churches in Union* (Philadelphia, 1785; London: Reprinted and Sold by William Ash, 1786), 12. This quote again shows a particular reception of Keach and Gill's interpretation of 2 Sam 23:5.

[78] Rogers does not think faith should be called an instrumental "cause," but he admits some do so label it and he himself calls it an instrument. Rogers, *Circular Letter on Justification*, 15-16.

[79] Rogers, *Circular Letter on Justification*, 17. In comparison to Gill, it is interesting to note that Rogers implies election occurs "in the everlasting covenant" while Gill explicitly places election prior to the covenant, in the decree.

Again, the everlasting covenant grounds what the Association calls "declarative" justification.[80] Like Gill, the Association affirms the believer's eternal security based on the fact that

> the righteousness of the Mediator is an everlasting righteousness; this being the sole ground of our confidence, it evidently follows that our abiding is safe: the believer can never lose his interest therein; the act which justifies is in itself unalterable; it is coeval with the eternal covenant; the benefit thereof is ensured and will forever be enjoyed by us.[81]

Though the Association published this letter as a reaffirmation of justification by grace alone, Rogers and the Association assume their readers are familiar with and affirm the everlasting, or eternal, covenant.

James P. Boyce. Moving further South and further into Baptist history, we come now to the work of one of the later Baptist theologians of the nineteenth century, writing about a hundred years after the ministers in Philadelphia. In summarizing C. Hodge, James P. Boyce (1827-1888) says, "To Christ as Mediator, the purchased salvation of his people belongs of right from the terms of the eternal covenant, but to us, that salvation is given in all its elements, stages and instrumentalities, only as a free and sovereign favor."[82] Earlier in his work, he said, "Theologians are accustomed to speak of two especial covenants, the one of works, the other of grace. . . . That of grace is the covenant of redemption made by God with his elect, or more properly with Christ, the second Adam, as their representative."[83] Otherwise, his comments do not address the *pactum salutis* substantively. In the two comments above, it is worth noting that neither

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[80] At the beginning of the treatise, Rogers distinguishes between eternal and declarative justification, calling the former that which existed in the divine mind eternal while the latter is that which takes place in or on the believer's conscience. Since my purpose is to demonstrate the assumed affirmation of the eternal covenant, I will not interact with the concept of eternal justification here, which would only detract from the primary aim of this section. Rogers, *Circular Letter on Justification*, 10.

[81] Rogers, *Circular Letter on Justification*, 21.

[82] James P. Boyce, *Abstract of Systematic Theology* (Louisville: Chas. T. Dearing, 1882), 344-45.

[83] Boyce, *Abstract of Systematic Theology*, 255.

provides a thorough treatment by Boyce himself; they are both summary statements. Further, for Boyce, the covenant appears in a systematic theology rather than the passing comments in other works, like those mentioned. However, unlike Gill or Dagg before him, or even his mentor Hodge, Boyce does not provide a distinct treatment of the covenant of grace/redemption.[84]

Articulation

While the sample in the previous section demonstrates that some Baptists at least assumed the doctrine of the eternal covenant in their writings, generally in line with what Gill provided before them, in what follows, I briefly outline two Baptist theologians who gave a specific treatment to the eternal covenant after Gill: R.B.C. Howell, second president of the Southern Baptist Convention, and John L. Dagg, sometimes called "The first writing Southern Baptist."[85]

R. B. C. Howell. The second president of the Southern Baptist Convention, R. B. C. Howell (1801-1868), wrote several polemical works in favor of Baptist theology. Among these, Howell wrote a work simply entitled *The Covenants*.[86] Having treated the fall of man in his previous chapter, Howell opens his treatment of the *pactum salutis*. Of note, in light of the preceding Baptist writers, he refers to "the covenant of redemption, called by most writers the covenant of grace."[87] He only refers to the covenant of grace by name once—several pages later—when he refers to it as the spiritual covenant as opposed to the national covenant, and the new covenant as opposed to the old covenant that founded

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[84] For Dagg, see my comments in the next section. See Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, 2:359-62.

[85] For a twentieth-century Baptist theologian, one might add Arthur W. Pink, *The Divine Covenants* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1973), 13-26. However, the *pactum salutis* was largely neglected by Baptists in the twentieth century.

[86] Robt. Boyte C. Howell, *The Covenants* (Charleston: Southern Baptist Publication Society, 1855).

[87] Howell, *The Covenants*, 31.

the commonwealth of Israel.[88] Howell works through the plan, purposes, parties, and promises of the *pactum salutis*. To demonstrate the reality of the covenant, Howell first says the various prophecies concerning a surety for the people show that one was foreordained to come, and then asks, "Did all this occur without any previous consent or agreement?"[89]

Like Gill before him, Howell reasons that the occurrence of the unfolding plan of redemption requires the previous agreement and thus covenant, which he demonstrates to be from eternity.[90] For its purpose, Howell says it is a covenant designed to redeem men—from which it gets its name—to the glory of "all the persons of the adorable Trinity."[91] Next, he outlines the Father's, Son's, and Holy Spirit's roles in the covenant according to their work in the plan of redemption, showing that each freely planned man's redemption. As for promises, some are made to the Son as Messiah, such as a kingdom and people, while "others of the promises of the covenant are given to the Messiah for his people," such as the graces immediately associated with salvation, like justification and glorification, but also those typically associated with the fruit of the Spirit.[92] Though much

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[88] Howell writes,

The promises of the national covenant, were national blessings; the promises of the spiritual covenant (i.e., the covenant of grace) were spiritual blessings, as reconciliation, holiness, and eternal life. The conditions of the one covenant [the old] were circumcision, and obedience to the law; the conditions of the other were, and ever have been, faith in the Messiah, as 'the seed of the woman,' the Son of God, the Saviour of the world. There cannot be a greater mistake than to confound the national covenant with the covenant of grace, [that is, the old covenant with the new] and the commonwealth founded on the one, with the church founded on the other. When Christ came, the commonwealth was abolished, and there was nothing put in its place. The church [now made visible] remained. (Howell, *The Covenants*, 117-18, brackets original).

[89] Howell, *The Covenants*, 32.

[90] Howell looks to such passages as 1 Pet 1:18, 1 Tim 1:2, 2 Tim 1:9, and Eph 1:3-6 to demonstrate the eternality of the covenant. Howell, *The Covenants*, 32-33.

[91] Howell, *The Covenants*, 34-35.

[92] Howell, *The Covenants*, 40-41.

briefer than Gill's treatment of the doctrine, Howell articulated a doctrine substantially the same a hundred years later and an ocean away.

John L. Dagg. Thomas J. Nettles calls John L. Dagg (1794-1884) "one of the most profound thinkers produced by his denomination."[93] In his *Manual of Theology*, published two years after Howell's in 1857, Dagg treats the covenant of grace in its eternal aspect in his characteristically concise manner. He says the language of "covenant" is accommodated to human speech since, in human affairs, a covenant is the agreement concluded between persons in which one party's proposals are deliberated and accepted by the other party[94]:

> In every work of God, the divine persons must either agree or disagree. As they alike possess infinite wisdom, disagreement among them is impossible. The salvation of men is a work of God, in which the divine persons concur. It is performed according to an eternal purpose; and in this purpose, as well as in the work, the divine persons concur; and this concurrence is their eternal covenant. The purpose of the one God, is the covenant of the Trinity.[95]

The covenant must be considered eternal because the parties are eternal, and the Scriptures speak of it occurring in eternity.[96] Each party is manifest in the economy of redemption according to this covenant, and though the Son and the Spirit perform particular subordinate roles in the economy, it is in these roles that they also manifest their divinity.[97]

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[93] Tom J. Nettles, preface to *Manual of Theology*, by John L. Dagg (Harrisonburg, VA: Sprinkle, 2009), n.p.

[94] Dagg, *Manual of Theology*, 253. Though the edition used here was published recently, the pagination is the same as previous editions.

[95] Dagg, *Manual of Theology*, 254.

[96] Dagg, *Manual of Theology*, 254.

[97] Dagg, *Manual of Theology*, 255-56. More explicitly, Dagg says,

> In this order of operation, inferiority of nature is not implied, in the subordination of office to which the Son and the Spirit voluntarily consent. The fulness of the Godhead dwells in each of the divine persons, and refers the fulfilment of the covenant infallibly sure, in all its stipulations. The Holy Spirit, in the execution of his office, dwells in believers; but he brings with him the fulness of the Godhead, so that God is in them, and they are the temple of God, and filled with the fulness of God. The Son or Word, in the execution of his office, becomes the man Jesus Christ; but the fulness of the Godhead

Finally, Dagg closes by arguing that the covenant of grace is the context of Christian piety and worship, but also that it is different from the new covenant of Hebrews 8 even though "there is, however, a close connection between them."[98] In the new covenant, God deals with man directly, while in the covenant of grace, the promises are made to the Son as representative of his people. Dagg does seem to approach something like the distinction between the covenants of redemption and grace here, but he does not do so explicitly. In relationship to Gill, one may remember that Gill considers the old and new covenants as historical manifestations of the covenant of grace, so Dagg is not necessarily departing from Gill at this point.

Conclusion

Along with the term "Calvinist," Richard Muller says, "the frequent identification of Gill's thought as 'Hyper-Calvinist' [is], at best, less than helpful." He continues, "The problem inherent in these identifications and assessments is that they presuppose, as a primary point of reference, the fundamentally flawed explanation of later Reformed theology as a deviation from Calvin's thought brought about, in large part, by [the] approach of Theodore Beza (1519-1605) to the doctrine of predestination."[99] Muller then aims to demonstrate that Gill largely worked within the broader Reformed sphere from his Particular Baptist location. Taking Muller's sentiment seriously, this final section will consider Gill's proposal on its own rather than by using the epithet "hyper-Calvinist."

dwells in him; so that, in his deepest humiliation he is God manifest in the flesh, God over all, blessed for ever. (255-56)

[98] Dagg, *Manual of Theology*, 257.

[99] Richard Muller, "John Gill and the Reformed Tradition," in Haykin, *The Life and Thought of John Gill*, 52. However, for an initial critique of Gill's use of previous sources, see Fesko, *The Covenant of Redemption*, 117-21. See also David Mark Rathel, "Was John Gill a Hyper-Calvinist? Determining Gill's Theological Identity," *Baptist Quarterly* 48, no. 1 (2017): 47-59; Rathel, "Gill and the History of Redemption as a Mere Shadow." Rathel treats the no-offer position as something that drove Gill's presentation, like a central dogma, in a way that I do not think it did. Rather, Gill seems to use the locus method and so the doctrines were intertwined. Still, Rathel does seem to offer a correct reading of Gill's argument for eternal justification.

The primary question to consider here is whether it is better to speak of a singular covenant of grace, considering both its eternal and temporal aspects, or two covenants, one of redemption and the other of grace.

In the survey above, and going back to the previous chapter, I noted that it was common for some to speak of a singular covenant of grace while others prefer to distinguish the eternal *pactum salutis* from the covenant of grace. In my survey of various Baptists, it does seem that the tendency was to affirm the singular-covenant model described in the previous chapter, though perhaps the Reformed community more broadly would have held to the two-covenant model.[100] However, in the writers surveyed, it is possible to note that there are points where something resembling the two-covenant model appears at times. Dagg said the covenant of grace differed from the new covenant. Howell called the eternal covenant the *pactum salutis* and then seemed to use the term "covenant of grace" in passing to refer to the "spiritual" reality of the new covenant, thus distinguishing it, perhaps, from the *pactum salutis*.[101] Further, since Boyce does not treat the covenant of redemption/grace, perhaps it could be averred that he would have followed his mentor, Hodge, in advocating a two-covenant system. As demonstrated, and as could be demonstrated further, Gill was not unique in his advocacy of the singular-covenant model, neither in his time nor in the sweep of theology from the mid-1600s to today. One systematic theology was even recently published advocating the singular-covenant system.[102]

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[100] Here, one-covenant and two-covenant models refer to the covenants of redemption and grace. Strictly speaking, they are two- and three-covenant models since either model would include the covenant of works. As noted, Fesko did mention that the singular-covenant model was common in the period surveyed here.

[101] As noted, however, he did say explicitly that what he calls the covenant of redemption, others call the covenant of grace.

[102] Joel R. Beeke and Paul M. Smalley, *Reformed Systematic Theology: Man and Christ* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2020), 2:601-5.

I differ with Keach and Gill in that I think it is appropriate to distinguish between the *pactum salutis* and the covenant of grace. The reason for this will be demonstrated, but first, Beeke and Smalley aptly caution,

> Both perspectives may be abused to the detriment of the gospel. Theologians holding to one convent of grace with Christ and his seed may be more prone to diminish human responsibility, break the link between election on the one hand and conversion on the other (cf. Rom. 8:30; 1 These. 1:3-5), fall into the error that God already counts as righteous the elect in Christ even though they do not yet believe (eternal justification, contra Gal. 2:16), and perhaps even think that God's elect will be saved regardless of whether they have a living faith that produces works of obedience to God's law (antinomianism). . . . On the other hand, those who distinguish between God's covenant of redemption with Christ and his covenant of grace with his people may be more prone to find our righteousness in our faith and obedience instead of Christ alone (legalism). Those who affirm distinct covenants with Christ and men must carefully preserve the doctrine that Christ alone is the basis for God's promises to us; our faith saves us only by uniting us with him, and his righteousness is our only ground for justification with God (Rom. 5:19; Phil. 3:9). They must also sustain the essential unity of the covenant of redemption and the covenant of grace in regard to their beneficiaries, lest they fall into the error that God covenanted with Christ to die for mankind as a whole and then takes specific people to himself through the convent of grace.[103]

Like most areas of theology, distinct dangers present themselves when asking whether to pose one covenant or two, but, following the ancient theological practice of distinguishing the eternal from the temporal, and the Head from the body, one ought to distinguish what occurs in the eternal mind of God and the temporal realm of creation. Gill's collapse of actual justification into eternity faces problems similar to the collapsing of the eternal and temporal covenants, so the statements about antinomianism and eternal justification in Beeke and Smalley's caution are warranted.[104] In fact, while Keach points out the dangers of too fully separating the covenants of redemption and grace, perhaps a further avenue of inquiry—though not taken here—would be to assess the dangers of too fully collapsing the two covenants or two aspects of the covenant. As one would not call the *filius incarnandus* the Incarnation itself, and as one would distinguish the eternal decree from its execution in time, so should one distinguish the *pactum salutis* from the covenant of grace. The

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[103] Beeke and Smalley, *Reformed Systematic Theology*, 2:603.

[104] Rathel argues for the presence of these dangers in Gill. Rathel, "John Gill," 377-400.

covenant of grace is certain because of the *pactum salutis*, similar to the fact that the Incarnation was certain, and the complete outworking of creation and providence certainly occur as effects of God's will.

J. V. Fesko helpfully explains the benefit of distinguishing between the *pactum salutis* and the covenant of grace. Defining the distinction, he says, "The elect are part of the *pactum salutis* by virtue of their election in Christ, the covenant surety, but they are not participants in the covenant of grace until they are indwelled by the Spirit and united to Christ by faith."[105] Fesko then draws on the distinction between federal and mystical union with Christ, which are not different unions but "different aspects of this one union."[106] The former (federal) grounds the latter (mystical): "The work of the covenant surety provides the legal context for the ensuing transformative work of the Spirit."[107] Since theologians logically distinguish between particular aspects of salvation without thereby separating them (e.g., the *duplex gratia* of Calvin, the forensic and mystical aspects of union, the difference between God's decree and his accomplishment and application of salvation, or any part of the *ordo salutis*), it follows that one should not immediately dismiss a distinction between the *pactum salutis* and the covenant of grace simply because the same persons are involved.

Finally, though one might differ from Gill's (and Keach's, Beeke's, and Smalley's) singular-covenant scheme, of particular benefit from Gill's work is his foregrounding of the Spirit's role in the covenant. Though one should see that the Spirit was often included in discussions of the *pactum*, what Gill offers is "a development and even refinement of the doctrine because of his emphasis upon the Spirit's work within the

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[105] J. V. Fesko, *The Trinity and the Covenant of Redemption* (Fearn, Scotland: Mentor, 2016), 311.

[106] Fesko, *The Trinity and the Covenant of Redemption*, 346.

[107] Fesko, *The Trinity and the Covenant of Redemption*, 348.

covenant."[108] In Gill's *Body of Divinity*, he assumed previous writers did not sufficiently treat the Spirit's role in the *pactum*, and whether or not he was right about the insufficiency in previous works, it is at least a helpful contribution to have a singular, dedicated treatment of the Spirit's role.

At this point, it has become clear that the eternal covenant was not missing from the theological discourse of previous Baptist generations. It is just the contrary. Though typically considered as the eternal aspect of the covenant of grace, the eternal covenant was stated, developed, defended, and integrated into the overall theological system of many of the earliest Baptists until the end of the nineteenth century.[109] It influenced debates against neonomians (the "Baxterians") and Arminians (Whitby). It was assumed on both sides of the baptism (Backus) and "gospel offer" (Fuller-Button) debates. It was stated by an association (Philadelphia), convention presidents (Howell, Boyce), and systematic theologians (Gill, Dagg, and Boyce). In short, the eternal covenant occupied no small place in theological discourse and underlying assumptions. Only considering Gill, one notes how the doctrine was integrated into the whole range of theological tasks, including direct exposition and integrating it in the rest of his theology, commentaries, and debate. For the remainder of this dissertation, work will be done to show the doctrine from Scripture and the currents of broader Christian theology.

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[108] Fesko, *The Trinity and the Covenant of Redemption*, 115. For an example of earlier integration of pneumatology, see B. Hoon Woo, *The Promise of the Trinity: The Covenant of Redemption in the Theologies of Witsius, Owen, Dickson, Goodwin, and Cocceius* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2018), 191-209. Fesko's treatment appears more balanced on the whole regarding Gill's integration of the Spirit than Rathel. Rathel, "John Gill," 392n48.

[109] Again, the reader may also look to Arthur W. Pink as an advocate in the twentieth century. An avenue of further research could explore how the changes in Baptist covenant theology and the neglect of the Second London Confession affected their affirmation of the *pactum*.

CHAPTER 4

TRINITY AND AN ETERNAL COVENANT

I have briefly considered the historical background and contemporary context of the *pactum salutis* in the introduction, noting both the rejection of the doctrine by some and its relative absence in contemporary Baptist theology. Then I surveyed the arguments for the everlasting covenant, or *pactum salutis*, in Baptist theological development over the previous two chapters, showing was once a doctrine both advocated and assumed in the first two centuries of Baptist history.

If Baptists are to recover the doctrine of the *pactum salutis*, they must respond to the recent objections raised against it. This dissertation now turns to place the doctrine of the *pactum* among other crucial doctrines, particularly its reference to classic articulations of Trinitarian, Christological, and Pneumatological doctrine. This chapter and the two that follow aim to demonstrate that the *pactum salutis* does not violate catholic Christian doctrine and that it is, in fact, biblically warranted.[1] As I make these arguments, I will draw—though not exclusively—on current Baptist works to show that the recovery various doctrines make this proposal a fruitful outgrowth in contemporary

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[1] The definition of "catholic" assumed in this dissertation, when in lowercase, should be interpreted in the sense meant by the Westminster Confession of Faith, Savoy Declaration, and Second London Baptist Confession of Faith (1677/1989). The Second London states, "The Catholick or universal Church, which (with respect to the internal work of the Spirit, and truth of grace) may be called invisible, consists of the whole number of the Elect, that have been, are, or shall be gathered into one, under Christ the head thereof; and is the spouse, the body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all" (Scripture references omitted). For a modern expression, see "A Reforming Catholic Confession," accessed January 15, 2022, https://reformingcatholicconfession.com, esp. "Explanation 3." Throughout this dissertation, the term "Catholic," when capitalized, refers to the Roman Catholic Church unless it appears in a quotation. The term "catholic," when it appears in lowercase, refers to what is meant in the definitions offered in this footnote.

Baptist thought. Each chapter will begin with an outline of the classical doctrine before

engaging in a biblical and theological presentation of the *pactum* in light of that doctrine.[2]

   This chapter primarily aims to respond to the charge that the *pactum salutis*

undermines historic Trinitarian theology, especially regarding the divine will and the notion

of subordination. After asking, are "formulations of the *pactum salutis* compatible with

Trinitarian orthodoxy?,"[3] Robert Letham argues,

> Furthermore, inevitable problems arise in applying covenant concepts to God. There
> are two kinds of covenants in the Bible. The first kind is a one-sided imposition.
> Applied to the relations of the Father and the Son (leaving the Holy Spirit aside!), this
> would mean subordination. The other covenant type is a quid pro quo, a voluntary
> contract between two or more persons. This requires the parties to be autonomous
> agents. Applied to the Trinity, it implies that the Trinitarian persons each have their
> own will, entailing something approaching tritheism. Both of these elements are
> present in the *pactum salutis*. Constructions such as these veer toward either
> subordinationism or tritheism.[4]

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[2] Using terms like "classical," "historic," "catholic," and "orthodox" is fraught each with its own debates. Rather than entering such debates on these points, which would distract from the aim of this dissertation, see my citations to understand what I find most compellingly represents the right definition of these terms. There is broad continuity on the doctrine of the Holy Trinity between East and West in the fourth and fifth centuries as demonstrated by Lewis Ayres, diachronically, at least in the West, through the Middle Ages as seen in Thomas Aquinas, and maintained by the Reformed as seen in the confessional documents and demonstrated by Richard Muller. Stephen Holmes's *The Quest for the Trinity*, called *The Holy Trinity* in the UK, surveys the historical development with which I most nearly agree. Stephen Holmes, *The Quest for the Trinity: The Doctrine of God in Scripture, History and Modernity* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2012).

[3] Robert Letham, *The Holy Trinity: In Scripture, History, Theology, and Worship*, rev. ed. (Philipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2019), 318. Letham asks the same question but supplies the word "Christian" in place of "Trinitarian" in Robert Letham, *Systematic Theology* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2019), 435.

[4] Letham, *The Holy Trinity*, 319. Though released the same year, Letham's treatment of the *pactum* in *Systematic Theology* was less resistant, though he still disagrees. For instance, he says,

> J. V. Fesko has produced a defense of the doctrine, wide-ranging and thorough, with most of which I
> am in agreement and which, in many ways, meets the reservations I have had ever since, back in
> 1972, I read Thomas Goodwin's remarkable exegesis of Ephesians 1. However, the nagging
> suspicion remains that the application of covenant concepts to the eternal life of the Trinity loses
> more than it gains, even if one recognizes that analogical predication is involved and an exact
> equivalence is ruled out. (Letham, *Systematic Theology*, 438)

For an example of one writer making the sort of moves Letham is concerned about in a semi-popular milieu, in which submission is argued to be an original and incommunicable property of the Son on the basis of the *pactum*, see Baptist historian and theologian Tom Nettles, "The Trinity: Prosopologically Speaking (Response to Some Comments)," *Founders*, accessed January 7, 2022, https://founders.org/2016/07/21/the-trinity-prosopologically-speaking/.

Thus, three arguments from Christian/Trinitarian orthodoxy against the *pactum salutis* appear in this quote from Letham:

1. it implies subordinationism;

2. neglects the Holy Spirit; and

3. implies three wills in the Trinity.

In his *Systematic Theology*, Letham lists these same arguments and adds,

4. "The biblical texts cited in support of the *pactum salutis* all refer to the incarnate Christ in his work as Mediator. In doing so, they do not apply to the intra-Trinitarian relations as such;"[5]

5. "The focus of the *pactum salutis* on contractual agreement misses the heart of what God's covenant is all about . . . [because] to construe this covenant in *purely* legal terms is to miss the relation of the most intimate communion or friendship in which God reflects his covenant life in his relation to the creature;"[6] and

6. "Historical consequences followed its deployment. English Presbyterianism soon became infected with Arianism and Unitarianism in the half century after the Restoration. Did constructions of the *pactum salutis* that implied the subordination of the Son play a part in this precipitous collapse? It is difficult to establish."[7]

Since he concedes that the last point is difficult to establish, I note five arguments. The fifth argument is also difficult to establish because theologians can write about any doctrine as though it was merely factual, rather coldly than affectionately. Nevertheless, the *pactum salutis*, as the means by which God establishes covenantal communion between God and man, must indeed be construed so as to emphasize that God has purposed all things "in love" (Eph 1:4).

Letham's concerns are not merely theoretical, however. John Peckham, interacting with the notion of an "I-Thou" relationship in the Trinity, says, "This understanding complements the idea of the precreation covenant of redemption (*pactum salutis*) within the Trinity, which *implicitly* appears in Scripture in numerous ways. . . . While J. V. Fesko argues that the covenant of redemption is consistent with the singularity

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[5] Letham, *Systematic Theology*, 436.

[6] Letham, *Systematic Theology*, 437.

[7] Letham, *Systematic Theology*, 437.

view, I believe such a covenant involves *distinct* wills of the trinitarian persons."[8] In other words, Peckham believes the *pactum* entails distinct centers of "reason, will, and self-consciousness," and he approves of that notion.[9]

Taking Letham's five arguments (excepting the appeal to historical developments), I will demonstrate in chapters 4-6 that the *pactum salutis* is "compatible with Christian orthodoxy" and rooted in the biblical testimony.[10] Chapter 5, on Christology, considers both Christological orthodoxy and the biblical-theological testimony that warrants speaking of the *pactum salutis*, responding to the charge of subordinationism by locating submission in the incarnate work of Christ. Chapter 6 will affirm the Holy Spirit's inclusion in the *pactum* as Love and Gift to demonstrate that it need not "miss the heart" of God's works.

This chapter, therefore, articulates a Pro-Nicene Trinitarianism and then shows that the *pactum salutis* is compatible with it, neither denying the singular divine will nor positing *ad intra* subordination. To build the argument, I provide a brief outline of standard explanations of simplicity, eternity, the person-nature distinction, and the eternal processions. These are things true of God *in se*. Next, I outline standard explanations of inseparable operations and appropriations, which are those things we affirm of God toward us, or *quoad nos*. Having outlined the standard constraints to exposition of Trinitarian theology, I am then able to locate the *pactum salutis* in the decree, thus carefully avoiding some of the inherent dangers noted by Letham, which receive a response in the "Clarifications" section. When understood in this way, Letham's concerns about subordinationism (1) and three wills (3) approach resolution, as does the reason for the

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[8] John C. Peckham, *Divine Attributes: Knowing the Covenantal God of Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2021), 244n102, emphasis original; J. V. Fesko, *The Trinity and the Covenant of Redemption* (Fearn, Scotland: Mentor, 2016), 51-124, 132-41.

[9] Peckham, *Divine Attributes*, 241.

[10] Letham, *Systematic Theology*, 435. Following this purpose, the citations are heavier than may be assumed necessary in order to facilitate weighty affirmation of the underlying theological principles.

use of biblical language that applies to Christ's mediatorial work (4). The biblical testimony that closes out the chapter introduces the texts often used to warrant covenantal language about the Son's mission. When seen in the light of the next chapter's testimony, these texts are loaded with the weight of the entire canon to testify to that truth we mean to identify in the term *pactum salutis*. The construction in this chapter, along with the succeeding chapters, aims to both avoid the problems about which Letham is rightly concerned and positively demonstrate the viability of the doctrine of the *pactum* within a larger classical Trinitarian framework.

Theology, Economy, and Analogy

We begin by making preliminary remarks about *theologia*, *oikonomia*, and analogy. The *pactum salutis*, like the decree, sits at the nexus between *theologia* and *oikonomia*. Why spend so much space engaging in the *theologia* when the *pactum* seems eminently concerned with the *oikonomia*? John Webster rightly warns, "It is important that the order of dogmatic exposition respect the material order of Christian teaching about the Trinity in relation to creatures: first the divine essence, then the distinction of persons, and (only) then the procession of creatures from God."[11] As the *pactum* is concerned with the transition point in dogmatic exposition from God *in se* to God *quoad nos*, and as "our minds are apt to run in a countervailing direction, preferring to begin with God's external works,"[12] the *pactum* must be exposited in the context of other definitional boundaries. When these boundaries are violated, Letham's concerns are realized; when these boundaries are respected, the *pactum salutis* is seen as it is: Scripture's given means for testifying that God eternally determined to manifest his triune glory by way of covenant.

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[11] John Webster, *God and the Works of God*, vol. 1, *God without Measure: Working Papers in Christian Theology* (London: Bloomsbury T & T Clark, 2016), 85.

[12] Webster, *God and the Works of God*, 85.

Analogy

Before considering some of the pertinent theological categories, I must note

that the doctrine of analogy undergirds all statements made about God by virtue of the

fact that analogy helps explain how a creature may speak of the Creator using creaturely

language. Any attempt at theological discourse, particularly when aiming to discuss the

incomprehensible and inscrutable being and ways of God, must also make use of the

doctrine of analogy. Analogy takes seriously two facts simultaneously. First, it recognizes

that creatures only possess the ability to speak in creaturely ways and that God, as

Creator, must necessarily be beyond univocal attribution. Analogy presupposes the *via*

negativa/negationis of theological discourse.[13] Second, however, analogy also affirms

that God has stooped to reveal himself using creaturely language; he has accommodated

what he says about himself so that his creatures, humans above all, may know him truly

even if incompletely. An analogy is the likeness of one thing to another; thus, it

simultaneously denies sameness while affirming similarity to the extent to which the two

objects are analogous. Steven Duby contends,

> The analogy of attribution in particular, which is expounded by Thomas and taken
> up by the Protestant orthodox, should have a place in theology proper today. This
> analogy is an agreement or similitude between two analogates, one of which (the
> creature) has something in a limited way and in dependence on another (God) who
> possesses it (e.g., being, wisdom, goodness, power) in an absolute, essential, and
> independent manner. In its "one to another" form—rather than its "many to one"
> form—the analogy of attribution stipulates that creatures are referred to the Triune
> God as the ultimate source of their natures and perfections, instead of both creatures
> and God being referred (*per impossibile*) to some other source above God.[14]

In other words, the application of analogical language, in the way Duby advocates, does

not make "goodness"—or any other attribute—something outside of God of which both

God and the creature partake. Rather, analogical language affirms that God is that to which

all creatures are compared and contrasted.

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[13] Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologia* I.q13.

[14] Steven J. Duby, *God in Himself: Scripture, Metaphysics, and the Task of Christian Theology*,
Studies in Christian Doctrine and Scripture (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2019), 291. All of Duby's chapter on
analogy should be consulted (232-91).

Anthropomorphisms are particular types of analogies that contribute to our doctrinal formulations in key ways.[15] From anthropomorphisms, some form or action of a man is attributed to God by means of a likeness between the works of God and the works of man. Thus, as a man displays his wisdom, which is exercised in counsel that comes before a visible action by the outworking of an action, so Christians attribute counsel to God (Eph 1:11). Though there is no succession of thoughts in God according to the fact that he is eternal—as discussed below—counsel is attributed to God in that the outworking of his decree in the visible works manifests his wisdom; wisdom which is infinitely more eminent than man's.

Eternal Relations

While many today affirm the doctrine of the Trinity, the original biblical and theological reasoning for its affirmation must continue to undergird contemporary affirmations. While standing upon Scripture alone as the ultimate authority, the Christian today must take seriously the modes of reasoning that produced the dogmatic consensuses of the past, including those that produced the language of Nicene orthodoxy.[16] The sympathetic reader of the Reformed Scholastics, who originally articulated the doctrine of the *pactum salutis*, will note that they believed they were continuing in the historic

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[15] Along with anthropomorphism is the category of anthropopathism, in which human passions are attributed to God, such as regret (e.g., Gen 6:6). These are a subset of what I have called the broader category of "ktisimorphisms" (from '*ktisis*,' meaning creation), that is, attributing to God some form seen in creation, such as peteinamorphisms (bird-form), lithomorphisms (rock-form), etc. In this paragraph, anthropomorphism is used in the broader sense of the term, which is inclusive of anthropopathism.

[16] As Kahled Anatolios says, "The approach taken here rejects as simplistic any sharp distinction between 'historical theology' (as 'what it meant then') and 'systematic theology' (as 'what it means now') . . . we must creatively re-perform the acts of understanding and interpretation that led to those statements." Kahled Anatolios, *Retrieving Nicaea: The Development and Meaning of Trinitarian Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011), 1. It is disingenuous to claim to hold to the same doctrine simply because the same words are maintained; rather, the logic that expressed itself in the words ought to undergird the expression of those same words today. This is certainly a hermeneutical claim that cannot be defended here. To see the same sort of conviction, see Holmes's confession of sorts in *The Quest for the Trinity*, 199-200.

modes of reasoning as they formulated doctrine for their generation.[17] To articulate the

doctrine of the Trinity one must also articulate other doctrines that were largely axiomatic

for much of Christian history. To outline Pro-Nicene orthodoxy it is helpful to follow

Gilles Emery (following Ayres) in the order of these affirmations or axioms:

> First, a clear version of the distinction between person and nature, entailing the principle that all that is attributed to the divine nature is found in an equal and simple way in each divine person; second, a formulation of the generation of the Son that clearly signifies that this generation occurs within the incomprehensible divine being; third, a clear expression of the inseparable action of the divine persons.[18]

Thus, to understand the doctrine of the Trinity as it was understood by Pro-Nicenes in

their generation and subsequent generations, one must also affirm simplicity, with its

attendant assumption of God's eternity; the person-nature distinction; the internal

processions; and inseparable operations, with its corresponding doctrine of appropriations.

Simplicity

Prior to the most recent generations, Christian theologians assumed and

defended the doctrine of divine simplicity.[19] As Holmes says, summarizing Gregory of

Nyssa, "we therefore discern that Father, Son and Spirit are not three dissimilar, or even

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[17] It is almost unnecessary now to demonstrate this with documentary evidence after the work of Heiko Obermann and Richard Muller. Very often, to read the Protestant Scholastics is to read developments of various debates from the Medievals, even if they go uncited, and the Medievals too aimed to simply show the consistency of the theology that had developed from Scripture through the church age to their point. The Protestants certainly incorporated the Reformation principles, and so modified what had been received ministerially (i.e., tradition) according to what had been received magisterially (i.e., Scripture), but they did not think they were departing from the tradition. Thus, any reading of them must be sympathetic to their concern to maintain and defend orthodoxy.

[18] Gilles Emery, *The Trinity: An Introduction to Catholic Doctrine on the Triune God*, trans. Matthew Levering (Washington, DC: Catholic University Press, 2009), 90ff. Emery follows exactly Lewis Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy: An Approach to Fourth-Century Trinitarian Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 236-40.

[19] Holmes writes, "Throughout this treatise [*Ad ablabium*] Gregory assumes, without naming, the concept of divine simplicity. . . . It is precisely his belief in divine simplicity that enables him to defend Trinitarian theology." Holmes, *The Quest for the Trinity*, 108. For a history the doctrine, see Steven J. Duby, *Divine Simplicity: A Dogmatic Account*, T & T Clark Studies in Systematic Theology 30 (London: T & T Clark, 2016), 7-53.

similar, essences but one essence—the one, simple, ingenerate, divine essence."[20] We say that it is the identical essence, which simultaneously denies dissimilarity (*heteroousios*) and similarity (*homoiousios*) and affirms the oneness of the essence (*homoousios*). Baptist James Dolezal helpfully defines simplicity:

> The principal claim of divine simplicity is that God is not composed of parts. Whatever is composed of parts depends upon its parts in order to be what it is. A part is anything in a subject that is less than the whole and without which the subject would be really different than it is. In short, composite beings need their parts in order to exist as they do. Moreover, the parts in an integrated whole require a composer distinct from themselves to unify them, an extrinsic source of unity. If God should be composed of parts—of components that were prior to Him in being—He would be doubly dependent: first, on the parts, and second, on the composer of the parts.[21]

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[20] Holmes, *The Quest for the Trinity*, 108.

[21] James Dolezal, *All That Is in God: Evangelical Theology and the Challenge of Classical Christian Theism* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage, 2017), 40. Thomas Aquinas says,

> I answer that, The absolute simplicity of God may be shown in many ways. First, from the previous articles of this question. For there is neither composition of quantitative parts in God, since He is not a body; nor composition of matter and form; nor does His nature differ from His suppositum; nor His essence from His existence; neither is there in Him composition of genus and difference, nor of subject and accident. Therefore, it is clear that God is nowise composite, but is altogether simple. (Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologia: Prima Pars, 1-49*, trans. Fr. Laurence Shapcote, ed. John Mortensen and Enrique Alarcón [Lander, WY: The Aquinas Institute for the Study of Sacred Doctrine, 2012], I.q3.a7 [p. 34])

Unless a translator is noted (as here), I am translating the Greek and Latin myself, even in the case of diglots. Further, when a page number is available for the translation or edition I cite, I place the page number in parenthesis while using standard citations beforehand. In subsequent citations, translator will be placed parenthesis. For the sake of reference, here is the original text:

> *Respondeo dicendum quod Deum omnino esse simplicem, multipiciter potest esse manifestum. Primo quidem per supradicta. Cum enim in Deo non sit compositio, neque quantitativarum partium, quia corpus non est; neque compositio formae et materiae, neque aliud essentia et esse, neque in eo sit compositio generis et differentiae; neque subiecti et accidentis, manifestum est quod Deus nullo modo compositus est, seed est omnino simplex.*

Francis Turretin defines simplicity: "The simplicity of God considered not morally, but physically, is his incommunicable attribute by which the divine nature is conceived by us not only as free from all composition and division, but also as incapable of composition and divisibility." Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, trans. George Musgrave Giger (Philipsburg, NJ: P & R, 1992) 3.7.3 (p. 1:191). "Simplicitas *Dei, quatenus non* moraliter, *sed* physice *sumitur, est Attributum ejjus incommunicabile, per quod Natura Divina a nobis concipitur, non solum ut expers omnis compositionis & divisionis, sed etiam incapax componibilitatis & divisiblitatis.*" Francis Turretin, *Institutio Theologiae Elencticae in Qua Status Controversiae Perspicue exponitur, Praecipua Orthodoxorum Argumenta Proponuntur & Vinicantur, & Fontes Solutionum aperiuntur* (Geneva: Samuelem de Tournes, 1679), 3.7.3 (p. 199, emphasis original). Van Mastricht helpfully categorizes the ways in which God is simple:

> Specifically, he is free from composition: (1) of quantitative, or corporeal parts, for he is a spirit (from the preceding theorem), whereas parts belong to a body; (2) of essential parts, matter and form,

While contested today, this doctrine of divine simplicity undergirded many of the claims of the church fathers as they defended the doctrine of the Holy Trinity.[22] If God is not composed of parts, then neither can one claim the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are three components of God's essence; they do not "make up" God. As Louis Berkhof says, "This

which likewise do not occur except in a body; (3) of substance and accident, because all accidents are considered more imperfect than their substance, which is not fitting for the most perfect being, and because accidents are thought to perfect their substances, and that would thus make his substance liable to change and corruption; (4) of essence and existence, because his existence is nothing but the act of his essence, and not something different, which would imply composition; (5) of genus and difference, for the being who is above being [ουσια υπερουσιος] fits into no category with anything else, but stands apart in all respects from all things, and arranges all things into classes of genus and species, and accordingly there is also nothing in him that can be restricted by difference. (Petrus van Mastricht, *Faith in the Triune God*, vol. 2, *Theoretical-Practical Theology*, trans. Todd M. Rester, ed. Joel Beeke [Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage, 2019], 1.2.6.XXII [pp. 144-45])

Nominatim compositionis: 1. ex partibus *corporeis quantitativis; est enim* spiritus, *per* theorema *praecedens, dum partes sunt coporis. 2. Ex partibus* essentialibus, *materia & forma, quae itidem, non nisi in corpus cadunt. 3. Ex* substantia & accidente; *cum accidentia quaevis, sua substantia, censeantur imperfectiora, quod non consistit cum perfectissimo: & accidentia* perficere *censeantur substantias, denique mutationi ac corruptioni, obnoxiam faciant. 4.* Ex essentia & existentia, *cum existentia non sit, nisi actus essentiae, nec diversum quid, quod compositionem inferat. 5. Ex* genere & differentia: *ουσια enim υπερουσιος, in nullo cum aliis convenit; sed per omnia, ab omnibus distat, omnique in classes generum ac specierum digessit: nec proinde etiam in eo est, quod restringi possit, per differentiam.*" Author, *Theoretico-Practica Theologia, Qua Per singula capita Theologica, pars exegetica, dogmatica, elenchtiea & practica, perpetua successione conjugantur.* (W. van der Water, J. v. Poolsum, J. Wagens, G. v. Paddenburg, 1724), 2.6.22 (p. 104, emphasis original).

Bavinck claims,

Simplicity here is the antonym of "compounded." If God is composed of parts, like a body, or composed of *genus* (class) and *differentiae* (attributes of differing species belonging to the same *genus*), substance and accidents, matter and form, potentiality and actuality, essence and existence, then his perfection oneness, independence, and immutability cannot be maintained. . . Accordingly, he is completely identical with the attributes of wisdom, grace, and love, and so on. He is absolutely perfect, the One "than whom nothing higher can be thought." (Herman Bavinck, *God and Creation*, vol. 2, *Reformed Dogmatics*, ed. John Bolt, trans. John Vriend [Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004], 176, emphasis original).

[22] Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 236, 279-96. John Calvin writes, "In the first place, we believe in one God, of a simple essence, and yet, in which there are three distinct persons, as we are taught in the Holy Scriptures, and as the doctrine has been laid down by ancient councils; and we detest all sects and heresies, which the ancient doctors have combatted." John Calvin, *Tracts and Letters of John Calvin*, trans. Marcus Robert Gilchrist, ed. Jules Bonnet (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 2009), 6:373. Cf. John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1960), I.13.22 (pp. 1:147-48). One explanation of unity today that is different than what was classically understood by simplicity is seen in Erickson's statement that "the unity of God may be compared to the unity of a husband and wife." Millard Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2013), 309. His later analogies of twins or speaking of perichoresis as "access to the consciousness of the others" are likewise inapt (312). This understanding of unity is more akin to the unity of a community than the unity of essence.

[simplicity] implies among other things that the three Persons in the Godhead are not so many parts of which the Divine essence is composed."[23] Further, if the Son and Holy Spirit are God, as they must be if they are to be worshipped, then neither can they be composed. Each just is God. Lewis Ayres asserts that in the doctrinal discourse of the Pro-Nicenes, both East and West, "the first and most fundamental shared strategy is a style of reflecting on the paradox of the irreducible unity of the three irreducible divine persons."[24] To deny or modify simplicity is to remove a key axiom for the historic articulations of Trinitarian doctrine.

Atemporal Eternality

Before addressing the doctrine of the eternal processions, one must first precisely identify the doctrine of eternity, a doctrine without which one would understandably conclude that the Son and Spirit are creatures of God the Father. Boethius provided the standard definition of eternity: "Eternity, therefore, is a perfect possession altogether of an endless life."[25]

In light of simplicity, which means that "God is incapable of being divided into parts, either temporal or spatial," the Baptist Paul Helm explains, "God's being in time

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[23] Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 2021), 50. Berkhof goes on to explain, "In recent works on theology the simplicity of God is seldom mentioned. Many theologians positively deny it, either because it is regarded as a purely metaphysical abstraction, or because, in their estimation, it conflicts with the doctrine of the Trinity" (50). The same issue in a current iteration serves as the background to Dolezal, *All That Is in God*.

[24] Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 278.

[25] "*Aeternitas igitur est interminabilis uitae tota simul et perfecta possessio.*" Boethius, *The Consolation of Philosophy*, trans S. J. Tester, Loeb Classical Library 74 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973), 5.6 (pp. 422-23). Aquinas affirms with Boethius that eternity is interminable and without succession, "*tota simul existens.*" Aquinas, *Summa Theologia* I.q10.a1. He then says, "Hence, as God is supremely immutable, it supremely belongs to Him to be eternal. Nor is He eternal only; but He is His own eternity." Aquinas, *Summa Theologia* I.q10.a2 (Shapecoate, 81). ("*Unde, cum Deus sit maxime immutabilis, sibi maxime competit esse aeteernum. Nec solum est aeternus, sed est sua aeternitas*"). Turretin, van Mastricht, and others restate what was given before. Bavinck defines eternity as "Infinity in the sense of not being determined by time." Bavinck, *God and Creation*, 160 (Vriend). Berkhof defines eternity as "*that perfection of God whereby He is elevated above all temporal limits and all succession of moments, and possesses the whole of His existence in one indivisble present.*" Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 48-49, emphasis original.

rules out this simplicity, [but] God's timeless eternity is a necessary condition of it."[26] Since God cannot be parted out between antiquity, contemporaneity, and futurity, it necessarily means God is beyond time.[27] Not only simplicity, but immutability also requires timeless eternality. To help understand the necessary Christian affirmation of eternity, one may simply consider Dolezal's concise definition of time as eternity's opposite: "Successive duration, or *time*, is the measure of a thing's movement from state of being *A* to a different state of being *B*. Eternity, then, is the negation of these three ingredients of all temporality: (1) a term *from* which (*terminus a quo*); (2) a term *to* which (*terminus ad quem*); and (3) the measure of movement between them."[28] Since God does not change from one state of being (*a quo*) to another (*ad quem*), neither is such a thing measurable.

Recalling the earlier discussion of theological language and analogy, all change is measured on the creature's side of the Creator-creature distinction, so change is stated by way of accommodation. Creatures speak of what God did yesterday or what he will do tomorrow in distinction from what he does today in ways that strictly apply to the changes and movement of creation, not to some movement or change in God (Jas 1:17). Further, creatures might speak of God being the Ancient of Days (Dan 7:9), or the one "whose years endure throughout all generations" (Ps 102:24 ESV), but such are creaturely, accommodated ways of speaking of the uncreated, infinite, and immutable Creator. The doctrine of eternity has a controlling effect on what is meant by language about the

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[26] Paul Helm, *Eternal God: A Study of God without Time*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 25.

[27] Augustine says, "He [God] knows nothing else than being. Inasmuch as God is, he knows being; he knows nothing of having been and of being about to be. There is one day there, but it is forever." Augustine, *Homilies on the First Epistle of John (Tractatus in Epistolam Joannis ad Parthos)*, trans. and ed. Bonfiace Ramsey, *The Works of Saint Augustine for the 21st Century* III/14 (New York: New City, 2008), 2.5 (p. 43).

[28] Dolezal, *All That Is in God*, 83-84.

processions, decree, and (eternal) covenant, governed as they are by absolute statements such as "you are the same" (Ps 102:27) and "I the LORD do not change" (Mal 3:6).

Person-Nature Distinction

The person-nature, or proper-common, distinction establishes one of the crucial underlying principles for all Christian theology. In the proper-common distinction, man attempts to delineate the manner in which things are predicated of God in common among the Father, Son, and Spirit, and those things predicated of one in relation to the other. A nature, *ousia*, or essence "denotes the whatness (*quidditatem*) of a thing."[29] As Turretin explains, in the church fathers, sometimes the word "substance" refers to the essence and sometimes to the subsistence or person. Using another of Boethius's key definitions, a person is the "individual substance of a rational nature" (*naturae rantionabilis individua substantial*).[30] Substance here has the sense of "subsistence" rather than a reference to the nature; Boethius would be guilty of tritheism if it meant nature.[31] A subsistence, or person, called *hypostasis* in Greek, is the "who" of a rational nature, the "*quis*." Augustine teaches Christian theologians to distinguish the essence and relations when he says,

> The chief point then that we must maintain is that whatever that supreme and divine majesty is called with reference to itself is said substance-wise; whatever it is called with reference to another is said not substance but relationship-wise; and that such is the force of the expression "of the same substance" in Father and Son and Holy Spirit,

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[29] Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology* 3.23.3 (Giger, 1:253).

[30] Boethius, "A Treatise against Eutyches and Nestorius," in *The Theological Tractates*, ed. Jeffrey Henderson, trans. H. F. Stewart, J. K. Rand, and S. J. Tester, Loeb Classical Library 74 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973), 84-85.

[31] Richard Muller says, "There cannot be three rational essences or natures in the Godhead. Such language—which understands substance as the equivalent of person in the sense of the Aristotelian 'primary substance'—would reduce the unity of the Godhead to a generic unity, with the term 'God' indicating a genus or class of beings rather than a single or sole divine Being." Richard Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics: The Rise and Development of Reformed Orthodoxy, ca. 1520 to ca. 1725*, vol. 4, *The Triunity of God* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003), 174-75. However, there is a sense in which the answer to the question, "Three what?" is "Three Persons," in which case "Person" answers to the question, "what?" Aquinas, *Summa Theologia* I.q29.a4.

that whatever is said with reference to self about each of them is to be taken as adding up in all three to a singular and not a plural.[32]

All theologians say of God's attributes, whether his eternity, simplicity, or anything else, theologians say of his substance or essence as a single divine, simple essence. As theologians speak of the three toward one another, they make statements with respect to their relations of opposition.[33]

Finally, we ought to understand that the distinction between person and nature, the proper and common, serves in precisely this way: it allows us to distinguish *quis* from *quid* and the Father from the Son and Spirit, the Son from the Father and the Spirit, and the Spirit from the Father and the Son. While the person-nature distinction does denote a distinction in God between the Father, Son, and Spirit, it does not constitute what Thomas called a "real distinction" between a Person and the essence, which would make the *ousia/essentia* a different "thing" than the Father or the Son or the Spirit.[34] Following Turretin, it seems preferable to refer to the distinction as "modal," in which "the person may be said to differ from the essence not really (*realiter*), i.e., essentially (*essentialiter*) as thing and thing, but modally (*modaliter*)—as a mode from the thing (*modus a re*)."[35]

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[32] Augustine, *On the Trinity (De Trinitate)*, 2nd ed., trans. Edmund Hill, ed. John E. Rotelle, *The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century* I/5 (New York: New City, 2015), 5.9 (p. 238).

[33] Opposition does not mean against one another in enmity, but in distinction. Thomas warns against using the terms 'diversity' and 'difference,' which he says undermines divine unity, and should instead limit our language to 'distinction' when speaking of relative opposition. Aquinas, *Summa Theologia* I.q31.a2.

[34] Muller explains, "Aquinas's denial of a 'real distinction' between essence and persons is hardly a denial of all distinctions in the Godhead, but only and quite specifically a denial of any substantial distinction between essence and person, in other words, the denial of any distinction that would render the essence one 'thing' and the divine persons other 'things.'" Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, 48. Van Mastricht makes the same point in *Faith in the Triune God*, 1.2.24.VIII (p. 503).

[35] Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology* 3.27.3 (Giger, 1:278). Turretin provides five views on the distinction: "Some maintain that it is real; others formal; others virtual and eminent (of reasoned ratiocination, which although it may not be on the part of the thing, still may have its foundation in the thing); others personal; others, finally, modal" (3.27.2 [Giger, 1:278]). Then, favoring the modal view, he explains, "by which the mode is said to be distinguished from some thing. For the personal properties by which the persons are distinguished from the essence are certain modes by which it may be characterized; not indeed formally and properly . . . but eminently and analogically, all imperfection being removed." (3.27.3 [Giger, 1:278]). He then explains that some have held that the modal distinction between Person

Thus, while a real distinction exists between Person and Person, only a modal distinction should be recognized when speaking of Person and nature. When Christians claim the Son is God, there is an absolute identification between the Person and the nature. What is not meant is that the Son is a distinct being which participates in the category or form "God;" he simply is God.[36] The same is true of the Father and the Spirit, yet "there are not three gods, but there is one God."[37]

Processions

With such strict doctrines as simplicity and eternality in place, the Christian must answer how he can affirm both threeness and oneness without violating the fundamental law of non-contradiction.[38] If generation and spiration are understood in successive terms, then it stands to reason that the Son and Spirit exist subsequent to the Father, or rather that they have passed from non-being into being and this from the Father. With that conception, they would therefore be classified on the "creature" side of the

and essence is sufficient for distinguishing Person from Person, while others have spoken of a real distinction between Person and Person. He seems to follow the latter model. In arguing for a real distinction, it is more precisely "a real minor distinction (*distinctionem realem minorem*, as the Scholastics have it) which exists between a thing and the mode of the thing or between the modes themselves, which coincides with the modal distinction held by others." (3.27.11 [Giger, 1:279]). Thus, the Father subsists in the divine nature as Father (modal distinction), and is distinct from the Son as "mode" and "mode" (real minor distinction). Van Mastricht seems to agree with Turretin in *Faith in the Triune God*, 1.2.24.IX (p. 504). Adonis Vidu says, "*Within the essential divine causality* there obtain real and irreducible distinctions, that there are subsistent relations that distinguish and define the persons over against each other yet never against the substance." Adonis Vidu, *The Same God Who Works All Things: Inseparable Operations in Trinitarian Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2021), 99, emphasis original.

[36] The word "simply" is used in both its technical and colloquial sense. Berkhof clarifies, "While three persons among men have only a *specific* unity of nature or essence, that is, share in the same kind of nature or essence, the persons of the Godhead have a *numerical* unity of essence, that is, possess the identical essence" Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 77. Due to the Creator-creature distinction, and "because the Son is ὁμοούσιος with the Father, existence, as well as wisdom, goodness, and power, are proper to his nature and not derived through participation in some other nature (Nyssen, *Catechtical Oration* 1)." J. Warren Smith, "The Fourth-Century Fathers," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Trinity*, ed. Gilles Emery and Matthew Levering (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 119.

[37] "*Et tamen non tres dii, sed unus est Deus*," Athanasian Creed/Quicumque Vult.

[38] Webster claims, "God is so to be conceived that personal distinction and simplicity are acknowledged as equiprimordial, fully coherent and mutually, though asymmetrically, determinative." Webster, *God and the Works of God*, 29.

Creator-creature distinction, perhaps worthy of some sort of honor, like angels and kings, but unworthy of anyone's worship (Exod 20:3-6).[39] Thus, in speaking of eternal generation and eternal spiration/procession, Christians confess the Persons of the Son and Spirit to be from the Father eternally, without passing from non-being to being (*mutation de non esse in esse*) or from potentiality (i.e., lesser-being-becoming) to actuality (being).[40] Trinitarian procession must therefore be an eternal and internal and necessary act since all external and temporal acts indicate external and temporal objects. The typical analogy used from creation is that of an internal word that is begotten by the intellect and the will that proceeds from the word, explained especially by Aquinas.[41] The Father is the eternal and internal origin of the Son and Spirit, the former procession distinguished as

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[39] Augustine preached, "Begotten by the eternal Father, begotten from eternity, begotten in eternity, with no beginning, with no end, with no length of space, because he is what is, because he himself is who he is." Augustine, *Homilies on the First Epistle of John* 2.5 (Ramsey, 43). John Davenant makes the point,

> We [must] not, from its being said that Christ is *the first-born* [in Colossians 1:15] in respect of the divine nature, infer, that this ineffable generation took its origin from some beginning of time. Christ hath a beginning of origin, viz. his Father of whom he is begotten: but he hath not a beginning of time; for he is begotten by the Father from eternity. Well spake Thomas, *The Son hath not so received from the Father as though receiving afterwards what he had not before: but because he hath his being from the Father even from all eternity: according to that Scripture, The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way,* Prov. viii. 22. *His goings forth have been* a diebus eternitate, *from the days of eternity,* Micah v. 2. *In the beginning*, John i. 1. Therefore this word *first*, when it is spoken concerning God, does not impute a temporal beginning to God, of whom it is affirmed; but only excludes the priority of other things: *I am the first and the last*, Rev. xxii. 13. Nor hence must we infer that God either had a beginning or will have an end; but we must from hence deny that any thing either existed before him, or will continue after him. So, when Christ is called the *first-born,* we are not to infer that therefore he had a temporal beginning of his existence: but we must therefore deny that any thing was co-eval, or more ancient than He." (John Davenant, *Colossians*, Geneva Commentary Series [Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 2009], 186, emphasis original)

[40] Webster explains, "There is certainly active and passive in their relation: the Father begets, the Son does not, but has his personal subsistence by virtue of the Father's act. But the passive generation attributed too the Son, his being generated, is no less an ontological perfection than the Father's active generation." Webster, *God and the Works of God*, 36.

[41] Aquinas, *Summa Theologia* I.q27. Gilles Emery helpfully summarizes the benefit of the analogy: "Here the theologian deploys an analogy which, primarily, suits the spiritual perfection of God; and which, secondly, enables one to grasp clearly what procession is like *in God*; and, thirdly, roots it apart from where Arius and Sabellius had so unproductively planted it." Gilles Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of St Thomas Aquinas*, trans. Francesca Aran Murphy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 60, emphasis original. The mental analogy will be explained, albeit briefly, in chap. 6.

"generation" or "begottenness" and the latter as "procession" or "spiration." At every point, the Christian theologian strives to avoid any notion of creation or inferiority among the Persons of the Godhead. By way of definition, John Webster says, "Eternal generation is the personal and eternal act of God the Father whereby he is the origin of the personal subsistence of God the Son, so communicating to the Son the one undivided divine essence."[42] Likewise, the spiration or breathing of the Spirit is the eternal act of God the Father and God the Son as a common principle whereby they are the joint origin of the personal subsistence of God the Holy Spirit, so communicating to the Holy Spirit the one undivided divine essence.[43]

Procession, not submission. Before progressing to the next component of Trinitarian theology, I must address a contemporary question, particularly because Letham associates this question with the *pactum salutis*.[44] Recently, some have argued that authority and submission characterize the distinctions between the Persons. For instance, Bruce Ware argues, "relation—both ontological and functional expressions of relation—is a central category for understanding the distinctions between the three persons of the Trinity."[45] From here, Ware argues that the "functional" expressions are the authority-submission structure. To those who would argue, as I do, that authority-submission is only *ad extra*, Ware says,

> At minimum, we can say that the economic and contingent expression of this relation *ad extra* is rooted in and expressive of the eternal relations of origin *ad intra*. But beyond this, I argue that if the self-revelation of God truly is exactly that, the self-

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[42] Webster, *God and the Works of God*, 30. I do not propose here to engage in the debate over whether the Son is "autotheos," which Gill would affirm.

[43] For a helpful summary of the argument for the double procession, drawing on the historical case for the *filioque*, see Gregg R. Allison and Andreas J. Köstenberger, *The Holy Spirit*, Theology for the People of God (Nashville: B & H, 2020), 258-64. More will be said in chap. 6 on Pneumatology.

[44] Letham, *Holy Trinity*, 463. Grudem does relate his proposal of ERAS to the *pactum* in *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2020), 308.

[45] Bruce A. Ware, "Unity and Distinction of the Trinitarian Persons," in *Trinitarian Theology: Theological Models and Doctrinal Application*, ed. Keith S. Whitfield (Nashville: B & H, 2019), 23.

revelation *of God*, and if his Father-Son relation depicted in all that we see in Scripture truly describes that relation, then it follows that the relation of authority and submission in the Trinity is indeed eternal (i.e., eternal in the stronger, *ad intra*, sense of eternal.[46]

What Ware calls the minimum in speech about the internal acts of God, I want to label the maximum. God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit has determined to make himself known in the missions, which are the eternal processions with created effects which reveal the processions.[47] However, to say that the submission of the Son must be carried internally (i.e., Person-defining) is—minimally—to assert more than creatures have been given to know or—maximally—to say something untrue of God. It is better to follow Scripture in associating the submission of the Son with his work as Mediator and Head of the elect, and therefore with the Incarnation. This dissertation explicitly locates the *pactum salutis* in the immanent works of God *ad extra* as explained in the following two sections.[48]

Immanent Trinity *Ad Extra*

As theology moves from God *in se* to God *quoad nos*, and from the works of God *ad intra* to the works of God *ad extra*, other questions arise, so the discussion moves to carefully define modes of speech about the external works of God. Webster asks, "Why

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[46] Ware, "Unity and Distinction," 59, emphasis original.

[47] I will provide a larger treatment on, and definition of, the missions later in this chap. in the section, "The Trinity and the Eternal Covenant."

[48] Early Reformed Scholastic William Perkins dealt with questions of inferiority with regard to the Spirit:

> But some will say, how can Christ send His Spirit unto His church, for the person sending and the person sent are unequal, whereas all three persons in [the] Trinity are equal, none greater or lesser than another, none inferior or superior to other? *Answer*. It is true indeed; but we must know that the action of sending in the Trinity makes not the persons unequal but only shows a distinction and order among equals. The Father sends the Son; the Father and the Son both send the Holy Ghost. Yet the Father is not above the Son, neither the Father or the Son above the Holy Ghost; but all are equal in degree, though in regard of order one is before another. And it stands with reason, for two men that are equal in degree may upon mutual consent one send another. (William Perkins "An Exposition of the Creed," in *The Works of William Perkins*, ed. Ryan Hurd [Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage, 2017], 5:268)

For a monograph-length argument against ERAS, see D. Glenn Butner Jr., *The Son Who Learned Obedience: A Theological Case against the Eternal Submission of the Son* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2018).

insert all these layers between God himself and God's temporal acts?" Why distinguish so carefully between what God is without us and what God is to us? Webster states,

> In order to characterize the agent of these acts, and so to come to understand and give due weight to both the acts themselves and their objects. God's outer works are most fully understood as loving and purposive when set against the background of his utter sufficiency—against the fact that no external operation or relation can constitute or augment his life, which is already infinitely replete.[49]

Since God is complete in himself, and since God has chosen to manifest himself to creation, such manifestation must be pure benefit to the creature. There are two main catholic components to consider next, inseparable operations and appropriations, followed by a final push into the doctrine of the *pactum* itself by way of the decree.

Inseparable Operations

Pro-Nicene trinitarianism has argued for the truth of inseparable operations. As Baptist theologian Adonis Vidu makes the biblical case for inseparable operations, he draws on Richard Bauckham's identification of what Vidu calls "distinguishing descriptions" of God and shows that the New Testament applies those to Jesus. The two distinguishing descriptions are those effects that mark the God of Israel as, first, their God in unique covenant (with the redemptive history that entails), and, second, the sole divine being that created all things. Vidu says, "These sets of actions are ascribable to God alone and thus can serve as *discriminating descriptions* of the agent."[50] The New Testament writers take those two distinguishing descriptions and apply them to Christ, and "[w]hen

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[49] Webster, *God and the Works of God*, 6.

[50] Vidu, *The Same God*, 12-13. Cf. Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel: God Crucified and Other Studies on the New Testament's Christology of Divine Identity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 7-11. Vidu later draws on Christopher Tilling, *Paul's Divine Christology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015), 73, to emphasize not just "the inclusion of Christ in the identity of YHWH (per Bauckham)" but also "what we would call a *relational or functional equivalence*" (17, emphasis original). Thus, it is not simply the same acts, but even the relational agent that is identified, such that, as the people of the old covenant related to YHWH, so even does the church relate to Christ. Vidu demonstrates the bearing of this notion on inseparable operations as Christ performs miracles and exorcisms, forgives sin, and claims authority over the Sabbath, while also critiquing the weakness of Tilling's argument in that it only indicates the same kind ("type") of relationship rather than the same identical ("token") relationship. Christ bears the same relationship to the people of God (Israel in the Old Testament) because he is the God of the people (Israel in the Gospels, and the "Israel of God" in the new covenant, Gal 6:16).

precisely the same sets of actions are ascribed to Jesus Christ, the implications are straightforward: Jesus is identified with YHWH, since YHWH is the only possible agent of those actions."[51] He later makes the case that, in addition to the inseparability of the Father and Son and Father and Spirit, "Equally inseparable are the operations and persons of the Son and Spirit."[52] Thus, "speculation about the identity of God (ontology) is derivative of the knowledge of God's activities (economy). The analysis of divine actions, and in particular the actions of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, constitutes the premises of the eventual ontological conclusions."[53] Ayres maintains, "One of the most important principles shared by pro-Nicenes is that whenever one of the divine persons acts, all are present, acting inseparably."[54] This classic doctrinal axiom, *opera trinitatis ad extra indivisa sunt*, might be appropriately defined as "meaning that every *act token* of any Trinitarian person is also an act token of the other persons."[55] Vidu maintains, "In virtue of what the persons are in relation to the substance, they cannot be involved in distinct actions proceeding externally (economic) from this substance. To suppose such diversity in their operations either divides the divine substance into separate acting substances or it

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[51] Vidu, *The Same God*, 12-13.

[52] Vidu, *The Same God*, 34-36.

[53] Vidu, *The Same God*, 19. It should be noted that Vidu follows what he believes to be the church fathers' method of moving "from a common operation to a common indivisible nature" (53).

[54] Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 280. Amandus Polanus, *Syntagma Theologiae Christianae* (Hanoviae: Wechelianus, apud Claudium Marnium, & haeredes Johannis Aubrii, 1609), 1333, "The works of God to the outside, that is what God does outside his nature, are undivided, that is, common to the three persons." (*Opera divinitatis ad extra, hoc est, ea que Deus extra essentiam suam facit, sunt indivisa, hoc est, communia tribus personis*).

[55] Vidu, *The Same God*, xv. Contrast this with the statement that the *indivisa* "should never be taken to mean that the three persons of the Trinity always do exactly the same tasks. Rather, each person of the Godhead acts in a way that is suited to his own person and mission." Guy M. Richard, "The Covenant of Redemption," in *Covenant Theology: Biblical, Theological, and Historical Perspectives*, ed. Guy Prentiss Waters, J. Nicholas Reid, and John R. Muether (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2020), 60. Though Richard clarifies that he means the way the Incarnation, crucifixion, and Pentecost are clearly works ascribed to the Son and the Spirit, making the statement unqualified by types of causation (efficient, final, etc.) leaves one wondering how the Son works *without* the Father and the Spirit.

introduces creation into the very constitution of the persons."[56] The efficient causality of all external actions, or "act tokens," must be the same since the substance is the same and the persons are in no way dependent on creation for their constitution. Thus, all works of the one God are indivisible in that they are the works of all three Persons in unity.[57]

Not similar operations. When first coming to terms with the doctrine of inseparable operations, a natural tendency is to associate it with cooperation. Some analogy may come to mind, perhaps of three men carrying a table or two parents raising children or various Christians singing with one voice. While perhaps place exists for carefully pointing to these as *reflections* of the divine unity and plurality (such as Christ's prayer that his people would be one in John 17:22), possibly under the rubric of vestiges or analogy, the doctrine of inseparable operations points to the one God as the singular efficient cause of all the works of God. For every creaturely work, a multiplicity of wills and powers and energies are involved, the harmony of different beings, not just distinct persons, while the works of God are the works of a singular being.[58] God is one in will

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[56] Vidu, *The Same God*, 101.

[57] One test case appears in Amandus Polanus, who answers the claim that the Father alone is Creator: "Therefore, all persons of the Deity create, but maintain this order and mode in operation, that the Father creates from himself, through the Son & Spirit: the Son from the Father: the Holy Spirit from the Father & Son. Therefore creation is attributed to the Father, but 1. Not alone. 2. For he is the fount of divine works, even also in creation." (*Omnes igitur personae Deitiatis creant, sed servato hoc ordine & modo in operando, ut Pater creet a se, per Filium & Spiritum: Filius a Patre: Spiritus Sanctus a Patre & Filio. Tribuitur igitur Patri creatio, sed 1. Non soli. 2. quia fons est divinarum operationum, proinde & creationis*). Amandus Polanus, *Syntagma Theologiae Christianiae*, 1333.

[58] Vidu argues the church fathers did not see these as "action types," but "action tokens." By action types, he means similar actions performed by categorically similar beings. The problem, of course, with seeing the works of the Trinity as "action types" is that it requires a category of being (deity) that has the capacity to perform a particular "type" of action (e.g., bestow grace), which action type is then performed by the three. Vidu then identifies the act of *creatio ex nihilo* as precluding such a notion since it is a unique act, with no other similar types, and it "is a basic divine act that is not further divisible into other subcomponent parts" of which the three would each have a different role. "To say that the Father, Son, and Spirit create the same things is to ascribe a unity to their operation that is neither of the collective kind, nor of the type kind. That is, there is no division of labor in the act of creation." Vidu, *The Same God*, 55. In this way, Vidu follows Augustine who said,

> Every creature . . . gets its being, to the extent that it is, from the same creator Trinity and derives from that source its own specific nature and is governed by it in the most beautiful order conceivable.

and one in power, so the works of the Persons must be inseparable as caused by the same divine being. "Inseparable operation," says Ayres, "does not mean that three persons are understood as merely co-operating in a given project."[59] Thus, Jesus says, "My Father works until now and I work" (John 5:17), which the Jews rightly take as him equating himself with God (5:18), though their response to that claim was wicked. Since there are not two Creators—the context of the interaction between Jesus and the Jews—it follows that Jesus makes serious claims about the "act token" of creation and his role in it. He is the very same being that created and rested-while-upholding. Rather than claiming there are different parts that each of the divine Persons play in creation, the work of bringing into being that which is not God is the operation of the singular divine power.

Appropriations

        Crucially tied to the affirmation of the inseparable operations of the Trinity as God has revealed himself is the corresponding concept of appropriations.[60] "Appropriations," says Ayres, "is the practice of attributing to one divine person an attribute or action that is common to the Godhead and thus to all divine persons: because the persons work inseparably in the context of the divine simplicity we frequently speak about something as characteristic of a divine person although it is in fact equally true of all divine persons."[61] In utilizing the doctrine of appropriations, theologians aim to explain how the essence and works of God are attributed to one person or another in the biblical

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Not that the Father should be understood to have made one part of the whole creation and the Son another and the Holy Spirit yet another, but that each and every nature has been made simultaneously by the Father through the Son in the Gift of the Spirit. (Augustine, "True Religion" [*De vera Religione*], in *On Christian Belief*, trans. Edmund Hill, ed. Boniface Ramsey, *The Works of Saint Augustine for the 21st Century* I/8 [New York: New City, 2005], 13 [p. 38]).

See the discussion of appropriations in the next section.

    [59] Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 281.

    [60] I will provide a larger treatment on, and definition of, the missions later in this chap. in the section, "The Trinity and the Eternal Covenant."

    [61] Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 297.

storyline. How can Scripture claim the Father or Son or Holy Spirit do something, such as electing, redeeming, and regenerating, while simultaneously claiming there exists but one God? Appropriations, then, is how "we account for the biblical pattern of attributing peculiar divine works to particular divine persons."[62] The doctrine of appropriations is not meant to say an "act token" belongs only to a particular divine Person; rather, "the whole point of appropriation is to illuminate or illustrate the distinct features of each person, even in those undivided external acts of the Trinity where no distinct personal action is manifest."[63]

Not sabellianism/modalism. While various theologians often employ the term "mode of being" in articulating the doctrine of the Trinity, readers should carefully avoid interpreting this phrase modalistically, or along the lines of Sabellianism. Sabellius argued that the Divine persons were different names based only on God's actions, and so they were merely different names for the one person or actor. Thomas explains briefly that Sabellius said, "God the Father is called Son on account of his assuming flesh from the virgin. And he is also called Holy Spirit on account of his sanctifying rational creature and moving it to life."[64] Conversely, Christians have argued that the Trinity is irreducibly triune, always three while always one, and that the "three" refers to the Persons, relations, or hypostases, while the "one" refers to the essence, substance, or *ousia*. Instead of masks God puts on over the course of redemptive history—first as Father, then as Son, and finally as Holy Spirit—Christians have affirmed the revelation of the three eternal Persons. To demonstrate the distinction of Persons, Christians have often pointed to the revelation of

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[62] Richard C. Barcellos, *Trinity & Creation: A Scriptural and Confessional Account* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2020), 87.

[63] Fred Sanders, *Fountain of Salvation: Trinity & Soteriology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2021), 50.

[64] "*Et sic accepit Sabellius, dicens ipsum Deum patrem filium dici, secundum quod carnem assumpsit ex virgine. Et eundem dicit spiritum sanctum, secundum quod craturam rationalem sanctificat, et ad vitam movet.*" Aquinas, *Summa Theologia* I.q27.a1.

the three Persons at the baptism of Christ, in which the voice from heaven calls him his Son and the Spirit descends. Further, the Son speaks to the Father in the garden of Gethsemane (Mark 14:36) and promises to send another Helper from the Father (John 15:26). In the affirmation of inseparable operations and appropriations, Christian theology has not sought to deny the distinctions between the Persons. Rather, these doctrines have generally been the underlying axioms that have conditioned theological formulations of the distinctions in God's acts to the outside. I will outline the modes of subsisting and modes of acting later in this chapter, such that all things are from the Father, through the Son, and in the Spirit.

The Eternal Decree

In the words of the Baptist Catechism, "The decrees of God are his eternal purpose, according to the counsel of his will whereby, for his own glory, he has foreordained whatsoever comes to pass."[65] Even in such a short statement, the early Protestants demonstrate the difficulty of human language and concepts. It is not his "eternal purposes" that could make grammatical sense since the antecedent "decrees" is in the plural. Instead, the Catechism speaks of "his eternal purpose." The Reformed, including the Particular Baptists, were intent on saying two things at once. First, Christians must confess the singularity of the decree due to the various doctrines maintained concerning theology proper, particularly the doctrine of divine simplicity and aseity. However, second, creatures are driven to using complex language because we are complex beings; we are driven to speak of what is singular in plural terms. It is more than the fact that we only know how to use complex speech; it is the complexity of the being that is effected. The

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[65] Baptist Catechism, Q. 10. The catechism has often been called "Keach's Catechism," but no evidence exists that he authored it. The same question and answer are in the Westminster Shorter Catechism 7. *A Brief Instruction in the Principles of Christian Religion: Agreeable to the Confession of Faith, put forth by the ELDERS and BRETHREN of many Congregations of Christians, (baptized upon Profession of their Faith) in London and the Country; owning the Doctrine of Personal Election, and Perseverance*, 5th ed. (London: 1695), 4.

object of the decree—that which is decreed—is plural, but the decreeing Being is singular, simple. Thus, even in talking about the "decrees" we confess that it is first the "decree."

This singular decree must be spoken of in a twofold distinction: immanent and transitive.[66] Since we will primarily focus on the former in the rest of this chapter, an explanation of the latter is helpful here. Admittedly, much of the same ground is covered multiple times to clarify the distinctions. The transitive acts of God are those acts of God considered in their termination in the creature. While the decree is God's internal will of all things external to him—creation, preservation, governance, and redemption—when the *opera Dei ad extra* are discussed as transitive, theologians are discussing the termination of those works upon creatures. Thus, though decreed eternally in God, the works of creation or redemption terminate in some creature, such as the earth or man. The effects have their existence from God, but insofar as we speak of them in their created terminus, we speak of them as transitive, as passing from Creator to the creature.

Immanent

The Reformed divines spoke of the decree in the two senses described previously within the context of the *opera Dei ad extra*.[67] Letham rightly follows this, explaining,

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[66] The distinction made here appears in various Reformed scholastics as seen in Heinrich Heppe, *Reformed Dogmatics*, ed. Ernst Bizer, trans. G. T. Thomson (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2007), 133-36. But a slightly more contemporary use of the distinction appears in Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 91. The Latin term *transeunt* is sometimes used instead.

[67] While this section largely takes into account the work of later Reformed scholastics, the same distinction between God *in se* and *quoad nos* appears earlier in Calvin as well. For a clear argument distinguishing these concepts in Calvin and explaining his insistence on a degree of apophaticism, see Paul Helm, "God *in Se* and *Quoad Nos*," in *John Calvin's Ideas* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 11-34. Though Herman Bavinck speaks of the decree as *ad intra*, he does so mistakenly. Bavinck, *God and Creation*, 342. Joel R. Beeke and Paul M. Smalley follow him in this in their *Systematic Theology: Revelation and God* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2019), 1:958-59, and Muller does the same in *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, 265. This does seem to be a common mistake presently. However, in all my reading of the Protestant Scholastics, whether Lutheran or Reformed, I have not seen them say the *opera Dei ad intra* are anything other than the processions, or relations of origin. Petrus van Mastricht does seem to operate with a twofold distinction between immanent and transitive, and then he divides the immanent into personal works (processions) and essential works, which he then subdivides between the essential works of the Persons

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Opera ad intra refers to intra-Trinitarian works, the relations between the three persons, generation and procession. *Opera ad extra* are the works of God relating to his creation, whether immanent (decrees) or emanant (flowing out: creation, providence, and grace). Precisely because God is the living Trinity, these works are possible and rendered actual.[68]

Things internal to God can be conceptualized in two ways, *ad intra* and immanent, and things external to God can be spoken of in two ways, immanent and transitive. Thus, Turretin says,

> The divine acts admit of a threefold distinction. (1) There are immanent and intrinsic acts having no respect to anything outside of God (such are the personal acts—to beget, to spirate—of which there is an absolute necessity without power to the opposite). (2) Others are extrinsic and transient acts which are not in God, but from him effectively and in creatures subjectively (as to create, to govern)—these are temporal acts and God is denominated extrinsic only from them. (3) There are acts immanent and intrinsic in God, but connoting a respect and relation (*schesin*) to something outside of God (such are the decrees, which are nothing else than the counsels of God concerning future things out of himself).[69]

The works that terminate within God, which is what is meant by using the term *opera ad intra*, with *ad* denoting the locus of termination, are only begottenness and procession.

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toward each other (e.g., the Father and Son knowing, loving, and glorifying one another) and God toward man (e.g., knowing, loving, electing, and reprobating him) 1.3.1.VII. From this, it seems that what he calls the personal immanent works are the *opera Dei ad intra*, while the *essential* works are *immanent opera Dei ad extra*. The Father and Son's knowing, loving, and glorifying of each other would then apply to the way the missions magnify the Persons. The explication of the decree and missions provided in this section are thus consistent with van Mastricht's formulation since he does not seem to say anything materially different than Turretin.

[68] Letham, *Systematic Theology*, 172. Likewise, when Turretin transitioned from the decree to creation, he said, "Thus far we have treated the immanent acts of God *ad extra*, commonly called the decrees. We intend now to speak of the transient and external acts (called the works of God) by which he executes his decrees outside of himself." Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology* 5.1.1 (Giger, 1:431). "Hactenus de Actionibus Dei immanentibus ad extra, quae vulgo, Decretum dicuntur, actum. Nunc de Actionibus transeuntibus, & externis, dicendum, quae Opera Dei vocantur, quibus Decretorum suorum executionem extra se molitur," 5.1.1, emphasis removed.

[69] Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology* 4.1.4 (Giger, 1:311). "Actus divini *trifariam distinguuntr, 1. Sunt* actus immanentes & instrinseci, *qui nullum habent respectum ad extra; Tales sunt actus personales gignere, spirare, quorum est absoluta necessitas, sine potentia ad oppositum. 2. Alii sunt* actus extrinseci & transeuntes*, qui non sunt in Deo, sed a Deo effective, & creaturis subjective, ut creare, gubenare; Isti sunt actus temporales, & Deus extrinsecus tantum ab iis denominatur. 3. Sunt* actus immanentes & intinseci *in Deo, sed connotantes respectum & ad extra; qualia sunt Decreta, qua nihil aliud sunt quam* Consilia Dei de rebus extra se futurus," 4.1.4, emphasis original.

Otherwise, creatures must be silent about the *opera ad intra* since what is internal to God is only accessible by revelation.

However, things to the outside (*ad extra*) may be spoken of (1) as they exist from God's determination and (2) as they terminate, or come to pass, in creation. We may say such things exist in the mind of God because of either explicit revelation from God or necessary causal dependence of something outside of God upon God. All things come to pass in time as they were determined in the mind of God and by the will of God. This claim is something both revealed and deduced since God "works all things according to the counsel of his will" (Eph 1:11), and the very notion of God in biblical understanding entails a determinative agent effecting the outworking of space-time.[70] Thus, as theology (*theologia*) moves to economy (*oikonomia*), the theologian must first recognize the conception of the economy in the mind of God before moving to how it has its outworking in the life of the creature. Berkhof insists, "This is the only proper theological method. A theological discussion of the works of God should take its starting point in God, both in the work of creation and in that of redemption or recreation. It is only as issuing from, and as related to, God that the works of God come into consideration as part of theology."[71] The decree, then, is the eternal will of God distinct from the execution of that decree in time and space. In figure 1, the components of theological sentences (e.g., "The Father begets the Son," "God creates creation") are labeled to clarify the distinctions being made here.

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[70] The statement that it "entails a determinative agent" certainly draws on the overall biblical definition of God. Debates over natural theology need not occupy attention here.

[71] Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 90.

Opera Dei Ad Intra[72]	*Opera Dei Ad Extra*
Begets	Creates/Preserves/Governs

Father ⟶ Son

Spirate

Holy Spirit

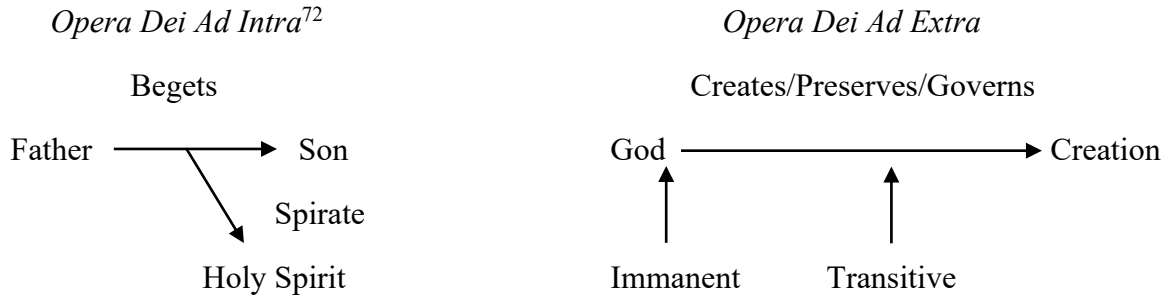God ⟶ Creation

Immanent   Transitive

Figure 1. *Ad intra/extra* distinction

In the figure, the categorical distinctions protect theologians from making God's being dependent on creation in any way. The *opera Dei ad intra* do not depend in any way upon the creation, and the missions of the Son and the Spirit are not constitutive of their relations of origin. Discussion of the *opera Dei ad intra* is categorically distinct from the discussion of the *opera Dei ad extra* since the former addresses God *in se* and the necessary acts (generation and spiration) while the latter considers God *quoad nos* and his free acts (those things which belong to the creation). Nevertheless, God *quoad nos* is the same simple triune God willing the creation, preservation, and governance of all things not-God. Scripture testifies that God "created all things, and through your will they existed and were created" (Rev 4:11) and that all things happen according to his will (Eph 1:11). In contrast to the failing plans of man is the ever-firm "counsel of the LORD" (Ps 33:1-11; cf. Prov 19:21).[73] Not only does keeping the distinction between the *ad intra* and *ad extra*

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[72] A helpful explanation of different notions of the relations of origin—with accompanying diagrams—is provided in Allison and Köstenberger, *Holy Spirit*, 258-64. The one used here for the *opera Dei ad intra* is similar to theirs. However failingly the diagram does this, it aims to affirm the *Filioque* by indicating the Father and Son are a joint principle. I will discuss the *Filioque* at greater length in chap. 6.

[73] While other texts are clearer, and the whole of biblical teaching draws this out, it may be that the distinction in two ways of speaking of God's will is seen in 1 Pet 3:17. Peter says suffering for the Christian may happen "if the will of God wills" (εἰ θέλοι τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ). The nominal use of "will" could indicate the decree while the verbal use could indicate its execution. In other words, it could be that Peter is telling the Christians to endure suffering if they find by its execution that this was the will (i.e., decree) of God. As is mentioned in almost any treatment of the biblical notion of the decree, there are several words and passages used in the two Testaments communicating the notion that God wills whatever comes to pass, including Hebrew and Greek terms for "will" in general as well as those denoting "good pleasure," "delight," and "counsel." This was noted in the chapter on Gill. One that is not often included—but noted by Beeke and Smalley—is the "mystery" of God. Beeke and Smalley, *Systematic Theology*, 1:959-60.

protect against the claim that creation is necessary, but the further distinction between the immanent and transitive protects against the claim that what is decreed is the same as the realization of the decree. While the former danger may lead to a form of pantheism, the latter may lead to such conclusions as the doctrine of eternal justification.[74]

While the decree encompasses all things that come to pass in the creation, preservation, and governance of the galaxies and molecules, treatments of the decree focus on the central thread of history: man's salvation. During theological disputation, several positions have been proposed about where the decree of election appears in the order of the decrees, specifically in relation to the fall.[75] Regardless of whether a particular theologian advocates for a supralapsarian or infralapsarian order of the decrees, the aim of explicating a decree has been to explain that the things that happen in the unfolding history of redemption have their grounding in the purpose of the eternal God.

Though the decree encompasses all things, theology gives special attention to the election and salvation of man. However, to be yet more precise, Duby rightly claims, "A number of scriptural texts may be invoked to substantiate the claim that the manifestation of God's glory in Christ is the central content and telos of the divine decree."[76] As the eternal *pactum salutis* is a manner of speaking of the missions "decreed" in relation to God's glory in Christ in redemption, it is appropriate to follow Turretin in saying election "should be considered antecedently to the mission of Christ and the preaching of the gospel (which was instituted for their sake)."[77]

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[74] Rightly Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 93-94.

[75] For a helpful taxonomy of the different positions on the decree, see Benjamin B. Warfield, *The Plan of Salvation: Five Lectures* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1915), 33.

[76] Duby, *God in Himself*, 172.

[77] Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology* 4.18.23 (Giger, 1:429).

The Trinity and the Eternal Covenant

The eternal covenant, whether considered distinct from the covenant of grace or—as with Keach and Gill—simply the "eternal pole" of the covenant of grace, belongs most properly to our knowledge of God from the economy of redemption. In our exposition of the doctrine, we will consider the divine missions, the *pactum salutis*, and how some of the items outlined in the previous sections constrain our conception.

Divine Missions

As defined by Thomas Aquinas, the divine missions are the eternal processions with a created effect.[78] The created effect is "the divine person's relation to the creature in whom this person is made present in a new way."[79] To avoid any notion of mutability for the Person, whether the Son or the Spirit, on the two poles of Creator and creature, the missions are the processions on the Creator "side" while they are the "created effects" and "new mode of existing" on the creature "side."[80] All change is in the creature. Thus, the Son is said to be sent into the world inasmuch as he is the Person begotten by the Father (procession) who unites a human nature to himself (created effect). In the Incarnation, creation is brought into a new relation to the eternally begotten Son, first in the human nature he assumes to himself, and second in the new relation man has to God by means of the Incarnation.

Any consideration of the doctrine of Incarnation must necessarily begin with the doctrine of God and must address the distinction between the persons and the nature of God. It is necessary to begin here because we must be able to account for it being the Word or Son, not the Father or the Spirit, who "became flesh and tabernacled among us"

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[78] Aquinas, *Summa Theologia* I.q27.a1.

[79] Dominic Legge, *The Trinitarian Christology of St Thomas Aquinas* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 15.

[80] Aquinas, *Summa Theologia* I.q43.a1.

(John 1:14).[81] To this point, the chapter has sought to explain the persons relative to one another *ad intra*, sometimes referred to as the immanent Trinity. First, all distinctions are considered between relations (*relative*) rather than between substances (*substantialiter*).[82] Scripture does not permit oppositional/differentiated divine beings, for "the LORD our God is one" (Deut 6:4; cf. 1 Cor 8:4) and "there is no other God" beside him (Isa 45:5), so theology must make sense of the New Testament statements about the Word being with God, being God (John 1:1), and knowing the Father as the "only begotten God in the bosom of the Father" (John 1:18). Yet the "scriptures cannot be broken" (John 10:35), the Bereans were commended for comparing the apostle Paul's teaching to the scriptures (Acts 17:11), and some, such as Nicodemus, were rebuked for not recognizing that the scriptures bore witness to Christ's advent (John 3:10; cf. Luke 24:25-27). One must not say the New Testament God differs from the God who reveals himself in the Old Testament, even if the revelation differs respecting its clarity.[83] The distinction between the persons in the one God is between the Father as the relational origin, the Son as begotten of the Father, and the Spirit as proceeding from the Father and the Son.[84]

I noted, second, two processions in God, the Son from the Father and the Spirit from the Father and Son as a single principle, but one may also speak of two processions

[81] All translations, of Scripture or otherwise, are the author's unless noted. For an argument explaining how such an act can be predicated of the immutable God, see James Dolezal, "Neither Subtraction, Nor Addition: The Word's Terminative Assumption of a Human Nature," *Nova et Vetera* 20, no. 1 (Winter 2022): 133-57.

[82] Augustine, *On the Trinity (De Trinitate)*, 2nd ed., trans. Edmund Hill, ed. John E. Rotelle, vol. 5.9, *The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century* I/5 (New York: New City, 2015), 238. By using the term *relationship-wise*, it is clear that the translator (Hill) is seeking to communicate Augustine's argument that we are speaking of relations, which is categorically distinct from speaking of substances. Augustine's aim is to demonstrate that the Christian claim to worship a God that is one and three is not formally contradictory since there is a categorical difference in what is meant by one and what is meant by three.

[83] Fred Sanders, *The Triune God*, New Studies in Dogmatics (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016), 209-37.

[84] This form may be considered parochial to the Western church, but it is both biblical (John 15:26; 16:7) and theologically reasonable, cf. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* I.q36; Augustine, *De Trinitate* V.15.

in another way. Thomas says, "While generation and spiration are only from eternity, on the other hand procession and giving are spoken of in God eternally and temporally. For the Son proceeds eternally as he is God, but also temporally as man according to the visible mission or as he indwells man according to the invisible mission."[85] So procession may be spoken of *ad intra*, which is called generation in reference to the Son and spiration in reference to the Spirit, and it may be further spoken of *ad extra* and temporally in reference to the temporal mission of the Son visibly and invisibly. Further,

> Mission is not only about the procession from the principle, but determines the term of the temporal procession. Thus, the mission is only temporal, but the mission includes the eternal procession and the other, the temporal effect known, is added to it. For the relation [*habitudo*] of the divine person to its principle must certainly be eternal. Thus, it is called a twin procession, which is certainly eternal and temporal; not because there is a twin relation [*habitudo*] to the principle, but it is double on the part of the term, temporal and eternal.[86]

While one would be tempted to make procession the sole focus, a relation that disregards the distinction between eternity and time, delineating procession and mission allows for a clear distinction without thereby creating new divine relations.

Divine Missions and the *Pactum Salutis*

Scott Swain and Michael Allen demonstrate perhaps the most helpful key to the transition between the processions and missions in terms of the Son's natures in "The Obedience of the Eternal Son."[87] While they mainly seek to demonstrate that Barthians

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[85] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologia: Prima Pars, 1-49*, trans. Fr. Laurence Shapcote, ed. John Mortensen and Enrique Alarcón (Lander, WY: The Aquinas Institute for the Study of Sacred Doctrine, 2012), I.q43.a2 (p. 439, my translation). (*Generatio autem, et spiratio solum ab aeterno: processio autem, et exitus dicuntur in divinis et aeternaliter, et termporaliter: nam Filius ab aeterno processit, ut sit Deus: temporaliter autem, ut etiam sit homo secundum missionem visibilem, vel etiam ut sit in homine secundum invisibilem missionem.*)

[86] Aquinas, *Summa Theologia* I.q43.a2 (p. 439, my translation). (*Missio non solum importat processionem a principio, sed determinat processionis terminum temporalem. Unde missio solum est temporalis, vel missio includit processionem aeternam, et aliquid addit, scilicet temporalem effectum. Habitudo enim divinae personae ad suum principium non est nisi ab aeterno: unde gemina dicitur processio, aeterna scilicet, et temporalis; non propter hoc, quod habitudo ad principium germinetur; sed geminatio est ex parte termini temporalis, et aeterni*)

[87] Scott Swain and Michael Allen, "The Obedience of the Eternal Son," *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 15, no. 2 (April 2013): 114-34.

need not reconstruct historic trinitarian metaphysics, they do well to demonstrate the fittingness of the eternal Son's proper work in the economy of redemption.[88] They argue, "The obedience of the eternal Son in the economy of salvation is the proper mode whereby he enacts the undivided work of the Trinity 'for us and for our salvation.'"[89] To reword this in a way more congruent to the argument constructed here, it is fitting that the Son is obedient in the economy of redemption by which the eternal decree of the salvation of sinners for the glory of the triune God is carried out.

First, Swain and Allen define proper acts: "For Aquinas [with whom they agree], a proper act is one in which a divine person 'acts in the distinct mode of his relation with the other persons' in carrying out the undivided work of the Trinity."[90] Following the axiom *modus agendi sequitur modus essendi*, they continue, "As the Son's proper mode of being God consists in the pure relation wherein he receives his being from the Father, so the Son's proper mode of acting as God consists in the pure relation wherein he receives his actions from the Father. 'Receptive filiation' is the Son's proper mode of being and acting as the one true and living God."[91] This simply expands the Nicene confession that the Son is "God from God" and "Light from Light" and "very God from very God."[92] The relations of the persons are such that the Son is what he is from the Father.

In this regard, the key text Swain and Allen consider is John 5:19-30. John 5:19 says, "Then Jesus answered and said to them, 'Truly, truly I say to you, the Son can do

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[88] Swain and Allen, "The Obedience of the Eternal Son," 116.

[89] Swain and Allen, "The Obedience of the Eternal Son," 117. Kyle Claunch argues, likewise, that there is a fittingness to the Son's Incarnation and obedience while also cautioning against the possible dangers of pressing this into the *opera Dei ad intra*. Kyle D. Claunch, "God Is the Head of Christ: Does 1 Corinthians 11:3 Ground Gender Complementarity in the Immanent Trinity?," in *One God in Three Persons: Unity of Essence, Distinction of Persons, Implications for Life*, ed. Bruce A. Ware and John Starke (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015), 65-93.

[90] Swain and Allen, "The Obedience of the Eternal Son," 123.

[91] Swain and Allen, "The Obedience of the Eternal Son," 123-24. "*Modus agendi sequitur modus essendi*" means "the mode/manner of acting follows the mode/manner of being."

[92] *Deo de Deo, Lumen de Lumine, Deum verum de Deo vero.*

nothing from himself [*aph heautou*], nothing except what he sees the Father doing, for what he does, these the Son does likewise.'"[93] Calvin arrests the difficulty of this text by arguing that it refers to the humanity of the Son: "The discourse does not relate to the simple Divinity of Christ, and those statements which we shall immediately see do not simply and of themselves relate to the eternal Word of God, but apply only to the Son of God, so far as he is manifested in the flesh."[94] Calvin understands the text to mean that Christ is only speaking of himself insofar as he is man, and thus he only does the will of the Father in and through his human will. However, John later records the Lord announcing, "But when he comes, the Spirit of truth, he will guide you into all truth. For he will not speak from himself [*aph heautou*], but whatever he hears, and he will proclaim to you the things that are to come."[95] The connection of the language between the two passages leads Swain and Allen to rightly conclude, "Because this language cannot be reduced to the Spirit's forma servi—because he has no forma servi (!), so it should not be reduced to the Son's forma servi."[96] Rather, the missions of the Son and Spirit have their origin in the eternal origins of the Father and the Father-and-Son. Thus, "just as it is the Son's proper modus essendi to have life in himself and to have it from the Father who

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[93] Ἀπεκρίνατο οὖν ὁ Ἰησοῦς καὶ ⌜ἔλεγεν αὐτοῖς ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, οὐ δύναται ὁ υἱὸς ποιεῖν ἀφ᾽ ἑαυτοῦ οὐδὲν ἐὰν μή τι βλέπῃ τὸν πατέρα ποιοῦντα· ἃ γὰρ ἂν ἐκεῖνος ποιῇ, ταῦτα καὶ ὁ υἱὸς ὁμοίως ποιεῖ. Interestingly, a survey of John's usage of απο has more reference to origination than authority, and the latter is an entailment of the former. Though the ESV's rendering "nothing of his own accord" gives a possible sense of the text—the emphasis is shifted from origination to relations of authority. Cf. John 7:18; 8:28, 42; 14:10. The same should be noted in the next chapter regarding the translation of the Spirit's work in John 16:13.

[94] John Calvin, *Commentary on the Gospel according to John*, trans. William Pringle (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2010), 1:198.

[95] ὅταν δὲ ἔλθῃ ἐκεῖνος, τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας, ὁδηγήσει ὑμᾶς ἐν τῇ ἀληθείᾳ πάσῃ· οὐ γὰρ λαλήσει ἀφ᾽ ἑαυτοῦ, ἀλλ᾽ ὅσα ἀκούσει λαλήσει καὶ τὰ ἐρχόμενα ἀναγγελεῖ ὑμῖν.

[96] Swain and Allen, "The Obedience of the Eternal Son," 125. "*Forma servi*" means "form of a servant" and is drawn from Paul's language in Phil 2:7.

begets him, so it is the Son's proper *modus agendi* to raise the dead and to have this power from the Father who sends him."[97]

This affirmation of an eternal *taxis*, or ordering, among the Persons stands in contrast to Millard Erickson. He says the "life of each flows through each of the others, so that each can be said to be the basis of the life of each of the others."[98] Similarly, he later says, "Rather than one member of the Trinity being the source of others' being, and thus superior to them, we would contend that each of the three is eternally derived from each of the others, and all three are eternally equal."[99] While it is not necessary to say that one is the "superior" to the other, nor that *taxis* demands inequality, it has been demonstrated here that *taxis*, or the order of subsisting, makes the best sense of the biblical testimony and best coheres with the witness of earlier generations of Christians.

While it may be pressing things too far to call the mission obedience in itself, which may be the door Swain and Allen are attempting to open, it is, in theological terms, *conveniens* (fitting) that the one who has his proper mode from the Father is the one to become man. One may rightly say the Son is "God from God, Light from Light, very God from very God, Will from Will." If this is correct, and there must be no reason for denying it,[100] then it is *conveniens* that he who has his will from the Father (*modus*

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[97] Swain and Allen, "The Obedience of the Eternal Son," 126. Swain and Allen are drawing on the modal distinction outlined earlier in this chapter.

[98] Millard J. Erickson, *Making Sense of the Trinity: 3 Crucial Questions* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), 67.

[99] Erickson, *Making Sense of the Trinity*, 90.

[100] Consider, for instance, Augustine's attempt to make sense of the biblical language about Christ as "the power of God and the wisdom of God" (1 Cor 1:24). He concludes that we must be able to say that he is "Power from Power" and "Wisdom from Wisdom" "just as he is light from light, God from God." Augustine, *De Trinitate*, 13.9. cf. 6-7.4 (p. 276, Hill). Aquinas makes this move, saying, "Thus, just as the Son is the Word, that is wisdom begotten, even so it is possible to say nature or will or power begotten, that is received through generation" (*ut sicut Filius est Verbum, id est spientia geinta, ita posset dici natura vel voluntas vel potential genita, idest per gerationem accepta*). "De Potentia" in *Disputed Questions*, Q10 A.2, *respondeo*. q10.a2.*resp*., accessed April 14, 2022, https://aquinas.cc/la/en/~QDePot,

essendi) would thus come (*modus agendi*) to do the will of the Father as man, assuming to himself another will in doing so.

In his classic *Golden Chain*, William Perkins says that the "subordination which is of the Son to the Father is not in the divine essence severally and distinctly considered, but in the relation or manner of having the essence."[101] This statement should not be taken to mean the Son submits to the Father eternally, i.e., in the divine essence, but that it is the same eternal Son who does in fact submit to the Father. How and when he submits belongs to the Incarnation in which he who eternally subsists (a mode of subsisting, or manner of having the essence) as Son submits as man's federal head to the one who eternally subsists as Father. Letham is right when says, "The biblical texts cited in support of the *pactum salutis* all refer to the incarnate Christ in his work as Mediator," and that "they do not apply to the intra-Trinitarian relations as such."[102] This is true insofar as the *pactum* has must be applied to the decreed mission of the Son, as seen here.

The doctrine of the decree considers God as the origin and source of all things, directing them to himself as their final end in a manner that is most wise, especially in the salvation of the elect in the work of Christ. Following this, the *pactum salutis* focuses in on the decree's specific relation to the missions. The decree is common to the Father, Son, and Spirit such that it can be said that the Son decreed the work "with his Father before

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Steven J. Duby takes up the question of distinct wills versus modification of the singular will (i.e., modes of subsisting in the divine will):

> It is fitting to maintain that the Father, Son and Spirit share the one essence and thus the singular marks of personhood (intellect and will) in God. Yet each has or really is the divine essence (with its attributes) *in his own peculiar manner*. Thus, without compromising the numerical unity of the essence and attributes, one can affirm that the Father, Son and Spirit are emphatically personal—not just modes of subsisting but *personal* modes of subsisting—and, modifying the divine intellect and will in diverse ways, are in this sense fit for personal communion with one another. (Steven J. Duby, *Divine Simplicity: A Dogmatic Account*, T & T Clark Studies in Systematic Theology 30 [London: T & T Clark, 2016], 214-15, emphasis original)

[101] William Perkins, *A Golden Chain*, in *The Works of William Perkins*, vol. 6, ed. Joel R. Beeke and Greg A. Salazar (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage, 2018), 55.

[102] Letham, *Systematic Theology*, 436.

the foundation of the world."[103] It is not common to see treatments of the decree outside the biblical imagery/analogy of two individuals coming together to form a pact or covenant. Thus, it is easy to assume the *pactum salutis* is founded on bitheist or tritheist grounds, either the Father and the Son as two equal gods, or the Father, Son, and Spirit as three equal gods, each coming together to make an agreement by means of their own distinct wills. However, students of the *pactum salutis* must recognize that affirmations of the doctrine appear in the context of sermons and biblical exposition, both of which are very comfortable using mundane images to communicate truth. That said, it is possible to place the *pactum salutis* in the more technical context of the divine decree.

As the termination of the decree occurs in time, and as the things decreed have their origin in God, so too the missions—the created effects united to the processions—are determined in the mind of God. Since the processions are *ad intra*, the missions are temporal effects *ad extra* united to the processions, and all that happens in time is dependent on the will/decree of God determining it as its efficient cause, the *pactum salutis* is a way of stating precisely that determination. Vidu says discussing the missions "shifts the conversation from the *what* to the *who*. . . . While the effects of the operations are in our world, their source—agency—is not."[104] In like manner, the *pactum salutis* is how theological discourse locates the accomplishment of redemption by the Son and application of redemption by the Spirit in the eternal plan of the triune God to redeem the elect for himself through the Son by the Spirit. As Fesko says, "The *pactum salutis* is the covenantal framework for the intra-trinitarian processions and missions that unveil the unified will of God in a threefold manner to share the love of God with fallen sinners."[105]

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[103] Boethius, "De Fide Catholica," in Henderson, *The Theological Tractates*, 68-69. "Then Christ is slain, lays three days and nights in the tomb, rises again from the dead, just as he had decreed with his Father before the foundation of the world" (*Occiditur ergo Christus, iacet tribus diebus ac noctibus in sepulchre, resurgit a mortuis, sicut ante constitutionem mundi ipse* cum patre decreverat [emphasis added]).

[104] Adonis Vidu, *The Divine Missions: An Introduction* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2021), xiv.

[105] Fesko, *The Trinity*, 145.

The work has now been done to define the classical location of the *pactum*: *The* pactum salutis *is the missions in planning.*

Since Scripture relates all things to Christ in the unfolding plan of redemption, some of which will be demonstrated in the following chapter, exposition of the *pactum salutis* may rightly include a treatment of the whole of Scripture within its Christotelic determination. This inclusion was apparent in Keach but especially in Gill. Likewise, summarizing Nehemiah Coxe, Samuel Renihan says,

> In the covenant of redemption it was not just the salvation of sinners that was entrusted to God the Son, but "the Government of the whole World was actually put into the hands of the Son of God. . . . And by him were all future Transactions managed for the Good of Man, and all discoveries of Grace and Mercy were made to the Children of Men in him, and by him."[106]

Even though treating the decree offers the theologian space to recognize both the breadth of "all things" and particularity of "the elect" in God's plan, and even though the decree centers on and highlights Christ's work since election was "in/through Christ" before the foundation of the world (Eph 1:3-14), incorporation of the *pactum salutis* encourages contemplation of God's manifestation of his triune glory in the manner decreed.[107] The overlap between the two doctrines appeared even in Dickson's statement at the beginning of this dissertation. While many might associate the Calvinistic doctrine of election with decretal theology, Dickson considered it under the heading of the *pactum salutis*.

Clarifications

Because God is simple, because the *pactum salutis* is an analogical expression of God's eternally decreeing the missions in time, and because God has chosen to speak to man by the analogy of a covenant, proper negations must accompany expositions of the

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[106] Samuel D. Renihan, *From Shadow to Substance: The Federal Theology of the English Particular Baptists (1642-1704)*, Centre for Baptist History and Heritage Studies 16 (Oxford: Regent's Park College, 2018), 237.

[107] For an argument for the *pactum* from Eph 1, see Fesko, *The Trinity*, 110-17.

pactum by those committed to classical theism. These clarifications will also respond to the challenges posed by Letham earlier in the chapter.

Analogy and three wills. In using the language of a covenant, one may be tempted to fall into univocal speech and thought. This danger was noted at the beginning of the chapter from the work of John Peckham who expressed an understanding of the *pactum* as necessarily entailing "*distinct* wills of the trinitarian persons."[108] One of Letham's concerns in using the language of "covenant" is that we too easily impose everything from human covenants upon God and fall into either subordinationism or tritheism, particularly in speaking of "wills."[109] However, in using the language of a covenant, we mean there is a divinely-given analogy between the singular determination of redemptive history and the agreements made between human persons about the execution of a joint plan. Insofar as the analogy and language are drawn from human relations, it is inadequate; but as the analogy is given by God to communicate something true, it is worthy of contemplation and affirmation.

The execution of a singular plan (will) by three human persons reveals a counsel/council between them and a covenant, or sealed agreement with promises and requirements, to execute what they have determined according to the roles each has in the execution. God's will is singular that he reveal his triune glory to man and unite man to God by the Son's mission from the Father and the Spirit's mission from the Father and the Son. The Father has the will from himself and has granted that the Son have the will from himself (John 5:26), and the Father and the Son to the Spirit to have the will from himself. The singular God wills the manifestation of his triune glory, and since this will is manifest in the missions covenantally, we use the analogy of a covenant. Therefore, in

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[108] Peckham, *Divine Attributes*, 244n102.

[109] Letham, *Systematic Theology*, 435-36. This is the main argument under which he places both the subordination argument and the "multiple wills" argument. His argument about the Holy Spirit is also in this statement, but only parenthetically.

speaking of the Trinitarian determination of the missions of the Son and Spirit for the redemption of the elect, we are not positing three wills in God since the object is something external to God. Christians have regularly both employed the language of deliberation in God and expressed caution about univocal application of deliberation and counsel to the will of God due to divine eternity, simplicity, perfection, etc. Christians ought to express similar cautions when they rightly affirm the *pactum salutis*.[110] Thus, in explanations of the *pactum salutis*, it is not uncommon for some to use language as though the Father has a will and the Son has a will, but interpreters of the covenant—or of those who exposit the covenant—must remember that analogy governs theological discourse.

Eternality and submission. The *pactum salutis* is said to be an eternal covenant in precisely the same way the decree is said to be eternal. Holding to this affirmation guards against falling into notions of eternal relations of authority and submission (ERAS), an issue with which Letham expresses legitimate concern, as noted in his third argument.[111] Does the advocate of the *pactum* affirm submission from eternity? It is not impossible for this to appear among those who both affirm something akin to ERAS and those who do not. However, for those who have and do exposit the *pactum* in a classical theological framework like what has been provided here, the *pactum* refers to the missions, which are temporal in their distinction from the processions themselves. As such, though it would be possible to say that the Son submits to the Father eternally in the *pactum salutis*, as was seen in Gill, one who affirms classical theism would be required to

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[110] As van Mastricht says of the counsel mentioned in Eph 1:11, "However, in God deliberation properly speaking, because it involves ignorance, cannot have a place; yet [it] is attributed to God with respect to the certainty of his knowledge, with respect to his wisdom and to his most perfect method of working, which freely proceeds not from nature, but from counsel, or from choice, or from rational complacency." Petrus van Mastricht, *The Works of God and the Fall of Man*, vol. 3, *Theoretical-Practical Theology*, ed. Joel Beeke, trans. Todd Rester (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage, 2021), 1.3.1.III (p. 3). Wittman points out that (according to Aquinas), even though there is not deliberation, this affirms that God acts deliberately. Tyler R. Wittman, *God and Creation in the Theology of Thomas Aquinas and Karl Barth* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 85-90.

[111] Letham, *Holy Trinity*, 463.

mean no more in saying this than what he means when he claims Christ is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world (Rev 13:8) or that the elect are chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world (Eph 1:4), and even receive grace in Christ (2 Tim 1:9), even though the elect do not yet exist.[112] With Augustine, language about the *pactum* is a way of referencing how what is temporal has its grounding in the eternal God.[113]

Here it is important to make some clarifications that distinguish this proposal ("prism") from what is said by Erickson. Consider his claim that the Son only temporarily submitted to the Father. Erickson says,

> The function of one member of the Trinity may for a time be subordinate to one or both of the other members, but that does not mean he is in any way inferior in essence. Each of the three persons of the Trinity has had, for a period of time, a particular function unique to himself. This is to be understood as a temporary role for the purpose of accomplishing a given end, not a change in status or essence.[114]

There are two weakness in this claim in light of the doctrine of eternity, weaknesses that the *pactum salutis* would help to address. First, it assumes the Son went from state of

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[112] There are different interpretations/translations of Rev 13:8, but those who affirm the translation as the Lamb was slain before the foundation of the world, rather than the inscription of names in the book before the foundation of the world, are within the range of possible interpretations. Both interpretations, with the connection to the decree in Rev 17:8, are explained in G. K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, The New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 702-3. For an argument from 2 Tim 1:9-10 for the *pactum*, see Fesko, *The Trinity*, 117-20. Here I am not advocating for speaking of eternal submission in reference to the *pactum*; I am simply demonstrating what one might mean if they did.

[113] Augustine says,

> It is clear that anything that can begin to be said about God in time which was not said about him before is said by way of relationship, and yet not by way of a modification of God, as though something has modified him. It is however said by way of a modification of that with reference to which God begins to be called it. That a just man begins to be called the friend of God means that he changes. But is unthinkable that God should love someone temporally, as though with a new love that was not in him before, seeing that with him things past do not pass, and things future have already happened. So he loved all his saints *before the foundation of the world* (Jn 17:24; Eph 1:4), as he predestined them; but when they are converted and find him, then they are said to begin to be loved by him, in order to state the thing in a way that can be grasped by human feeling. (Augustine, *On the Trinity* 5.16, 17 [Hill, 248-49])

In other words, by creaturely constraint, one speaks of the changes in creation that modify creaturely relation to God as though God were changing. God does not change, but decreed the changes in the world.

[114] Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 309. As I showed in the section on the divine missions and the *pactum salutis,* Erickson is also known for his denial of *taxis*.

being *A* to state of being *B* to state of being *C*. In state of being *A*, the Son is not submissive; in state of being *B*, the Son is submissive; in state of being *C*, the Son has returned to a state of equality. A further demonstration of this conception of the Son's change in status appears in Erickson's later claim about the kenosis of the Son. He says, "By taking on human nature, he accepted certain limitations upon the functioning of his divine attributes."[115] To illustrate, he compared the Incarnation to a great athlete limiting their ability to perform various functions.[116] The second problem with this proposal is that it neglects the Scripture's language about the Son receiving a work to do before the Incarnation, accomplishing it, and then receiving a reward. There is a notable absence in Erickson's work of the language of Christ having received a work to do.

On my part, this may indicate that I have contradictory goals since I am concerned that Erickson does not adequately account for eternity on the one hand, and, on the other hand, he does not adequately account for language that seems to speak of succession. However, consider the important role the *pactum salutis* plays in addressing both issues. First, because it is about the mission of the Son, which is not a change in his procession (eternal generation) but a change in created effects that are now united to that procession in accord with the eternal decree, it does not require any modification of eternity that results in a succession of events in God. Second, since it is about the decree of the created effects, it also makes sense of the language of Scripture, since those created effects were determined before the foundation of the world, that is, in the eternal decree of God. In this way, the *pactum* affirms the language of "temporal submission," but it does so by also assenting to the biblical language that the work of submission is from before the foundation of the world, that is, it is determined in the eternal decree of the Son's mission as covenant head without saying that submission occurred in eternity.

[115] Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 670.

[116] Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 671.

Simplicity and the will. In light of the affirmations being made, we must still affirm divine simplicity. We have used the image of God covenanting to describe the decreed covenantal shape of missions. In that covenant, the Father sends the Son as head of the elect—the Son being the recipient of a reward for the work he accomplished—and the Father and Son send the Spirit to unite the elect to their head—he being the Love and Gift of the Father and the Son poured into the hearts of the elect. Van Mastricht, speaking of the decree, says,

> The reasons of the Reformed, whereby the decree is the same thing as the essence of God, are sought: (1) from the divine simplicity, through which he rejects all accidents, just as we demonstrated in its own place in the chapter on the simplicity of God; (2) from his infinity, which does not allow a difference of things, or parts, or any composition, as we showed in its own place; (3) from the fact that the decree in God is nothing except his intellect and will, without a doubt coincide with his essence; (4) because accidents, which by their nature imply imperfection, do not square with the most perfect one.[117]

Using biblical imagery to distinguish the Son as being the covenant head of the elect from the foundation of the world leads to analogical speech of the Persons covenanting. However, this is not meant to deny simplicity by dividing the will any more than distinguishing the decree by its effects (the things decreed) is meant to divide the will. God's determination of things fitting, appropriate, and wise calls to it the notion of "counsel." Likewise, God's determination to send the Son as covenant head who accomplishes a work and receives a reward from the Father calls to it the notion of covenant. While these are biblical ways of speaking, the affirmation of modes of subsisting permit speaking of the fact that the divine Son decrees the economy of redemption "from the Father" and the Spirit decrees "from the Father and the Son." In the economy, a human nature is united to the same divine Son by the Spirit and he assumes that human nature as the covenant head. Thus, while not denying divine simplicity, nor dividing the will, the *pactum salutis* indicates in biblical language the singular divine determination of the Son's and Spirit's work in the economy of redemption. In his third

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[117] van Mastricht, *The Works of God and the Fall of Man* 1.3.1.XXVIII (Rester, 14).

argument Letham is right to express concern about arguments for the *pactum* that "requires the parties to be autonomous agents."[118] This danger is present any time one speaks of the Trinity, and the affirmation of divine simplicity is one of the means by which we remind ourselves that our speech is not univocal. Thus, to guard against human tendencies to affirm complexity in God, the theologian of the *pactum* must continue to affirm simplicity.

Biblical Data

Scripture speaks regularly of the will of God. Romans 9:19 presents an improper response to Paul's high doctrine of election, an improper response based on a correct understanding. The indignant respondent exclaims, "For who can resist his [God's] will?" Certainly, every unbeliever resists God's will as it has been declared in the law and the gospel, so Paul's use of *will* here must refer to something distinct from the moral commands of God.[119] In fact, the will, as understood by the hypothetical opponent to Paul's doctrine, refers to that will historically understood as the decree. This conceptual framework follows the Lord's testimony in Matthew 11:25-26. There, Christ thanks the Father for revealing the gospel to "little children" and hiding it from the wise. He says, "for this was pleasing before you/in your sight." While most translations follow this, the ESV includes an interpretive statement, "for such was your gracious will," which follows the biblical reasoning that what God has done—what pleases him—is an expression of his eternal will or decree. The events of history, particularly God's saving revelation of himself to individuals, flow from the good pleasure (εὐδοκία, *beneplaciti*) of God. In the context of this dissertation's argument, it is telling that the next verse says, "All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father

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[118] Letham, *Systematic Theology*, 436.

[119] For distinctions between the proper and metaphorical conceptions of the will of God, see Aquinas, *Summa Theologia* I.q19.a6; Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:220 (locus 3, quaestio 15); van Mastricht, *Theoretical-Practical Theology* 1.2.15.XXVIII; Bavinck, *God and Creation*, 42-45.

and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him" (Matt 11:27, ESV). The revelation of the Father and the Son appears in the revelation of the gospel to the heart of believers by the Spirit (John 3:5-8; 1 Cor 2:11-13). God reveals himself, Father and Son and Spirit, to whom he wills, a revelation that manifests itself in its effects (John 3:8) and points to God as the efficient cause. The Father is currently drawing people to the Son by the Spirit in fulfillment of the promises made to him in eternity and declared in prophecies and types.

The *pactum salutis* arises from the patterns of thought expressed in Scripture regarding the work of the Son as determined from eternity. Some of this was seen in the explanation of Gill's works in the previous chapter, and a more redemptive-historical, or biblical-theological, presentation of the mission of the Son will be presented in the next chapter, but here I note some of the key biblical texts that warrant speaking of the Son's mission in covenantal language.

Psalm 2:7-8

There are two main interpretations of Psalm 2:7-8, but both cohere with the *pactum salutis* concluded or terminating in time. One interpretation, offered by Augustine, says that the "today" in "today I have begotten you" is the eternal "today" of God's present.[120] This means the begottenness of Psalm 2:7 is a reference to the eternal generation of the Son in that David is speaking in the "prosopon" of the Son in eternity, reporting on the declaration by the Father, "you are my Son, today I have begotten you." In this interpretation, a theologian could then argue that verse 7 declares the eternal generation of the Son while verse 8—"ask of me and I will make, etc."—describes the *pactum salutis* proper. The one who is the eternally begotten Son is now told to ask (the reward is held

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[120] For a sample of patristic interpretations, see Craig A. Blaising and Carmen S. Hardin, *Psalms 1-50*, Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, vol. 7 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2008), 14-15. For a recent argument that Ps 2:7 "was read prosopologically as pertaining to a conversation about divine begottenness between God the Father and the Son by a wide variety of early Christians," see Matthew W. Bates, *The Birth of the Trinity: Jesus, God, and Scripture in New Testament & Early Christian Interpretations of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 62ff.

out), and receives when he asks (the *prosopon* of the Father gives). It should be noted that this interpretation does not reject the in-time declaration/manifestation.[121] In other words, there is an immediate referent (enthronement) that hearkens back to an eternal referent, and these interpretations leverage their focus on that eternal referent.

Calvin, Dickson, Gill, and others offer an interpretation that seems to be more consistent with the apostolic interpretation of this text (e.g., Acts 13:33; Rom 1:4; Heb 1:5; 5:5). These interpreters argue that the "today" is the in-time manifestation of the Son's being the eternally begotten of the Father. Gill says it is true at every moment of the Lord's incarnate life, but especially in the word-act of the resurrection, again drawing on the apostolic statements. Likewise, Dickson says,

> The apostle, Rom. i. 4, teacheth us, saying *He was declared to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead*. For the resurrection of Jesus Christ was a real speech, saying to Christ in the audience of the world, in effect as much as *I declare thee this day to be my Son, my only begotten Son, one in substance with me eternally*.[122]

More recently, Guy Richard says, "It ['today'] refers to the point in time when the Son's begottenness would be made manifest to the world, or to what the early church understood as Christ's coronation or induction as King of the universe," initially in the Incarnation, but principally in the resurrection.[123] Set in its biblical-theological context, this Psalm hearkens back to the sonship language of 2 Samuel 7. There, God promises that David's

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[121] For instance, Bates says, "for the earliest Christians, the primary theodramatic setting of this conversation is at the Son's enthronement ('I was established as king'), but within the conversation there is *reported speech* which finds a second theodramatic setting before the dawn of time." Bates, *The Birth of the Trinity*, 67. Bates takes Heb 1:6 as a reference to the Incarnation and argues that it is coeval with the statements of 1:5, thus projecting the entirety of the text to pre-Incarnational speech between the Father and Son, speech which is then reported and repeated by David's offspring. For an argument that Heb 1:5 refers to eternal generation, see Madison N. Pierce, "Hebrews 1 and the Son Begotten 'Today,'" in *Retrieving Eternal Generation*, ed. Fred Sanders and Scott R. Swain (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2017), 117-31.

[122] David Dickson, *A Commentary on the Psalms: Two Volumes in One* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1959), 7, emphasis original.

[123] Richard speaks too strongly in the sentence opening these statements when he says, "The verse has nothing to do with the Son's ontological origin." In his own understanding, he clearly thinks it has *something* to do with the Son's ontological origin in that it prophesies the means by which that origin would be manifest to creation. Richard, "The Covenant of Redemption," 56.

son will reign in his place and will in fact be God's S/son. Thus, Fesko rightly demonstrates that this text draws on covenantal imagery between God and the Davidic king in reference to the coronation of the king, which is particularly important for the argument made in the next chapter.[124] In consequence of the resurrection, the Holy Spirit leads Saul/Paul and Barnabas to take the gospel to the nations (Acts 13:2, 4, 9), and Paul's gospel proclamation is that the promise God made has been fulfilled in the exaltation of Jesus (Acts 13:32-33).[125] In fact, Paul's testimony emphasizes the qualitative difference between what happens in Jesus's exaltation (coronation) and others' when he contrasts the death and decay of David with the incorruptibility of Christ (Acts 13:36-37; cf. Acts 2:27-31). As the Baptist Matthew Barrett has said, theologians should be "clear, the temporal mission(s) do not create the eternal relations in the Trinity, but merely manifest an eternal reality."[126] In the exaltation of Christ, the Son's eternal relation to the Father is manifest by means of the redemptive-historical precursors and prophecies made to David and David's sons; namely, that one of David's offspring according to the flesh would sit on the throne forever. According to the apostles, this covenantal context, decreed before the foundation of the world and prophesied in the old covenant, has now been fulfilled in the resurrection. It is the same eternal Son who asks for a kingdom from the Father and receives from him the ends of the earth in the mission of the Spirit.

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[124] Fesko, *The Trinity*, 86-88. Cf. James M. Hamilton, *Psalms*, Evangelical Biblical Theology Commentary (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Academic, 2021), 1:103-4.

[125] Interestingly, the next week, malcontents rejected Paul's teaching and his response was that salvation was then going to the Gentiles and the ends of the earth (Acts 13:47). Though Paul quotes Isa 49:6, Luke's placing it in such near proximity to the promise of Ps 2 could lead one to reasonably conclude that one of the means by which God makes the ends of the earth the possession of David's greater Son is by the sort of rejection by the Jewish unbelievers referenced in Acts 13:45.

[126] Matthew Barrett, *Canon, Covenant and Christology: Rethinking Jesus and the Scriptures of Israel*, New Studies in Biblical Theology 51 (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2020), 257n33.

Psalm 110

Christ famously points out that Psalm 110 refers to David's son as David's Lord (Matt 22:42-45; Mark 12:35-37; Luke 20:41-44). This one who is the son of David according to the flesh, as the Pharisees rightly affirmed (Matt 22:41), is yet greater than David. R. T. France comments,

> It is the implication [that the son has now been sent, as in the parable in 21:37] which he [Jesus] now invites his hearers to draw out, for surely one who is the lord of David, the most distinguished of all historical Israelites, must be himself more than just another human king. If David calls him "lord," he is clearly the son of someone far superior to David. For the uninstructed reader the question remains tantalizingly open as the pericope ends, but Matthew's Christian reader is not going to find it difficult to answer the question, "Whose son is he?" Indeed, even the high priest himself will put before Jesus the combined title "Messiah, Son of God" [26:63-64].[127]

While coming after him according to the flesh, David's Lord ranks before him because he is ultimately the one sent from God. Clearly, though, this Psalm is couched in Messianic terms as it anticipates fulfillment in the one to come while harkening back to promises once delivered (e.g., Gen 49:10; 2 Sam 7).[128] In its fulfillment, the Lord will exalt David's greater Son to his right hand. Peter's first sermon says this was fulfilled in Jesus's taking of the throne (Acts 2:34-36), and the author to the Hebrews says it demonstrates Jesus's superiority over the angels (Heb 1:13).[129] The text must be held together with Psalm 2, in which the LORD sets his king on Zion (2:6; 110:2), gathers people to himself (2:8; 110:3), and subdues his enemies (2:9; 110:6). In Psalm 2, the Davidic heir has terms proposed (ask for the nations) and promises given (I will make the nations your heritage and possession). While these could be read as mere promises, it is well acknowledged that they are

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[127] R. T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 849.

[128] James M. Hamilton Jr., *Psalms*, Evangelical Biblical Theology Commentary (Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2021), 2:290-97.

[129] Hamilton argues that Dan 7 draws on Ps 110 by envisioning the Son of Man "enthroned alongside Yahweh." James M. Hamilton, *With the Clouds of Heaven: The Book of Daniel in Biblical Theology*, New Studies in Biblical Theology 32 (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2014), 147-53. France makes a similar connection, noting that Jesus made the connection to the Sanhedrin in Matt 26:64. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 1026-28.

covenantal in nature due to their connection to the Davidic line.[130] As the promises are

restated in the exalted language of Psalm 110, in which David speaking by the Holy Spirit

(Mark 12:35-37) refers to the Messiah as his Lord, interpreters should retain the covenantal

character. As the oracles are given regarding the Son's mission, in which he will assume

a human nature, these oracles are explicitly covenantal.[131] Thus, as the Father sends the

Son in time, and as the Father and Son send the Spirit, they do so in fulfillment of the

covenantal, Spirit-inspired promises about the LORD and David's Lord. In other words,

they do so through the covenantal lens provided in the Old Testament. As these missions

manifest the processions according to the eternal decree, as the decree had been

progressively revealed through the covenants of the Old Testament, and as this is

particularly true of the covenant with David, it is appropriate then to use the language of

"covenant" to refer to this eternal plan with respect to the missions.

John 17:1-5

In the high priestly prayer of John 17, Jesus begins by calling the Father to

glorify him since he accomplished the work the Father gave him to do (v. 4). Taken in

connection to Psalms 2 and 110, which are themselves located in the canonical and

covenantal storyline I will develop in the next chapter, this is Christ asking that the Father

set him on the throne (Pss 2:6; 110:1) and give to him the nations (Ps 2:8). In fact, Jesus

says, "you [the Father] gave him [the Son] authority over all flesh, in order that he might

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[130] Even in his argument against the *pactum salutis*, Williamson says,

> Taking their cue from the promises of 2 Samuel 7, in their canonical context these psalms also anticipate David's greater Son, the ultimate Messiah. . . . Yahweh's 'decree' proclaimed by the psalmist in Psalm 2:7-9 alludes to the covenant promises made to David concerning his offspring in 2 Samuel 7:11-16, in particular, the promise of a filial relationship (2 Sam. 7:14a) and an enduring reign (2 Sam. 7:13b, 16). (Paul Williamson, "The *Pactum Salutis*: A Scriptural Concept or Scholastic Mythology," *Tyndale Bulletin* 69, no. 2 [2018]: 274)

Williamson remains unconvinced about seeing this as a reference to the *pactum* because he believes the text can only point "forward" to the Incarnation, not "backward."

[131] Williamson and Hamilton both make note of the language of oracle in Ps 110. Williamson, "The *Pactum Salutis*," 259-81; Hamilton*, Psalms*, 2:292.

give eternal life to all whom you have given to him" (John 17:2).[132] Jesus is referring to the Father giving him both a work and a promise prior to this moment (6:37-40; 10:14-18, 29), and upon completing the work, the promise of a gift is fulfilled. The gift is that he is to have authority over all flesh and is to be with the Father (παρὰ σεαυτῷ). He glorified the Father on earth (17:4), meaning that the work was given before his advent on earth.[133] Köstenberger and Swain helpfully outline the prayer according to what they call a "chain of gifting":

> [The] redemptive-historical plot [of the high-priestly prayer] unfolds according to the logic of a great chain of "gifting." The Father has "given" the Son "authority over all flesh" (17:2 ESV); a people "out of the world" (17:2, 6, 9 24); a "work" to do on earth (17:4); "everything" (17:7); his "words" (17:8); his "name" (17:11, 12); and "glory" (17:22, 24; cf. 1-5). Moreover, the Father has gifted the Son that the Son might in turn "gift" to his disciples and his church "eternal life" (17:2); his Father's "words"/"word" (17:8, 14); and, ultimately, a participation in his own "glory" (17:22, 24). According to John, redemptive history is the unfolding story of "the gifting of God," the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.[134]

When we see this "chain of gifting," in which Jesus here requests the fulfillment of the promise made "before the ages began" (Titus 1:2, ESV) in language reflecting the promise typified and revealed in time in such texts as Psalms 2 and 110 (cf. Ps 40:7-8), we are warranted in seeing this in covenantal terms. In other words, the fulfillment of

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[132] Καθὼς ἔδωκας αὐτῷ ἐξουσίαν πάσης σαρκός, ἵνα πᾶν ὃ δέδωκας αὐτῷ δώσῃ αὐτοῖς ζωὴν αἰώνιον.

[133] Augustine makes a theological argument in his commentary on John 17:5 for why Christ must be talking about something other than the Son's essential glory as God. Since Jesus is calling the Father to glorify him, which is fulfilled in the exaltation of the God-man, if this were a reference to the same glory as the Son has essentially with the Father, then it would mean that either the divine glory had something added to it by human nature, or that the human nature was converted into divinity, losing its nature as humanity. To maintain confession of two true natures without any mutation in God or conversion of the human nature into God, the glorification must refer to the humanity. Instead, says Augustine, the glorification which he had in the beginning with the Father is the glorification of predestination, what we might associate with the decreed Incarnation as the head of the elect. Augustine explicitly connects this glory to the predestination mentioned in Eph 1:4 and Rom 8:28-30, the mediatorial work of Christ as the God-man in 1 Tim 2:5, and the Latin *prædestinatus* in Rom 1:4 (translated "declared" or "appointed" in most English translations). In other words, if Augustine's reasoning holds here, even the claim to "glory . . . before the world existed" is the proleptic glorification of the Mediator as head of his people, offering patristic evidence for the components categorized as the "covenant of redemption" by Augustine's heirs twelve hundred years later. Augustinus, *In Evangelium Ioannis Tractatus Centum Vigini Quatouor*, Tractatus 105.

[134] Andreas J. Köstenberger and Scott R. Swain, *Father, Son and Spirit: The Trinity and John's Gospel*, New Studies in Biblical Theology 24 (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2008), 166.

Psalms 2 and 110 as expressed in Jesus's prayer of John 17 exposes a covenantal context by which readers ought to understand the mission of the Son.

Luke 22:20-30

The components of the covenant appear in the previous texts, with the inclusion of the agreement, promises, and duties of distinct Persons enacted in the economic work of redemption. When such items are seen in their covenantal, Davidic context, enough appears to affirm the language of a covenant. However, pressing further into the justification for using covenantal language is the way the texts referenced above correlate to the speech and events in the upper room in Luke 22. Having distributed the bread to the disciples, Jesus then speaks of the "new covenant" being enacted in his blood (v. 20). Though the betrayer is culpable, the "Son of Man goes as it is determined," a statement in which the divine passive refers to the decree (v. 22). In the accomplishment of the work determined for him, Jesus then tells his disciples, "I covenant to you as my Father covenanted to me, a kingdom" (v. 29).[135] In an interesting fact of translation history, this text has not often been translated as the act of covenanting but instead appears in translation as "assign," "grant," "confer," "bestow," or "appoint."[136] While an argument can be made from the context that this is a covenantal assignment—both immediate (new covenant meal) and redemptive-historical (Davidic kingdom)—the Greek connection of the verbal *diatithemi* to the earlier nominal *diatheke* strengthens the argument. It is worth noting that the connection to a kingdom, both in its previous reception from the Father and eschatological completion under the Son by his disciples who sit at his table, fits within the contexts of Psalms 2 and 110 and John 17. The parts of this text (Luke 22:29) may further substantiate a distinction between the covenants of redemption and grace in

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[135] Καγω διατιθεμαι ὑμιν καθως διεθετο μοι ὁ πατηρ μου βασιλειαν.

[136] See the influence of Beza on the recognition of this text as covenantal in J. V. Fesko, *The Covenant of Redemption: Origins, Development, and Reception* (Bristol, CT: Vandenhoeck & Ruprect, 2016), 39-40.

that the former is the covenant between the Father and Christ while the latter is between Christ and his disciples. A possible weakness in this view would be tied to the difficulties attending interpretations of Christ's statement that the disciples will judge the twelve tribes of Israel. If the covenant is made exclusively to the twelve, if the twelve are the exclusive judges over Israel, whether the "people of God" broadly or those of Jewish ethnicity in particular, and if the covenant to the disciples is the covenant of grace, then some other explanation must be given for how "Israel" is in the covenant of grace. Perhaps the answer is that the disciples represent those who administer the covenant of grace, which is itself grounded on and secured by the *pactum salutis*.

Conclusion

As argued in this dissertation, and specifically in this chapter, the *pactum salutis* is that point at which theology declares that God's decree of salvation is for the manifestation of his triune glory through the covenantally shaped missions of the Son and the Spirit from the Father. While it is true that dangers exist in arguing for the *pactum salutis* since it is possible to conceive of it as something that violates a necessary component of the received theology proper, such as the doctrine of simplicity, the unity of the divine will, or the equality of the Son to the Father, it is not *necessary* to deny such things when we affirm the *pactum salutis*. While one might claim that, while not necessary, it is nevertheless a danger better avoided altogether, the response is that this is true about anything we say in human reflection on the revelation God has made of himself. In claiming the Son is eternally begotten of the Father, we must also claim that the things implied by human generation are denied in eternal generation, such as temporality, mutability, contingency of being, etc. Likewise, when one argues that God eternally decreed whatsoever comes to pass, one must also deny that God goes from state of being A, "not decreeing," to state of being B, "decreeing." Nevertheless, to indicate the freedom of God and the contingency of creation, as well as the wisdom by which all things occur,

Bible-reading theologians must put a "layer," to recall Webster, between their exposition of the doctrine of God *in se* and God *quoad nos*.

In our affirmation of a *pactum salutis*, we speak of the Trinitarian contours of the history that is decreed. We are saying the "created effects" that are united to the processions were purposed, that these created effects were for the sake of man's salvation, and that the salvation of which we are speaking is a *covenantal* salvation.[137] Far from being either a philosophical-theological abstraction or a departure from the received dogmas, this concept in Christian theology is both richly biblical and richly theological. At its best, it both takes stock of the developments and dangers in theological contemplation before it concerning the doctrine of the triune God and allows those settled convictions to interact with the biblical contemplation on the doctrine of covenant. To modify the Trinitarian doctrine that preceded the doctrine of the *pactum salutis* violates its intended location within classical trintarianism; to reject or neglect discussion of the eternal covenant is to rob oneself of a fuller theological exposition of the Scripture. In the next chapter, the theological debates over the human will of Christ and the biblical-theological Adamic thread will be placed in conversation for the sake of bolstering the argument of an eternal covenant progressively revealed in time until its fulfillment in the last Adam.

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[137] More on the covenantal aspect of salvation will be given in the following chapters.

CHAPTER 5

CHRISTOLOGY AND THE ETERNAL COVENANT

If Baptists are to reaffirm the *pactum salutis*, they must ensure that it is consistent with the broader Christian theological tradition. In the previous chapter, I demonstrated the consistency of the *pactum salutis* with classical trinitarian definitions and began to demonstrate how the doctrine does not undermine the singularity of the divine will or imply subordinationism. In this chapter, I show that the doctrine of an eternal covenant between the Father, the Son, and the Spirit about the Son's mission as the last Adam, is consistent with two-nature Christology, seen most explicitly in the development of dyothelite dogma. God the Son became man by assuming to himself the same nature as ours, yet without sin, that he might be the covenantal head of his people, and this was according to the sovereign plan of God. First, this will be demonstrated by looking at the theological framework by which one may understand the obedience of the Son in his temporal procession and mission, looking specifically at the argument for dyothelitism. To show that the Son became man as covenantal head, special attention will be given, second, to the biblical-theological development of the Adamic type. Finally, typology will be used to demonstrate that the last Adam was the point of the first Adam, and therefore the reader is drawn further back to the eternal decree according to which the Father would send the Son by the Spirit. Before closing the chapter, I will respond to Letham's objections and demonstrate that the *pactum* is a preferable means of interpreting the Son's obedience rather than Grudem's proposal of eternal submission.

Classical Christology provides an interpretive aid for affirming the truth of the *pactum salutis*. In the decree, Christ is considered according to the obedience he would render in the human nature he will assume according to that nature's capacity to will, akin

to the distinction between elect persons' decreed salvation and their actual existence and salvation in time.[1] By addressing the biblical presentation of Christ as the covenant head who obeys in his human will on man's behalf and whose mission was promised and typified, I demonstrate that the *pactum salutis* does not rest on only a few texts. The *pactum salutis* affirms that the whole canon bears witness to the fact that the one who assumed man's nature—including the capacity to will—did so according to the plan of God.

In this chapter, therefore, I am developing the *pactum salutis* in contrast to three of Letham's five claims listed at the beginning of chapter 4:

1. It implies subordinationism

3. It implies three wills in the Trinity

4. "The biblical texts cited in support of the *pactum salutis* all refer to the incarnate Christ in his work as Mediator. In doing so, they do not apply to the intra-Trinitarian relations as such."[2]

Further, I note that the first two (1 and 3) are under Letham's question, "are the formulations of the *pactum salutis* compatible with historic Christian orthodoxy?"[3] The previous chapter began to provide answers to all three of these charges, but this chapter builds on those arguments by incorporating the Christological and biblical-theological testimony to the *pactum salutis*. Here I show *how* the *pactum salutis* is the prism through which God manifests his triune glory in the mission of the Son as man's covenant head.

Scopus Scripturae, or the Scope of Scripture

As it was important to provide the theological constraint of *analogy* in the previous chapter before engaging in the task of positively arguing for the placement of the *pactum* within a classical framework, so too must a preliminary word be offered before

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[1] The crucial distinction between the elect's decreed salvation and the Son's decreed human nature is that the Person of the Son exists eternally, and he is thus active in the decree.

[2] Robert Letham, *Systematic Theology* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2019), 436.

[3] Letham, *Systematic Theology*, 435. An initial response to the third argument was provided in the previous chapter.

looking at the biblical-theological framework of the *pactum* Christologically. The

paradigmatic framework for affirming an eternal covenant is the Reformed Scholastic

notion of the *scopus scripturae*.[4] Richard Muller argues, "The concept of a *fundamentum*

Scripturae, according to Heppe, particularly when it is understood in this immediate

relationship to the entire body of doctrine, provides Reformed dogmatics with its

'scientific' point of departure, its basic method."[5] He goes on to say that the key points

(*fundamenta*) of Scripture (God's covenant, Christ's kingdom, and communion with

Christ) press one to consider that the Reformed did not hold to a "central dogma," but

rather a paradigm for interpreting Scripture Christologically. Muller says the *fundamenta*

"manifest Christ and covenant, rather than the eternal decree, as the hermeneutical focus

of the Reformed orthodox system."[6] This is not to discard the eternal decree; instead, it is

to clarify how the decree fits into Reformed dogmatics. Focus on the *historia salutis* and

> covenantal or economic focus of the system on the historical *executio* of the divine
> plan in Christ does direct the attention of theology to the eternal decree—as a
> "speculative deduction" from the historical execution of the work of salvation—and
> manifests the Reformed system as resting on a "theological" rather than on an
> "anthropological" principle.[7]

The previous chapter noted that the decree itself, and the *pactum salutis* as a particular

focus of it, is drawn from the conclusion that all that happens in time occurs according to

God's eternal purpose. Thus, if the central "word" God speaks to man is the Word

Incarnate, in whom is the culmination of the plan of God, and in whom all things are

united (Eph 1:9-10), certainly the notion of Christ as the *scopus scripturae* structures the

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[4] The *scopus scripturae* is explained at length in Richard A. Muller, *Holy Scripture: The Cognitive Foundation of Theology*, vol. 2, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics: The Rise and Development of Reformed Orthodoxy, ca. 1520 to ca. 1725*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003), 205-23. See also Baptist biblical theologian Richard C. Barcellos, "*Scopus Scripturae*: John Owen, Nehemiah Coxe, Our Lord Jesus Christ, and a Few Early Disciples on Christ as the Scope of Scripture," *Journal of the Institute of Reformed Baptist Studies* (2015): 5-24.

[5] Muller, *Holy Scripture*, 213.

[6] Muller, *Holy Scripture*, 213.

[7] Muller, *Holy Scripture*, 213.

method of articulating the decree. Furthermore, if the *scopus* is made known in covenantal terms, then it follows that something may be said about *Filius incarnandus* ("Son to be incarnate") in covenantal language.

Christ's Two Wills

In affirming Christ's assumption of a human nature, particular questions require careful thinking about the Scripture's testimony to both the true divinity and the true humanity of Christ. We must ask how we are to confess the God-man in such a way that we do not confuse, dilute, or divide the divine and human natures. Maximus, Constantinople III, Demetrios Bathrellos, Thomas Watts, and the Baptist Stephen Wellum serve as guides here. The distinction between person and nature must be maintained, and from there, we may proceed to consider the union of the two natures. Any consideration of the doctrine of Incarnation must necessarily begin with the doctrine of God and must address the distinction between the persons and the nature of God. It is necessary to begin here because we must be able to account for it being the Word or Son, not the Father or the Spirit, who "became flesh and tabernacled among us" (John 1:14).[8] The previous chapter sought to explain the persons relative to one another *ad intra*, sometimes referred to as the immanent Trinity, so much of that discussion will be assumed here.

Three Christological mistakes lurk behind arguments about the Person and the natures, either collapsing the natures, dividing the natures, or combining the natures. First is the Apollinarian collapse of mind and personhood. "Apollinarius," Bathrellos says, "came very close to identifying human hypostasis with human mind, which for this reason must not be predicated of Christ."[9] Because the Son must be one, the Son from the

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[8] All translations, of Scripture or otherwise, are the author's unless noted. For an argument explaining how such an act can be predicated of the immutable God, see James Dolezal, "Neither Subtraction, Nor Addition: The Word's Terminative Assumption of a Human Nature," *Nova et Vetera* 20, no. 1 (Winter 2022): 133-57.

[9] Demetrios Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ: Person, Nature, and Will in the Christology of Saint Maximus the Confessor*, ed. Gillian Clark and Andrew Louth, Oxford Early Christian Studies (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 11.

Father, and because the mind is how we identify personhood according to Apollinarian thought, therefore Christ must not have a human mind.[10] Further, since Apollinarians consider man to be necessarily sinful in some sense, it would be unthinkable for Christ to have two wills, one human and the other divine, since these would *de facto* oppose one another.[11] On the other hand, Nestorians divide the natures because they identify nature and person. They claim, "[The creed's statement,] 'in one Lord Jesus Christ.['] This name is that of the man whom God put on.'"[12] Where the Apollinarians replace the human mind of Christ with his Person, the Nestorians place the Person alongside the human person Jesus Christ.

A third figure, Cyril, has served as an example of monophysitism by some, though these conceptions are based on three significant misunderstandings.[13] His emphasis on the unity of the Person, while one-sided, is forgivable in light of his primary opponents, the Nestorians. His "use of the 'monophysite' formula 'one incarnate nature of God the Logos,'" was because he assumed it originated with Athanasius, and he therefore interpreted it in an orthodox manner.[14] Finally, though monophysites may have appealed to Cyril, his work demonstrates clear Chalcedonian Christology—to be only slightly anachronistic.[15] Chalcedon codified the parameters of discussions about two natures,

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[10] A similar collapse of mind and personhood is seen recently, for example, in J. P. Moreland and William Lane Craig, *Philosophical Foundations for a Christian Worldview*, 2nd ed. (Downers Grove, IL: IVP), 595-611. For a critical assessment, see Robert Lucas Stamps, "'Thy Will Be Done': A Dogmatic Defense of Dyothelitism in Light of Recent Monothelite Proposals" (PhD diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2014), 28-32, 180-215.

[11] Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 12-13.

[12] Theodore of Mopsuestia, *Commentary on the Creed*, quoted in Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 20n59.

[13] Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 24-27.

[14] Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 25.

[15] Bathrellos briefly demonstrates this:

In his *Scholia de Incarnatione Unigeniti,* he wrote that "the *natures* [plural] *remained* without confusion." He also wrote that "we know the difference of the natures [plural] and we keep them

ruling out Nestorianism and monophysitism. Warfield said of Chalcedon, "This key unlocks the treasures of the biblical instruction on the Person of Christ as none other can, and enables the reader as he currently scans the Sacred pages to take up their declarations as they meet him, one after the other, into an Intelligently consistent conception of his Lord."[16] The work of Cyril and the Chalcedonian Definition served as markers for theological discussion right through the Fifth Ecumenical Council.[17]

Maximus exemplifies dyothelite theology, the doctrine that brought Christological discussions to a point. He utilized a saying combining the insights of Chalcedon, Cyril, and Leontius of Byzantium: "Christ is out of two natures, in two natures and two natures."[18] Maximus referred to the two natures before the union with the first phrase, the two natures after the union with the second, and "the identity between Christ and his natures" with the third.[19] The latter is analogous to identifying the persons of the Holy Trinity with the divine essence so as to guard against creating a fourth something— the essence—alongside the three. Thus, "Maximus identifies Christ with his two natures in order to emphasize that Christ is not anything external or additional to his two natures, a tertium quid that would exist alongside them, but that he is identical with them, as man

without confusion with each other." He also devoted a whole paragraph to explaining how the natures—namely, the nature of the Logos and the nature of the humanity—coexist. He wrote that each of the natures is in the other, that there is a difference in the natures etc. It is clear, of course, that Cyril refers to the natures of Christ after the union. It must be finally mentioned that the *Formulary of Reunion,* which Cyril whole-heartedly accepted, speaks of *two* natures after the union. (Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 26)

Bathrellos notes further, following Patrick Gray's *The Defense of Chalcedon in the East*, "for the vast majority of the Fathers of Chalcedon, Cyril was the supreme Christological authority," 28.

[16] Benjamin B. Warfield, *Christology and Criticism*, vol. 3, *The Works of Benjamin B. Warfield* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1932; 2003), 263-65. His full statement is worthy of inclusion here for its summary of the time leading to the Definition, and only with great hesitancy do I leave it out.

[17] Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 24-56, esp. 54-56.

[18] Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 108-10.

[19] Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 109.

is identical with his body and soul."[20] When the Lord says, "Remove this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will" (Mark 14:36), Maximus believed, "In an unambiguous way that it is the Logos as man who addressed the Father in Gethsemane."[21] Each component of that statement matters. It is not the Logos in his divinity, nor is it some other person, but it is the "Logos as man." It is the divine Person, in and through his human nature, that willed as a self-determining man.[22] This is distinct from both the essential divine will, which would make the humanity of Christ completely passive,[23] and creating two Persons who will, which results in some form of Nestorianism. Bathrellos explains, "On the basis of this interpretation, Maximus argued that the Logos had assumed a human will, which he submitted to the will of the Father and thus offered us a perfect example of obedience for the sake of our salvation."[24] This statement is crucial to an understanding of the covenant, more of which will be addressed later in this chapter. Bathrellos continues,

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[20] Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 110.

[21] Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 146-47.

[22] Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 168.

Attention must again be paid to the all-important distinction between nature (and natural will), on the one hand, and person, on the other. It is one thing to say that the human will of Christ is moved by the Logos, and quite another thing to say that it is moved by the divine will (or by the divinity). To say that the human will of the Logos is moved by him is perfectly compatible with Maximus's thought, for time and again Maximus makes it explicit that the willing subject in Christ, the Person who wills as God and as man, is the enfleshed Logos. Given that it is the Person who moves his will, and that the Person in Maximus's Christology is identified with the enfleshed Logos, it is the enfleshed Logos who moves his human will as well as his divine will. However, this does not in any way contradict the self-determination of the human will; on the contrary, it affirms it, by enabling its actualization. (168)

[23] Certainly, the humanity of Christ was in some sense passive, as all creatures are passive to some degree. However, to say that it was the divine will that willed in Christ would make the humanity of Christ more passive than ours, and thus our wills would remain unredeemed. Christ's will must be a truly human will in order that our wills, which are to some degree self-determining, may be redeemed. The extent of self-determination is, of course, the concern of our treatments of providence and the problem of evil. That God is ultimately sovereign, and that we are self-determining to some degree, should provide an example of the conceptual space into which we can affirm that Christ, in his humanity, was both self-determining and passively determined. Bathrellos also makes this connection. Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 170; St. Maximus the Confessor, "Ambiguum 7: On the Beginning and End of Rational Creatures (PG91:1068D-1101C)," in *On the Cosmic Mystery of Jesus Christ*, trans. Paul M. Blowers and Robert Louis Wilken, Popular Patristics Series (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2003), 49ff.

[24] Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 147.

As Maximus said elsewhere, the Logos (the divine person) moves and models his human will. . . . Maximus excludes gnōmē and proairesis from Christ on account of their connection with ignorance and sinfulness, which implies that they belong to a human fallen person, which is also to be excluded from Christ. Nowhere does Maximus appear to deny that Christ had a sinless, non-deliberative, and oriented-to-the-good human will, which was modelled, moved, and actualized in particular acts of human willing by the divine person of the Logos in obedience to the Father. On the contrary, his whole dyothelite Christology points to this very truth.[25]

The language of "deliberation" is particularly important for discussing the natures of Christ. Here, deliberation does not mean that Jesus did not make real choices, but only that he was at no time inclined toward choosing sin. Instead, the Lord chose the next good thing that was set before his eyes (Luke 2:52), and when evil was presented to him, he chose rather to obey the Word of God than what might be most pleasing to the senses (Matt 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-13).

What moment is more evident of this than the weeping in Gethsemane? The man in the garden could not possibly desire the unjust destruction of his body, though he knew the salvation of the elect had been decreed to happen in that particular manner. Matthew says, "And going on a little, he fell upon his face praying, and saying, 'My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will (*thelo*) but as you [will]' . . . Again, for a second time he went away and prayed, saying, 'My Father, if it is not able to pass unless I drink it, let your will (*thelēma*) be done'" (26:39, 42).[26] The *pathos*, and there is no more appropriate word, of this text leads one to see a distinction between the one willing the atonement and the one passively accomplishing it. In the garden, as

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[25] Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 161. Bathrellos explains Maximus' usage of these terms, which were usages particular to him.

> *Gnōmē* is a disposition of the appetite towards what deliberation has shown to be the most appropriate thing to choose. *Proairesis*, which is distinct from *gnōmē*, follows. *Proairesis* seems to be the actualization of the disposition (*gnōmē*) towards what should be done in order that a desirable end is achieved. It is composite of appetite, deliberation, and judgement, and chooses what is shown by deliberation to be best. (149)

Notice, both are based on deliberation, and in both cases this deliberation is post-lapsarian (118).

[26] Καὶ προελθὼν μικρὸν ἔπεσεν ἐπὶ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ προσευχόμενος καὶ λέγων· πάτερ μου, εἰ δυνατόν ἐστιν, παρελθάτω ἀπ' ἐμοῦ τὸ ποτήριον τοῦτο· πλὴν οὐχ ὡς ἐγὼ θέλω ἀλλ' ὡς σύ . . . Πάλιν ἐκ δευτέρου ἀπελθὼν προσηύξατο λέγων· πάτερ μου, εἰ οὐ δύναται τοῦτο παρελθεῖν ἐὰν μὴ αὐτὸ πίω, γενηθήτω τὸ θέλημά σου.

Stamps says, "He expresses his volitional submission to the Father in full confidence that God's will reigns supreme. . . . The human struggle is real, but so is the righteous submission."[27] At the moments of deep suffering, the Lord Jesus actively submits his human will to the divine, expressing the truest desire that "your will be done" (cf. 6:10; 26:42).[28] Jesus has a human will by which he was obedient to the Father as man, obedient even to the point of death on the cross.

This last point is crucial. It would be tempting to say the human nature is merely passively conformed to the divine will, like a drying sheet conformed by the wind. However, what is seen in the actual texts is a true submission of the self to the will of the Father. The "self" in this instance must not refer to the divine nature but, in light of Maximus's previous saying, to the Son as man. Stephen Wellum says it succinctly:

> As the obedient Son who loves his Father, and in his humanity, he aligns his human will with the will of his Father, as he chooses to act as our representative substitute. Instead of viewing Jesus's humanity as a passive instrument of the divine will (which would imply a Nestorian separation between the person of the Son and his own flesh), dyothelitism views the Son as the subject of the Incarnation, who wills in and through his human nature.[29]

We end in mystery, but we confess clearly that it is the true Son from the Father who submits to the Father and that he does so poignantly as the man in Gethsemane.

Similarly, Christians may point quite readily to the example of their sanctification in which they "work out [their] salvation with fear and trembling for God is working in [them] both to will and to work for his good pleasure" (Phil 2:12-13). We pray for God's will to be carried out in our lives and for our wills to be conformed to his, but we also seek, actively, to conform our wills to his. The mystery of sanctification does

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[27] Stamps, "'Thy Will Be Done,'" 189.

[28] In both passages, the text reads, "γενηθήτω τὸ θέλημά σου." For connections between the Lord's Prayer and the prayer in Gethsemane, see Stamps, "'Thy Will Be Done,'" 187-89.

[29] Stephen J. Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate: The Doctrine of Christ*, Foundations of Evangelical Theology Series (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016), 347, emphasis original. Cf. Thomas A. Watts, "Two Wills in Christ? Contemporary Objections Considered in the Light of a Critical Examination of Maximus the Confessor's Disputation with Pyrrhus," *Westminster Theological Journal* 71, no. 2 (2009): 485.

not make one or the other false. Consider, likewise, the text of Hebrews 5:8: "Though he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered."[30] Though Christ's human capacity to will was conformed perfectly to the will of God, as an iron is conformed to the heat of the fire while retaining its own nature of being able to cut, theologians need not reduce it to absolute passivity.[31]

Christ also wills as God. He says, lamenting over Jerusalem, "How often I willed (*ēthelēsa*) to gather together your children" (Matt 23:37; Luke 13:34).[32] Wellum rightly notes that this text "makes sense only if the will spoken of here is a divine will."[33] Further, and perhaps even more directly, just as the Father gives life to the dead, "in the same way the Son makes alive whom he wills (*thelei*)" (John 5:21).[34] From the very same divine will, which the Son has from the Father, the Son grants life. He has assumed a human will, and in so doing has been granted the authority to judge as the Son of Man, but as the divine Son, he always has his will from the Father, so he is always the Judge. He is, as Wellum points out from Romans 1:3-4, "the eternal Son of God [who] became the incarnate Son of God to then become the Davidic Son of God through his life, death, and resurrection."[35] To put this another way, the Son of God who willed to gather the children of Jerusalem willed to represent man as the son of God in Gethsemane, praying "your

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[30] καίπερ ὢν υἱός, ἔμαθεν ἀφ᾽ ὧν ἔπαθεν τὴν ὑπακοήν.

[31] It is certainly admitted that the Incarnation is unique in its mystery, including especially the fact that man's sanctification is a battle with his own indwelling sin and remaining corruptions, even of the will. However, the capacity to will is increasingly conformed to the prescriptions of God and receptive to the decreed purposes of God.

[32] ποσάκις ἠθέλησα ἐπισυναγαγεῖν (Matt)/ἐπισυνάξαι (Luke) τὰ τέκνα σου.

[33] Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 347. Cf. Watts, "Two Wills in Christ," 472.

[34] οὕτως καὶ ὁ υἱὸς οὓς θέλει ζῳοποιεῖ.

[35] Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 174. It should be noted that this is not to say that he is three different sons. Rather, the one Son is known in this threefold way as the divine Son who assumed a human nature as the fulfillment of typological Adamic-sonship, and has brought to completion the typological Davidic sonship. For proper and improper ways of speaking of "two filiations," see Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* III.q35.a5. Though these statements are made in sequence, it should also be remembered that all sequence is on the part of the creature, in this case, the human nature of Christ.

will be done," and now sits on the throne as the Son of God incarnate, reigning on the Davidic throne forever.

In sum, the doctrine of dyothelitism wrestles with the important distinctions between person and nature, and it does so in light of the confession that Christ is the eternal Son from the Father and the man from Nazareth.[36] First, we understand that person is conceptually distinct from nature. We do so to say the three persons are each truly God and that they are three, but not that there are, therefore, three gods. Rather, the distinction is in the relation of the Person to Person, and the identity is in terms of nature. When applied to Christ, we say that the one Person, the divine Son, subsists in two inseparable and unconfused natures. A person, then, is the subject to which things are predicated, the "he" in statements like "he grew" or "he is eternal."[37] All things for the divine Son are considered in terms of his proper modes of being and acting. Thus, in describing God, theologians say that all things are indivisibly from the Father through the Son by the Spirit and that each Person exists in the divine nature in a manner proper to the person (mode of being and *taxis*). Further, Christians believe that will is properly an attribute of the nature for God as well as in man. To be a person is to be one who has the natural capacity to will and employ said faculty in a particular manner. My will is a natural faculty, but I can also speak of my will in terms of the result of employing that faculty.

Since Christ assumed to himself a true human nature, and since, in doing so, he did not cease to subsist in the divine nature (which includes the divine will), it must be

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[36] As seen throughout the discussion of this chapter so far, Grudem is incorrect when he posits that dyothelite discussion has no bearing on the question of the triune will. Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2020), 312. In the Christological controversies leading up to the dyothelite consensus was the operative assumption that the Son's claim, "Not my will but your will be done" presents a difficult interpretive decision. That difficulty was due to the universal conception that the Father and the Son have the same will. If submission is simply a matter of distinct expressions of that will, then interpretive difficulties are ameliorated. However, instead of affirming distinct expressions, the Constantinople III affirmed two wills *so that* the Son could submit to the Father's will.

[37] As Augustine taught, making such statements as "he grew" or "he is eternal" requires the exercise of partitive exegesis, in which the reader recognizes the distinction of the human and divine natures referenced.

acknowledged that the Son has two wills. The one person operates by those wills in a manner appropriate to the nature to which they belong. The Son, therefore, wills to uphold the life of Mary and Joseph according to his divine will from the Father by the Spirit, and he also wills to obey Mary and Joseph and receive from their hands according to his human will received through the conception and birth as a man. At either point, it is the one Son who acts, who wills, and he does so through his two natures simultaneously. Oliver Crisp notes that any reason for rejecting a conciliar definition should be based on sufficient theological grounds, but "many of the current discussions of Christology in philosophical theology tend to reject the Constantinopolitan construal of Chalcedon for philosophical, rather than theological, reasons. . . . The fact that we cannot make sense of this [doctrine] does not necessarily mean it is nonsense. It just means it is beyond our ken."[38] We say what we do about the wills of Christ because such affirmations are demanded by the text of Scripture.

The Last Adam: The New Covenant Head

It important to affirm the two wills of Christ due to the fact that he came as the last Adam, the covenant head of his people. In this section, I will not only look at the texts of Romans 5 and 1 Corinthians 15; instead, the truths made explicit in these texts are demonstrated to be the consistent confession of Scripture. The following section will look at the relationship between these truths and the doctrine of the decree. The previous section outlined the importance the early church saw in affirming Christ's two wills, so the closing section will seek to draw together that early affirmation with the biblical testimony of federal representation so that both issues are demonstrated to be integral to a complete Christology. The church's historic confession that the Son subsists in two natures is not detached from the Reformed confession that Christ is a federal head; rather,

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[38] Oliver Crisp, *Divinity and Humanity: The Incarnation Reconsidered*, Current Issues in Theology (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 36n2. For a treatment of Gill's affirmation of dyothelitism, see Stamps, "'Thy Will Be Done,'" 135-48.

the two are mutually dependent, thus furnishing the principles that require affirmation of the *pactum salutis*.

Old Testament Witness

The Old Testament presents Adam briefly at the beginning of the narrative (Gen 1-3; 5:1-5),[39] and then it seems to leave him in the background as Abraham, Moses, and David take up the attention of the biblical writers. However, there are good reasons for seeing the crucial importance of Adam's place in redemptive history, not merely as a prologue to the biblical narrative but as foundational and permeating. In other words, the entire biblical storyline progresses organically from the Garden and consistently makes reference to it.

Genesis 1-3, 5. G. K. Beale argues that "the Garden of Eden was the first archetypal temple, and that it was the model for all subsequent temples."[40] In this temple, Adam is the priest-king given divine authority over the creatures of heaven and earth and charged with expanding the borders of the Garden (1:28). Though the narrative of temple-building becomes progressively clear as Scripture unfolds, the construction of the Garden of Eden resembles in striking pattern the temples that would later exist.[41] The Garden was that place of divine blessing in which God met with his people, giving them the law covenant (2:16-17) and the gift of life (2:8).[42] As God gives instruction regarding the construction of the tabernacle, which is subsequently magnified to scale in the Temple by Solomon, it bears unquestionable resemblance to that Garden earlier constructed by the

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[39] Adam is mentioned again in the genealogy of 1 Chron 1:1.

[40] G. K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God*, New Studies in Biblical Theology 17 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004), 26.

[41] See especially Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission*, 66ff.

[42] Compare the tree of life (Gen 2:8), to the menorah in the tabernacle (Exod 25:31-40). This theme is picked up by the Lord in John 8:12; Rev 2:7, 22:2, 5, 14. These passages together demonstrate that entrance into the presence of the Lord is entrance into light and life. Christ gives access to the tree of life in his presence in the final temple, which is one holy of holies.

hand of God and committed to the keeping and guarding of Adam.[43] The Garden is a
temple, and Adam is the priest-king tasked with particular responsibilities and authority
over the sacred space. Beale continues,

> Before the fall, Adam and Eve were to produce progeny who would fill the earth with
> God's glory being reflected from each of them in the image of God. After the fall, a
> remnant, created by God in his restored image, were to go out and spread God's
> glorious presence among the rest of darkened humanity. This "witness" was to
> continue until the entire world would be filled with divine glory.[44]

God's original design was to spread his glory through the hands and progeny of Adam.

Adam was not only typical as the priest-king (and prophet, 2:16) because of his
role in the Garden of Eden; he was also typical as the priest-king-prophet in that his
faithfulness in fulfilling his tasks were consequential for those whom he represented. God
creates Adam and places him in a special relationship with the rest of creation. After he is
created, God places him in the Garden (2:8, 15), giving him the command to obey with
consequences to follow. Richard Barcellos, a Baptist biblical theologian, remarks,

> A sinless image-bearer was called by God to be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth
> with others like him. He was to subdue the earth and rule over other creatures, starting
> in the garden of Eden and going out from there. He was made of a body and soul
> outside the garden. He was put in the garden to begin the task assigned to him as a
> priest. He was given law to obey and a helper to complement him so he could fulfill
> his task. He was a son of God. He was a spokesman for God (i.e., a prophet), a priest,
> and a ruler (i.e., a king).[45]

Though the initial command and consequences may seem to be restricted to
himself, in the narrative of Genesis 3, the reader comes to understand how explicitly the
obedience of the man relates to the status of all other creatures. First, the command given
to the man in 2:16 is repeated, albeit with some variation, by the woman in 3:3,

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[43] Beale remarks that these tasks are elsewhere assigned to the Levitical priests respecting the
tabernacle and its furnishings. Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission*, 66-69. Regarding garden
imagery, consider the design of the menorah mentioned above and the flourishes of design offered in
Solomon's temple(1 Kgs 6:18, 32, 35, 7:19-20, 22, 26). Brandon Crowe explains, "Solomon himself is
identified in Adamic terms as an ideal gardener." Brandon Crowe, *The Last Adam: A Theology of the
Obedient Life of Jesus in the Gospels* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2017), 64-65.

[44] Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission*, 117-18.

[45] Richard Barcellos, *Getting the Garden Right: Adam's Work and God's Rest in Light of
Christ* (Cape Coral, FL: Founders, 2017), 132.

demonstrating her likely reception of the command through him.[46] More explicitly, however, God addresses the man first when he comes into the Garden in judgment (3:9), and the largest and most far-reaching punishment is pronounced on the man. Similar to completing the creation narrative with the focused attention on man and the consequences of his creation upon the rest of creation, so too do the judgments climax in the judgment upon Adam and the consequences of his judgment upon all creation (3:17-19).

The text of Genesis 5:1-5 makes the consequential relationship between Adam and his progeny explicit. Harkening back to 1:26-27, 5:1 says God created man in his likeness, and the son of Adam, Seth, is also said to be in his (Adam's) likeness and image. The representative relationship between Adam and those in his image rumbles throughout the succeeding genealogy as each subsequent son dies, all in consequence of the sin of Adam. The most explicit consequence appears in the destruction of the earth by the deluge in Genesis 6 and 7, brought on as the "sons of God," perhaps angelic beings (Job 1:6; 2:1), took wives from the daughters of Adam.[47] Regardless of which reading one takes respecting the identities of the "sons" and "daughters," Moses's point in Genesis 6 and 7 demonstrates the universal consequences of the sin of Adam.

Genesis 9. After the flood, God reiterates the commands to Noah that he had given to Adam about procreation and exercising dominion, though with notable alteration. The universality of the scope does not reconstitute humanity *de novo*; rather, it connects the succeeding to the earlier narrative. Following the work of William Dumbrell, Baptist biblical scholar Peter Gentry demonstrates the importance of Moses's terminology in the

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[46] Kenneth A. Mathews, *Genesis 1-11:26*, The New American Commentary, vol. 1A (Nashville: B & H, 1996), 235.

[47] Some would say it is the godly line of Seth. For a list of alternative readings on the identities of the "sons of God/daughters of men." See Mathews, *Genesis 1-11:26*, 322-32.

Noahic narrative.[48] Rather than saying *karat berit*, which would assume a new covenant was being made, Moses says that God is *heqim berit*, or affirming a covenant made previously. Gentry argues that the covenant affirmed is the covenant with Adam (or creation), similar to the covenant affirmation in Genesis 17 of the covenant cut in Genesis 15. The covenant with Adam, made at creation and broken in the garden, continues to dominate mankind, evidenced in the continued state of fallenness (8:21). Thus, in the covenant with Noah, Scripture presents a continuation of the original covenant with Adam, though it now pulses through a fallen creation, seen especially in the heart-wrenching account of 9:20-23.[49]

Genesis 12, 15, 17. The promise for a new and better Adam who would recapitulate the race comes through the patriarch Abraham. Gentry remarks that the first key to this continuation is in the named sons of the three crucial figures: Adam had Seth, Cain, and Abel; Noah had Shem, Ham, and Japheth; and Terah had Abram, Haran, and Nahor. The first in each of these, in my ordering, are those sons through whom the new Adam would come: "This parallel is a literary technique inviting the reader to compare

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[48] Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants*, 2nd ed. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018), 187-95. See also the appendix in which he does an in-depth lexical analysis of *berit* (841-904).

[49] Some of the connections between Adam and Noah include the following: in 5:29, Lamech names him Noah because "Out of the ground that the LORD has curse, this one shall bring us relief from our work and from the painful toil of our hands," or, to paraphrase, "This one will reverse the curse of Adam"; in the covenant itself, God commands Noah to procreate, exercise dominion, eat other creatures, and he reiterates the notion of "image bearing" (see Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 201); and the consequences of the covenant are creation-wide. Debate persists about whether covenants are monopleuric or dipleuric, i.e., whether they are mere promises from God, and so rightly called "testaments" or whether they are true covenants which place demands on both parties. It seems best to understand them as both, but with peculiar senses in each case. As no human can perfectly obey the demands of God without his influencing and sustaining grace, all covenants are monopleuric, being from him, through him, and to him. We must believe, but we cannot do so apart from the regenerating work of the Spirit, and we believe in what Calvin called the "double grace" of justification/adoption and sanctification. At the same time, we work out our salvation with fear and trembling, honor God with our lives, uphold his standards, and persevere to the end, and so in one sense all covenants are also dipleuric. Any dichotomy that minimizes the grace of God or the demand on man has fundamentally misunderstood the teaching of Scripture.

Abram with Noah and Adam."[50] Like Adam, Abram's relation to God bears marks of individualized specificity and consequences for others based on their relationship to him. "God's six promises to Abram [in Genesis 12]," says Gentry, "are arranged in two groups of three: (1) the first group promises blessing for Abram as an individual—he will develop into a great nation, be blessed, and be given a great name; and (2) the second group promises blessing (or cursing) for the nations of the world through their relation to Abram."[51] These two groups of promises are demarcated by two commands, first to "go" (12:1) and second to "be."[52] Like Adam, Abraham fills the role of prophet (20:7), priest (12:7-8; 22:9),[53] and king (23:6).[54] God's covenant with Abraham, cut in Genesis 15 and maintained in Genesis 17, includes procreation (15:5) and dominion over the land (15:7, 18-19). A sign is added in Genesis 17 along with a promise that Sarah "shall become nations; kings of peoples shall come from her" (v. 16b; cf. 3:15, 20; 4:1, 25). A hope for all people after the likeness of Adam, one through whom the righteousness and blessing of God would come, carries on through Abraham the Shemite.

Israel. The sons of Jacob—son of Isaac, son of Abraham—were intended by God as the reconstitution of Adam. Like Noah and Abraham, they still existed in the post-Genesis 3 state, and this is a crucial distinction when coupled with the notion of federal representation.[55] Still, one of the key indicators that Israel is intended as a new Adam of

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[50] Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 260.

[51] Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 270.

[52] Gentry provides an extended defense for interpreting וֶהְיֵה as an imperative rather than a consequence, meaning the text would read, "I will bless you and make your name great, so be a blessing." Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 267-70.

[53] T. Desmond Alexander, *From Eden to the New Jerusalem: Exploring God's Plan for Life on Earth* (Nottingham, England: Inter-Varsity, 2008), 83.

[54] Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 272-74; Alexander, *From Eden to the New Jerusalem*, 82-84.

[55] Crowe, *The Last Adam*, 65-66.

sorts appears in the language of sonship. Genesis's statement about the relationship of Seth to Adam, being directly reminiscent of the relationship of Adam to God, leads Luke to conclude that Adam is "the son of God" (Luke 3:38). Further, Adam is placed in the Garden while Israel is placed in the luscious land prepared for them, over which they are to exercise dominion and glorify the saving and creating God. The people are established as a corporate "kingdom of priests" (Exod 19:6) which means "they will function to make the ways of God known to the nations and also bring the nations into a right relationship to God. Israel will display to the rest of the world within its covenant community the kind of relationships, first to God and then to one another and to the physical world, that God intended originally for all humanity."[56] Brandon Crowe provides five connections between Adam and Israel: "(1) sonship, (2) obedience, (3) continuity of commands, (4) blessings and curses, and (5) their relation to the place of God's covenantal presence."[57] With the difference between these two Adams admitted, God clearly continues his plan of relating to mankind in someone like Adam through the line of Israel.

David. Though the notion of Israel as a corporate Adam seems to shift the biblical focus away from singular, federal headship, David's role in the nation ensures the reader of the Old Testament remains hopeful for a new individual Adam. The Old Testament narrative does not leave David as merely an important individual in the life of Israel; it casts him as the focus of the people of Israel. One cannot read Genesis 49:8-12 without thinking of David. The book of Ruth is written, in considerable measure, to explain the lineage of David, and the book of Samuel recounts his rise and reign, as does 1 Chronicles. Kings and Chronicles compare the later monarchs to David (e.g., 2 Chron 28:1; 29:2). The Psalms are so largely written by him that they are often referred to in such a way that some might think he was their exclusive author. In fact, the structure of the Psalms

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[56] Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 341.

[57] Crowe, *The Last Adam*, 63-65.

gives hope that David would return, as books 1 and 2 are written almost exclusively by him, and he seems to return in book 5. In the prophets, promises are given for David's sake (Isa 55:3; Jer 23:5, 30:9; Ezek 37:25; Hos 3:5; Amos 9:11; Zech 12:8). Right up to the end of the Old Covenant era, the hope of the people remained vested in the status of the Davidic King, and the Old Testament reflects this in that it is as much about the progression, or regression, of the kings as it is about the people as a whole. In fact, one could argue that the maintenance of Judah is for the sake of David.

Here, consider three particular issues: the relationship between the king and people in the Law, the covenant between God and David in 2 Samuel 7, and the maintenance of the people for the sake of David. In Deuteronomy, God lays stipulations upon the people regarding their choice of a king. Though they will seek to be "like the nations" (cf. 1 Sam 8:5), they are to choose a king based on two things. First, he is to be one of them ("One from among your brothers," Deut 17:15b). Second, he is to be characterized by obedience to the law of God (vv. 18-20). Like Adam, who is one of us, the king must be one from among us, but unlike Adam, he must be one who takes greatest delight in the law of God rather than the accumulation of forbidden items. In David, God takes from among the people one after his own heart (1 Sam 13:14b; Acts 13:22) whose great delight was in "the law of the LORD" (Ps 19). God treats David as a son and promises him an eternal throne through which the nations will be blessed (2 Sam 7:14-16; Ps 2). Notice, 2 Kings 8:19 says, "The Lord was not willing to destroy Judah, for the sake of David his servant, since he promised to give a lamp to him and to his sons forever" (ESV). To have an eternal throne means to have an eternal kingdom, and so even the continuation of the tribe of Judah is said to be for David's sake.

The new Adam, who will recapitulate creation like Noah, bless and inherit the nations like Abraham, and perfectly obey the law of God, will be from the tribe of Judah, the line of David, and yet be David's Lord (Ps 110:1; Mark 12:35-38) who even existed before Abraham (John 8:58). This one who would not become drunk in the vineyard (Gen

9:21) even as he drank the wrath of God (Matt 20:22), would not circumvent the difficulties of covenant fulfillment (Gen 16; Matt 26:39), and would himself be the lamb who was slain (2 Sam 12:4; John 1:29), and would be greater than any other individual who pointed back to Adam. These were not mere continuations; they are true vestiges of the first Adam, reminding the people that a new, indeed last Adam was coming.[58]

New Testament Witness

It would seem, at first, that the notion of Jesus's role as the last Adam is constrained to the famous passages of Paul in which his appeal to this relationship seems to arise ex nihilo. However, a close reading of the Evangelists and the rest of the New Testament reveals the pervasive theme of the second and last Adam.

Matthew opens his Gospel with the argument that Jesus is the son of David, the son of Abraham, which ought to be enough for any reader to draw conclusions about the role he would serve in fulfilling all these men represented.[59] He would be the king in whom all the nations of the earth were blessed. But note the language of "genesis" in Matthew's work (1:1), tipping the reader to the new creation coming in the Abrahamic and Davidic son.[60] Further, Matthew presents Christ as the son called out of Egypt, raised up as the king of the Jews in the time of a wicked ruler (Matt 1:23; Isa 7:14). After the Messiah is plunged into the water, the Spirit comes down and God pronounces judgment: "This is my beloved

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[58] They are vestiges of the first Adam and types of the second and last Adam. There is sometimes a tendency to make Adam and the Garden anticipations of later Israelite life rather than the reverse, in which Israelite life is a vestige of creation and type of new Creation. Note again, positively, Beale's comment about the garden and subsequent temples opening the section on Gen 1-3, 5. Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission*, 26.

[59] Craig L. Blomberg, "Matthew," in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 2-3.

[60] Leon Morris writes, "The emphasis in Genesis 5:1 is on Adam who began the line, but in Matthew it is on Jesus in whom the line reached its consummation." Leon Morris, *The Gospel according to Matthew*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 18n2. Likewise, Charles Quarles says, "The phrase βιβλος γενεσεως appears twice in the LXX (Gen 2:4; 5:1). In both instances, the phrase introduces an account of creation, first the creation of the heavens and earth and then the creation of humanity." Charles L. Quarles, *Matthew*, Exegetical Guide to the Greek New Testament (Nashville: B & H, 2017), 14.

Son, with whom I am well pleased" (3:17; cf. Gen 3:8). This Son, like Adam, is tempted by the devil, but unlike the one who had all the food he could want, save one tree, this one is fasting and must not turn for even one meal. Unlike the one who was in a garden characterized by peace among animals (Gen 2:19-20a), this one is in the wilderness, where wild beasts roam (Mark 1:13).[61] Unlike the one who failed the test and was prevented from entering the garden by Cherubim, this one passed "and behold, angels came and were ministering to him" (Matt 4:11; Mark 1:13). Luke, likewise, famously reverses Jesus's genealogy, working backward to conclude that Jesus is "the son of Adam, the son of God" (3:38), before demonstrating his perseverance in holiness in the face of Satan's temptations.

Having set the Lord in Adamic relief, the synoptists also demonstrate that he fulfills Adamic hope. Brandon Crowe shows that Matthew draws especially on the theme of Israel's covenant infidelity when he speaks of Jesus fulfilling Scripture.[62] He says, "One might gloss Matthew's understanding of fulfillment as Jesus's representative reversal through his vicarious obedience, of the negative trajectory of Israel's history that was necessary to secure eschatological blessings for God's people . . . fulfillment marks a redemptive-historical advancement, as Jesus brings salvation history to its goal," rather

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[61] Richard Bauckham has argued that the wild beasts were at peace with the Lord in the wilderness, a view maintained by Crowe in *Last Adam*, and held as far back as at least John Gill. However, this seems to interrupt the foil. I clearly agree that we are meant to see Christ fulfilling the role of a new Adam, and thus bringing in the new creation hopes of the Prophets, but we are meant to see it in terms of a Pauline-like foil (cf. Rom 5:12-21). Thus, Adam has (1) all the food in a (2) peaceful (3) garden; Jesus is (1) fasting in a (2) wild-beast-filled (3) wilderness. The situations radically differ in which both are confronted by the ancient corrupter of God's Word, which serves to magnify the perseverance of the second Adam. While I remain uncommitted to Bauckham's argument that Mark intended the reader to see Christ as at peace with the wild animals, which I believe is more vague than his thesis allows, his work does demonstrate that Mark intends for the reader to see Jesus as the inaugurator of eschatological, Edenic peace. Richard Bauckham, "Jesus and the Wild Animals (Mark 1:13): A Christological Image for an Ecological Age," in *Jesus of Nazareth: Lord and Christ, Essays on the Historical Jesus and New Testament Christology*, ed. Joel B. Green and Max Turner (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 3-21. Cf. Crowe, *Last Adam*, 24; John Gill, *An Exposition of the New Testament*, The Baptist Commentary Series, vol. 1 (London: Mathews and Leigh, 1809), 381.

[62] Brandon D. Crowe, "Fulfillment in Matthew as Eschatological Reversal," *Westminster Theological Journal* 75, no. 1 (Spring 2013): 111-27.

than merely repeating the cycle.[63] Apart from two key explicit texts (Mark 1:15; 14:49), Mark primarily accomplishes his demonstration of Jesus's eschatological fulfillment of Scripture through "verbal parallels to key Old Testament texts [which] alert the reader to ways in which Jesus is fulfilling the Old Testament, such as we see in the Isaianic servant texts [Isa 42:1-6; 49:6; 53:11-14]."[64] Luke opens his narrative by explaining that he aims to provide certainty of the readers' doctrines (λόγων) regarding those things that Christ fulfilled (πεπληροφορημένων) among them. Luke focuses much of his attention on Christ's obediential fulfillment, so that will be treated in a moment, but it is worth noting that all three opening songs (*Magnificat*, *Benedictus*, *Nunc Dimittis*) are characterized by the theme of salvation history reaching its telos in the Son's advent.

Moving from the Gospels, but before looking at the most pertinent passages of Romans and 1 Corinthians, notice that last Adam themes continue to appear. In Colossians 1:15-16, Paul extols Christ as the Creator and Sustainer, very God. Referring to Christ's deity, Paul claims, "He is the image [εἰκων] of the invisible God," recalling Genesis 1:26 and 5:1, which say, "Let us make man according to our image [εἰκονα, LXX]" (Gen 1:26) and "the day God made Adam, he made him according to his image [εἰκονα, LXX]" (5:1; cf. 5:3). Paul cannot resist placing Christ in explicitly Adamic terminology as he proclaims his identity. Wellum rightly cautions, "In Genesis 1, humans are created as God's image bearers, designed to represent him in the world. However, we are not to think that we are the original image. Rather, the Son is the original image in accordance with which humans were created: he is the archetype and we are the ectype."[65] He means, though we may be tempted to say that Christ is like Adam, what Paul is really doing is saying that Adam is made to the image of Christ, the latter being the true image or impression of the Father.

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[63] Crowe, *The Last Adam*, 85.

[64] Crowe, *The Last Adam*, 85.

[65] Stephen J. Wellum, *Christ Alone—the Uniqueness of Jesus as Savior: What the Reformers Taught . . . and Why It Still Matters*, The 5 Solas Series (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2017), 97. See discussion later in this chap. on the various uses of "type" terminology.

Wellum continues, "In Jesus, the one who has eternally borne the Father's image perfectly and completely now takes up our humanity in order to fulfill the purposes that God had marked out both for himself and for us."[66] As Adam was intended to represent God (as ectype to archetype), now God assumes human form to fulfill where Adam failed (as antitype to type).

Consider, further, the testimony of Hebrews. In 2:5, the author transitions to discussing the relationship of Christ to his people, and the rule of both, reflecting particularly on Psalm 8 and moving to Psalm 22 and Isaiah 8.[67] David reflects on the glory of God manifested in creation in Psalm 8, but then he marvels at the fact that God deigned to set man above it.[68] Psalm 8, then, is a reflection on Genesis 1. At creation, God set a particular man, and mankind in general, above all else that he made, leaving nothing outside of his dominion (Heb 2:8b). Due to the fall, creation does not appear to exist in the state of dominion presently, but the author draws our eyes to Christ. Christ was made for a little while lower than the angels that he might be the head of those who would reclaim the glory for which God designed man. Allen Ross summarizes, "the fulfillment of the divine plan will be realized because the Son of God became man, a little lower than the angels, and he will eventually put all things under his dominion."[69] He endures all things as a man and tastes death for mankind. In this way, he is the founder, leader, or head (ἀρχηγὸν) of those who are saved and will constitute the new creation. David

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[66] Wellum, *Christ Alone*, 98.

[67] Much of what follows is a summary of Geerhardus Vos, *The Teaching of the Epistle to the Hebrews*, ed. Johannes G. Vos (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1956), 95-99.

[68] There is an interesting contrast between the question in David's mouth and in Job's (Job 7:17) in which the latter languishes over God's attention to him for judgment, wondering why it is that God would worry so much about such an insignificant creature. "The point of the psalm is that God honors us by paying attention to us. The point of Job is that God makes too much of us with his incessant surveillance and unforgiving scrutiny." Robert L. Alden, *Job*, The New American Commentary, vol. 11 (Nashville: B & H, 1993), 112.

[69] Allen P. Ross, *A Commentary on the Psalms 1-89: Commentary*, Kregel Exegetical Library (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2011), 1:290.

reflects on the glory given to Adam and mankind in Adam, and the author of Hebrews magnifies Christ as the true Adam, the one who assumed to himself flesh and blood to represent those who are flesh and blood.

First Corinthians 15 and Romans 5. The preceding survey of the biblical testimony demonstrates the inherent Adamic hope of God's people spanning redemptive history and realized in the person of Jesus Christ of Nazareth. Though 1 Corinthians 15 and Romans 5 present the most explicit connection of Jesus to Adam, Paul's argument represents neither theological novelty nor theological idiosyncrasy. Instead, Paul merely presents in most explicit terms what the entire band of biblical writers argue: our hope is in he who fulfills all Adam was intended to be, who succeeds at all points where Adam and Adamic vestiges failed.

First Corinthians 15 runs along the same argument as Hebrews 2. Man was set above all creation with outstanding glory and dominion, but his astonishing failure has resulted in death and decay (1 Cor 15:22). However, in Christ we see the one who has reversed the curse as the firstfruits from the dead (1 Cor 15:23). Thus, Christ is the new Adam to bring about new creation. Paul builds his argument for the final resurrection of those who are in the last Adam by explaining the differences between the glory of various objects (15:38-41) and the importance of one's origins (15:47-49). His connection in verse 43 of glory and honor, again tying into the argument put forward in Hebrews, recalls Psalm 8 and Genesis 1.[70] Paul labors to demonstrate the glorious reversal of the first Adam by the last Adam for those who are in the latter, promising that "we will also bear the heavenly [man's] image" (15:49). In the train of the one man or the other come creational consequences.

Romans 5 operates in federal headship categories as well, but much more explicitly. While Paul's point in 1 Corinthians 15 was on eternal bodies and the question

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[70] Roy E. Ciampa and Brian S. Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 813-14.

of the resurrection(s), in Romans, he focuses on the forensic standing of those in the respective Adams. Some debates exist surrounding the relationship of verses 1-11 and 12-21, but Douglas Moo seems most clearly to grasp what Paul is doing when he says,

> The main connection is with the teaching of assurance of final salvation in the immediately preceding paragraph (vv. 2b, 9-10). The passage shows why those who have been justified and reconciled can be so certain that they will be saved from wrath and share in "the glory of God": it is because Christ's act of obedience ensures eternal life for all those who are "in Christ."[71]

Paul had just been arguing that justification is by faith because of the imputed righteousness of Christ, and here he builds his argument for the hope of eternal glory with the concept of federal headship.[72] To see the universal import of Adam, one must simply consider the history of humanity between Adam and Moses. Though there was no explicit positive law violated, such as "do not eat," the shadow of Adam's sin was cast, and the effects of it were experienced as the inhabitants of the earth continued to die. Genesis 4-6 is empirical evidence of the consequence of Adam's sin for mankind. Their deaths and sins demonstrate their implication in the sin of Adam. Paul explains these consequences by highlighting the representative function of the two men, saying both Adams constitute humanity morally, forensically, and vitally. Those in the one are sinners, condemned, and dead; those in the other are righteous, justified, and live eternally.

The result of a biblical survey of Adam leads the reader to conclude that Adam does not simply fade into the background after Genesis 5. Rather, the hope of the world lay in the promise that one like Adam would come. Romans 5 says Adam is "a type of the

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[71] Douglas Moo, *The Letter to the Romans*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2018), 344.

[72] Moo, *The Letter to the Romans*, 345-46n150. Arguments abound regarding the relationship between the end of v. 12 and the rest of the verse. Some argue for consequence ("all people now sin and die because Adam sinned") to corporate solidarity. For surveys, see Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2018), 279-83; Moo, *The Letter to the Romans*, 351-56. Moo's argument for the concept of corporate solidarity in the person of Adam seems strongest as it makes sense of the biblical testimony, seen in this chapter, and the conclusions Paul draws in vv. 18-19. Schreiner, conversely, argues for a "both-and" interpretation of the passage, saying Paul emphasizes both personal sin (v. 12) and corporate solidarity (vv. 15-19). Both Moo and Schreiner encourage the reader to see corporate headship in the passage; disagreement appears in whether Paul includes the notion at the end of v. 12.

coming one" (v. 14b), and so the advent of Noah, Abraham, and David serve to sustain the hopes that a new and last Adam would arrive, yet repeatedly the readers learn that these individuals are not this last Adam. The New Testament identifies Jesus as the last Adam, the second man who inaugurates the new creation, the antitype of these previous Adamic sons. As both archetype and antitype, he is the reason for the original Adam, who functions as a type of the one to come. Who was Adam? Adam stood as representative head for mankind through whom God related to man, as did Abraham ("in you") and David (2 Kgs 8:19). The last item for consideration in this regard is the importance of obedience.

Obedient Adam(s)

As each of the men considered in the previous sections stood as covenant representatives—those through whom the promised Seed would come—they did so in the context of the demand for obedience. In many ways, one cannot reflect on the role of any of those represented in the previous sections apart from the concept of obedience, but it seems fitting to have considered the identity, or role, of covenant headship prior to covenantal obedience. Having laid much of the groundwork already, here I highlight the obedience of each and the subsequent consequences for those in them.

Old Testament. God had made all things very good and given Adam demands for obedience (Gen 1:26-27; 2:15, 17). As Wellum says, "It is best to view this command [about the fruit of the tree of knowledge] as a test of Adam's obedience to the Lord. He was created to love God and neighbor. The specific prohibition was a test to discern whether Adam would be what he was created to be."[73] Rather than obey, Adam took the fruit and brought all under condemnation. The demand for perfect obedience from the covenant head, who typologically prefigured the one to come (Rom 5:14b), and the consequent curses for those whom he represented becomes evident in the succeeding

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[73] Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 778.

biblical narrative.[74] In Adam, all are constituted sinners. Nevertheless, we see the manifestation of vital faith in the obedience of each of the covenant heads. They are, of course, only righteous by Christ and have that righteousness by faith in Christ. Nevertheless, the author of Hebrews points to the works that manifest that faith. Noah's obedience stands out in the antediluvian generation (Heb 11:7), and Abra(ha)m's obedience before God shines in the midst of despairing circumstances.[75] Abraham, who received the covenant of God, ends up being the basis of hope for the inheritance of the land of Canaan (Exod 2:24; 6:8; 32:13; 33:1; Lev 26:42; Deut 9:5, 27; 29:13; 2 Kgs 13:23; Ps 105; Isa 41:8; Mic 7:20). Likewise, the sustenance of David's line directly connects to his obedience (esp. 1 Kgs 3:6). The one who would take David's throne would be the righteous Branch (Isa 9:7; 16:5; Jer 23:5; 33:15).

Throughout the progression of salvation history, the theme of obedience appears in covenantal categories and results in members of the covenant receiving blessings or curses. As covenant heads, Noah, Abraham, and David recall the reader to the original holiness and original covenant and original sin. Gentry highlights the importance of God's faithfulness in the Noahic covenant despite man's fallen condition,[76] and we see in Genesis 15:17 and the promises regarding David that any accomplishment of the reversal of the human condition will come at God's hand (Isa 9:7). Looking at "Eden shows us how the requirement of covenantal obedience shapes the storyline of Scripture to help present us with the identity of Christ. . . . To undo, reverse, and pay for the first Adam's sin, the last Adam will indeed be a 'seed of the woman' (3:15), but this time one who will

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[74] Wellum demonstrates that "it is best to think of God's initial arrangement with Adam as holding forth a conditional promise of everlasting life." Instead, "Death (physical and spiritual) was the result of Adam's disobedience." Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 778-80.

[75] Gen 6:9 says Noah was "righteous," "blameless," and "walked with God" while that generation was "corrupt" and "filled with violence" (ESV). Abraham is called away from his land and family and home, and he goes (Gen 12:1, 4), despairs over the possibility of a heritage but believes God (Gen 15:2-3, 6), he honors the covenant sign though he had already gone twenty-four years without a child from Sarai (Gen 17:10, 23), and he went to the point of sacrificing his heritage in obedience to the Lord (Gen 22:12, 16-17).

[76] Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 202-3.

render the required covenantal obedience."[77] From the beginning, Adam was meant to point to Christ, and throughout the storyline, the biblical covenant heads refer the reader back to Adam in the hope of a coming one who would be greater and perfectly obedient in his stead.

New Testament. The primary means by which the Gospel writers convey the message that Christ is the new and last Adam appears in their demonstration of his obedience. The first time a Bible reader encounters the words of Christ, he reads, "Permit it now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matt 3:15).[78] "Put simply," says Crowe, "Jesus's baptism is one part of his fulfilling all righteousness, and fulfilling all righteousness is necessary for Jesus to save his people from their sins (1:21)."[79] Since this section of the gospel focuses on "the representative, recapitulatory obedience of Jesus," Crowe continues, "it seems likely that the most consistent and contextual reading of Matthew 3:15 is to view the righteousness of Jesus as a uniquely *christological* fulfillment of righteousness."[80] Matthew continues in this vein as he traces out the fulfillment of Scripture in Christ as a fulfillment of righteousness.[81]

Fulfillment, for Luke, connects tightly to his presentation of divine necessity. Healings, preaching, exorcisms, and the sum of Christ's work are concentrated in the exemplary mission of Christ as the fulfillment of God's plan for the salvation of sinners. From Luke's first report of Jesus's words (2:49) to the end of his Gospel (24:44-46), "taken together they [*dei*, δει/ 'it is necessary' passages] emphasize the entire obedience

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[77] Wellum, *Christ Alone*, 42.

[78] The statement includes both John and Jesus because it is a law for the people at the time that all Israel go to John to be baptized. Geerhardus Vos, *Biblical Theology: Old and New Testaments* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1975), 319; Crowe, *Last Adam*, 88.

[79] Crowe, *Last Adam*, 87.

[80] Crowe, *Last Adam*, 87.

[81] See esp. Crowe's argument on the Sermon on the Mount in *Last Adam*, 89-93. Cf. Matt 12:15-21.

of Jesus that is necessary for the accomplishment of eschatological salvation."[82] As the last Adam who comes to the children of Abraham, he defeats Satan and brings fulfilling Sabbath rest (13:16; 19:9-10), and his coming resembles Noah (17:26). Christ's fulfillment of and obedience to Scripture in the Gospel of Luke relates to the divine necessity upon the last Adam.

John says the Word became flesh to fulfill the will of the Father. At three key moments in the development of his Gospel, John relays Jesus's words in such a way that we will naturally move into the final section in this chapter.[83] First, after meeting with the woman at the well, Jesus's disciples express concern about him and his need for food. John records, "Jesus says to them, 'My food is to do the will of him who sent me [πέμψαντός] and to complete [τελειώσω] his work" (John 4:34). A little later, in the midst of a dispute about his identity, he says, "for the works which the Father gave to me that I might complete [τελειώσω] them, the very works which I do, bear witness concerning me that the Father sent me [ἀπέσταλκεν]" (5:36). Finally, in the High Priestly Prayer, he says, "I glorified you on the earth, having completed (τελειώσας) the work which you gave to me to do" (17:4). In these three texts we see three "moments" in the Father-Son relation: the assignment of a task (5:36), the beginning of the task (4:34), and the accomplishment of the task (17:4).

With this covenantal, obediential, and Adamic paradigm in place, I move to consider how the eternal covenant and dyothelite Christology come together.

The Son Obeys as the True Adam

Remember that Paul says Adam was a type of the one who was to come (Rom 5:14b). A two-part question presents itself here: how ought we to define "type" in (1) biblical language and (2) theological discourse? Biblically, the word "type" (τύπος)

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[82] Crowe, *Last Adam*, 104.

[83] Crowe, *Last Adam*, 118-25.

refers to various things,[84] but it boils down to the notion of a revelatory example or model. The Old Testament saints and New Testament ministers serve as examples of how to walk or not walk (1 Cor 10:6; Phil 3:17; 1 Thess 1:7; 2 Thess 3:9; 1 Tim 4:12; Titus 2:7; 1 Pet 5:3),[85] and the teaching Roman Christians earlier came under ought to serve as their model. Most basically, then, a type is a fixed standard by which other items and actions are judged. However, two other uses bring us closer to its technical use in theology. In Hebrews (cf. Acts 7:43-44; Exod 25:40 LXX), the writer uses the term to refer to the revealed content by which Moses constructed the tabernacle (8:5). God had opened heaven to the prophet and commanded him to direct the tabernacle's construction based on the "type" he had seen. Hebrews says these items are copies (*antitupa*) of the true things (9:24). The second use appears in Peter. The apostle says baptism serves as the antitype (*antitupon*) of the Noahic floodwaters through which salvation comes in Christ (3:21).[86] "To him [the Hebrews writer]," says Vos, "the same Old Testament things that Peter would call types are already antitypes;" for the one writer, they point upward, toward heaven, and for the other, they point forward.[87] Typology has these two important characteristics in the biblical literature.

Both the differences and the connections are crucial here. An early item serves as the type of the thing that later comes to resemble and heighten its significance, as seen in 1 Peter. This relationship is what has been theologically categorized as "type-antitype." The type comes before the antitype, and the antitype surpasses in importance the value of

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[84] The word appears fifteen times in the NT and another six times as the root of another word (ἀντίτυπος) [2x, Heb 9:24; 1 Pet 3:21], ὑποτύπωσις [2x, 1 Tim 1:16; 2 Tim 1:13], ἐντυπόω [1x, 2 Cor 3:7], τυπικῶς [1x, 1 Cor 10:11]).

[85] One other way the word is used in the NT is the impression upon an object by another, such as the impression in the Lord's hands from the nails (John 20:25, 2x). This gets to something of the root meaning of word which refers to the image left when one object is pressed upon another, like a stamp.

[86] This is not the place to enter the discussion on salvation and baptism. For the interpretation assumed here, see Thomas R. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, The New American Commentary, vol. 37 (Nashville: B & H, 2003), 193-97.

[87] Vos, *Biblical Theology*, 145.

the type. Conversely, a type could be heavenly and its antitype earthly, as in Hebrews. For my purposes here, I will use the concept of "archetype-ectype," the former being heavenly and the latter earthly, though these two categories typically refer to the difference in theological knowledge between God's knowledge and man's.[88] Thus, biblical types operate under a schema such as in figure 2.
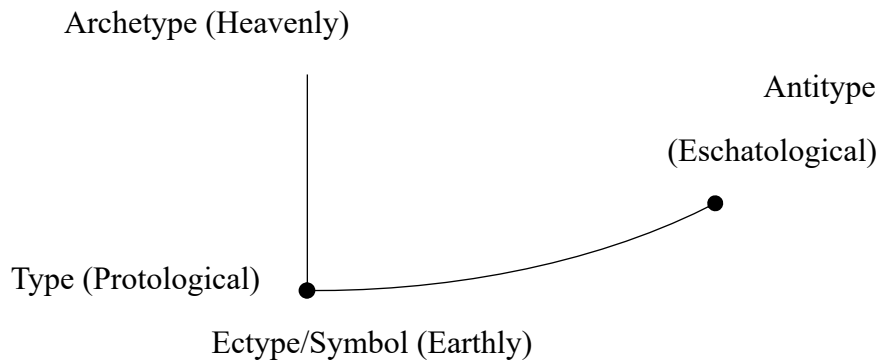

Figure 2. Archetype, type, and antitype

Adam is the image of the Image (Col 1:15-17), as ectype to archetype.[89] As the Father looks at the Son and sees a perfect reflection of himself, so too ought God to see a

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[88] Vos uses the term "symbol" here. A symbol, he says, is "something that profoundly portrays a certain fact or principle or relationship of a spiritual nature in a visible form." Vos, *Biblical Theology*, 144. However, important distinctions between symbols and ectypes should be maintained, particularly because of various ways the word "symbol" has been used. Cf. Herman Bavinck, *God and Creation*, vol. 2, *Reformed Dogmatics*, ed. John Bolt, trans. John Vriend (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004), 107-10; Michael Horton, *The Christian Faith: A Systematic Theology for Pilgrims on the Way* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), 44-79. Ectype usually refers to creaturely knowledge of God distinct from God's archetypal knowledge of himself. For a contemporary discussion of these concepts in the context of Col 1:15, see G. K. Beale, *Colossians and Philemon*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2019), 80-86. Though I would state it slightly differently, Beale gets at the relationship mentioned here when he says, "Christ being in the perfect Adamic image in his Incarnation is but the expression of his eternal existence as the divine archetypal Adam-like image in his preexistence" (83). The phrase "Adam-like" implies that the economy grounds the Son's imaging of the Father rather than the reverse. Beale strives to remove such notions, but nevertheless expresses himself at various points in imprecise ways.

[89] Douglas Moo writes, "In both texts where Paul asserts this about Christ (here and in 2 Cor. 4:4) [that Christ is the image of God], the focus is on Christ's revelation of God. He *is* the 'image' in accordance with which human beings are formed." Douglas J. Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 117.

creaturely, analogous reflection of himself in Adam.[90] That man images God must minimally mean man resembles God as ectype to archetype, as the resulting imprint to the imprinting device. When God created Adam in his image, he made him the covenant head and called him to obedience as federal representative of the human race. While all humans are image bearers (Gen 5:1-3), not all humans are federal heads. In fact, Adam was unique in the scope of his headship because it included all humans, and Noah and Abraham recall this scope as hope-invoking vestiges that one like Adam would come. Adam, then, is also a type of the one who would come.

Recall, a type is an objective standard that sets the mold of later antitypes. Wellum offers this definition: "Typology is the study of the relationship between OT revealed truths of persons, events, institutions ('types') which God has specifically designed to correspond to, and predictively prefigure, their intensified 'antitypical' fulfillment in Christ and his people."[91] Notice the purposive tenor to Wellum's definition. "Revealed truths," "specifically designed," and "fulfillment" each enforce the concept of objectivity determined and purposed by God. Ardel Caneday warned a study session of the Evangelical Theology Society against the danger of turning typology from revelation into interpretation.[92] He worries about the tendency to miss God's created purpose for the "persons, events, [and] institutions" and conclude that they are instead perceived connections made by the interpreter, either a later biblical interpreter, such as Paul or the author to the Hebrews, or current biblical interpreter. Instead, Paul, the author of Hebrews,

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[90] Thomas calls it fitting (*conveniens*) that in order to restore the created image, which is man, the uncreated Image assumed the created image. Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on the Sentences* Bk. III d1.q2.a2, accessed April 14, 2022, https://aquinas.cc/la/en/~Sent.III.D1.Q2.A2. He says, "*Secundum autem quod imago, convenientiam habet cum eo qui reparandus erat, scilicet cum homine, qui ad imaginem Dei factus est, Gen. 1; unde decuit ut imago imaginem assumeret, increata creatam.*"

[91] Stephen J. Wellum, "Editorial: Thinking about Typology," *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 21, no. 1 (Spring 2017): 6.

[92] Ardel Caneday, "Response to 'Typology in the book of Hebrews,' by Buist M. Fanning," (paper presented at the Evangelical Theological Society Conference, Denver, November 14, 2018).

and Peter, in addition to Jesus (Luke 24:26-27), understand types to be ontological and revelational, and therefore serve hermeneutics.

If Wellum and Caneday are following Paul correctly in this regard, then Paul's calling Adam a type of Christ must drive the theologian and interpreter to an understanding of the first Adam that is deeper than mere illustration. Further, if Wellum and Caneday are following Paul, then Adam must not be the logical starting point, but rather Christ in the eternal purpose of God.[93] No one precedes Adam in the biblical narrative but God, and since Adam immediately prefigures Christ by divine plan as type to antitype, his role as covenant head logically follows the eternal relations of origin according to the order (*taxis*) among the Persons as they turn *ad extra* in the decree.[94] In the decree, the eternal, simple, and triune God determines to create, redeem, and glorify a people for himself. As the decree is appropriated to each Person, the Son relates to the one decree as Son, in receptive filiation. Thus, while the Son is not obedient in the decree, his obedience as covenant head in time is decreed and is thus referred to covenantally.

Obedience in time requires a second will, and it appears in the context of covenantal (i.e., federal) representation. For Christ to be the antitypical Adam, and for Adam to be the righteous covenant head, directs the reader to consider how the eternal relations of the divine Persons appear in the missions. When the Son assumes a human nature, he assumes a true human will for the salvation of those in him. The Son enters into covenant with the Father in a manner fitting the human nature which was decreed for him to assume. He assumes a second will for the purpose of fulfilling the eternal covenant. Wellum explains,

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[93] By saying an interpreter must start with Christ in the eternal purpose, I mean by way of doctrinal explication.

[94] Though much of the discussion here follows as though eternity precedes time as a sort of "time-before-time," this should be understood analogously. For a proper defense of the classic doctrine of eternity, see Paul Helm, *Eternal God: A Study of God Without Time*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

As the obedient Son who loves his Father, and in his humanity, he aligns his human will with the will of his Father, as he chooses to act as our representative substitute. Instead of viewing Jesus's humanity as a passive instrument of the divine will (which would imply a Nestorian separation between the person of the Son and his own flesh), dyothelitism views the Son as the subject of the Incarnation, who wills in and through his human nature, and is "active in obedience at all times as the Son obeyed the Father according to his humanity."[95]

The one Person of the Son, whose will is one with the Father, obeys the Father in time through a second will as the fulfillment of all Adam and the Adamic vestiges pointed toward. Bathrellos highlights the importance of this for the cross in addition to the mystery involved: "The acceptance of the cup is the apex of the soteriologically indispensable human obedience of the Son to the divine will of the Father, which is identical with his own divine will."[96] According to the language of John, Jesus understood his work as this obedience to the task his Father gave him to do.

When the Son assumes flesh as the last Adam, and when he assumes a true human will to fulfill this role, he does so according to the eternal plan from the Father. Since the New Testament gives more attention to the Son's role as the antitypical Adam, it is unsurprising that the development of the doctrine tended to follow the grain of Scripture in this way.[97] Biblically, theologians must make some sense of the fact that the Son was sent by the Father, and that his sending was as the covenant head of a new people according to the eternal purpose of God. Certainly, Letham is right to warn about making subordination an *ad intra* reality, which would pose various crucial dangers. However, this is not a necessary entailment of the doctrine laid out here.

Clarifications and Eternal Submission

In what I provided in chapter 4 and this chapter, I have now given the context in which adherents may speak of submission. Letham claimed that (4) the biblical texts

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[95] Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 347, citing, Watts, "Two Wills in Christ?," 485.

[96] Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 171.

[97] The Person of the Holy Spirit will be considered more in the next chapter.

used to support the *pactum* most appropriately apply to Christ's work as man. As seen above, the reason advocates of the *pactum* use biblical texts that refer to the Mediator is due to the fundamental conviction that the work of Christ as Mediator and covenant head is determined in the eternal decree. Texts that refer to the one who is to come are promises grounded in eternity and concluded in the fullness of time. Further, Letham was concerned that the *pactum salutis* (1) tends toward subordinationism and/or (3) posits three wills in God. I will interact below with Grudem's proposal of eternal submission, which should alleviate the concerns about the *pactum salutis* tending toward subordinationism, and then I will conclude the response to the charge that the *pactum* posits three wills.

Eternal submission. Grudem makes several arguments for the Son's being eternally submissive to the Father. He calls forth the language of the Father's choosing the elect in the Son (Eph 1:3-4), the Father's giving of the Son (John 3:16), the Son's doing of the Father's will (John 6:38), Christ's statement of the Father's superiority (John 14:28), the Son's intercession for the saints (Rom 8:34), the Son's received authority to pour out the Spirit (Acts 2:32-33), the Son's received authority to deliver revelation (Rev 1:1), the Son's sitting at the right hand of Majesty (Heb 1:3), the Son's received authority to execute final judgment (John 5:26-27), and the Son's delivering of the kingdom to the Father (1 Cor 15:28).[98] However, much of what he leverages in these ways could as easily, and without much controversy, be interpreted as a reference to the decreeing of the Son's mission (e.g., Eph 1:3-4), the mission itself (John 6:38; 14:28), the Son's status as the ascended God-man and Mediator (e.g., Rom 8:32-34), and the culmination of the Son's work as the God-man (1 Cor 15:28). Of particular note is Grudem's use of Ephesians 1:4. He says, "The Father 'chose us' in the Son 'before the foundation of the world' (Eph. 1:4), which must refer to the divine Son (for the human nature did not exist at that time."[99]

[98] Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 302-3.

[99] Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 312.

First, those who were chosen did not exist at that "time" either, and second, this text refers to the decreed economy of redemption in which the Son comes as the covenant head of the elect, not the works of God *ad intra* (i.e., generation and spiration; see chapter 4).

Consider Grudem's later argument. Referring to John 6:38, in which Jesus says he came down not to do his own will but "the will of him who sent me." Grudem writes,

> The "I" in this verse cannot be the human nature of Christ, for the human nature of Christ did not "come down from heaven," but rather the divine nature of the Son did this. And yet he distinguishes "my own will" from "the will of him who sent me," which must imply that there are different expressions of the unified will of God among the three persons of the Trinity.[100]

First, one must respond claim about "the divine nature of the Son," an argument that is like that made against Erickson in chapter 4. Since it is impossible that the Son could have changed in his divinity, per his eternity and immutability, and because the divine Son is omnipresent/immense, it must be the case that the Son's "coming" should not be construed as a change in his status *A* to status *B* nor location *X* (heaven) to location *Y* (earth).[101] All change must be in the created effects; namely, in the human nature that has been created and united to him. Since it is a created nature, it is inferior to the Father (John 14:28), and since it is uniquely the Son's human nature by union to himself, it is rightly said that the Son is inferior to the Father in that human nature without a change in his equality to the Father in his divine nature.

Second, Grudem's claim requires an interpretation of Jesus's distinguishing statement about his will and the will of the one who sent him. It is worth noting that three options are available that would not require eternal submission in the manner Grudem proposes, all of which are consistent with Trinitarian orthodoxy. First, one could read the statement, "not my own will," as a statement that it is not the will he has *by himself*; that is, as differentiated from the Father since it is the same identical will as the Father's. Second, one could read it as stating that it is not the will that he has *from himself*; that is, since the

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[100] Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 307.

[101] The same cautions attend interpretations of such texts as Gen 11:5 or Exod 34:5.

Son's mode of subsisting is by receptive filiation, he has the divine will as the one who is "from the Father." The third, and preferable, way to interpret this statement is that he has come to do not his own *human* will, but the will of God. As he comes from the Father in the mission, he does so as the divine Son incarnate, not by a change in the eternal God, but by a new created nature that has now been united to the eternally begotten Son. This new created human nature of the Son is that by which he represents man before God as the Mediator and federal head according to his decreed mission as I have outlined in this chapter.

By referring to the *pactum salutis* as the logical precedent to the Son's mission, and by viewing the Son's mission as uniquely the fact of the human nature being united to the eternally begotten Son, some of the difficult Trinitarian and Christological questions in modern baptistic systematic theologies are reconciled. The Son does not change in his status from equality to inequality, nor is he eternally submissive to the Father while changing his location from heaven to earth. Rather, in the *pactum salutis* one makes sense of the elect being chosen in Christ before the foundation in the world and the in-time obedience of the Son in his human nature. Thus, the *pactum salutis* offers an interpretive key for understanding biblical texts about covenantal representation in eternity and the Son's being sent from the Father in time without thereby affirming eternal relations of authority and submission or formal subordinationism.

Three wills in the Trinity? As seen both in the previous chapter and this chapter, Letham's argument that the *pactum salutis* implies three wills is not a necessary entailment of the doctrine. Rather, the *pactum salutis* implies the triune determination in the decree of the creation in time of a second will to be united to the Son as he fulfills the work of federal headship as the last Adam. While the proposal made by Grudem may run into problems surrounding the will, the *pactum salutis* is about the *Filius incarnandus*, strictly located in the *opera Dei ad extra* and strictly focused on the mission of the Son. Since the Son would come as the last Adam, representing his people by covenantal

obedience, those he would represent would need him to be like them in every way—yet without sin—to redeem them. For their wills to be redeemed, they would need him to have a true human will. However, this was not something God determined after the event of the fall. Since Adam was an immediate ontological type of the one who was to come, it was determined in the decree that the one who was to come would assume a true human nature with a true human will as the federal head of his people. Thus, the elect are chosen in him before the foundation of the world (Eph 1:4) even though the mission is the in-time creation of a complete human nature that is united to the eternally begotten Son.

Substantial change in the *historia salutis*. While this chapter has focused on the mission of the Son as the covenant head, who assumed a true human will that he might obey for them, this should be further developed to note the substantial change this makes to the history of redemption, or *historia salutis*. While drawing out the argument for the covenantal differences this makes would require a further dissertation, some preliminary remarks are warranted here. Since all previous covenant heads are only types of Christ, the transition and transformation of redemptive history by the coming of Christ ought not to be minimized. All others are shadows, but the substance is Christ (Col 2:17). They are types, but Christ is the fulfillment of all types. Since the federal head of the new covenant is the God-man, the new covenant that has now been established in his blood (Luke 22:14-30) must be substantially different than those covenant heads that preceded him. In the coming of Christ as the fulfillment of the decree of redemption, the substance of what was hoped for has come. It is inappropriate, then, to define who should receive the mark of union with Christ in a manner no different than the mark of union with, for instance, Abraham by applying it to those who have exhibited no evidence of having become members of the new covenant that has now come.

Conclusion

Though the difficulties inherent in any discussion of the Incarnation have not been avoided, this chapter has demonstrated how the biblical notion of Christ as the second Adam includes both dyothelitism and covenantal representation, and that both are connected to the decree through the doctrine of the eternal covenant. The Son came from the Father to do his will, fulfilling the Adamic type as the head of a redeemed people. In the words of B. B. Warfield, "They [the Evangelists] consentiently [unanimously] represent Him [Christ] as having come to perform a specific task, all the elements of which were not only determined beforehand in the plan of God, but adumbrated, if somewhat sporadically, yet with sufficient fulness for the end in view, in the prophecies of the Old Testament."[102] This covenant is not an *ad intra* relation insofar as it is not about the eternal relations without consideration to the missions in time, but an *ad extra* mode of acting (*modus agendi*) when the immanent decree is addressed. As the decree logically precedes all types, Adam, Noah, Abraham, David, et al., and as all types possess their ontological revelational status by God's providence, so also was the Son considered in the decree as the covenant head of the people prior to all Old Testament foreshadows. All vestiges of Adam hold out hope for the one like him who was to come. It was fitting that the one whose proper mode of subsisting is by "filial reception" would be the one to do the will of the Father by assuming to himself another will of the same nature as those he represents.

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[102] B. B. Warfield, "The Foresight of Jesus," in *Biblical Doctrines*, vol. 2, *The Works of Benjamin B. Warfield* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003), 71.

CHAPTER 6

PNEUMATOLOGY AND THE ETERNAL COVENANT

Perhaps the one aspect of the doctrine of an eternal covenant that seems most appropriately critiqued is its seeming neglect to include pneumatology. This was noted earlier in the work of John Gill. Recall, Gill said, "This covenant is commonly represented as if it was only between the Father and the Son." It is worth noting that he sought to show that the Holy Spirit "was not a mere by-stander, spectator and witness of this solemn transaction, compact and agreement, between the Father and the Son, but was a party concerned in it."[1] In Gill's positive argument, the Spirit's part in the covenant is twofold. First, the Spirit is at work in the formation of the Son's human nature and in his work as the federal head. Second, the Spirit carries forth the gospel of the Son by the public ministers and privately by working in the heart of the elect. Likewise, and more recently, it was noted from the works of Robert Letham that some feel

> inevitable problems arise in applying covenant concepts to God. There are two kinds of covenants in the Bible. The first kind is a one-sided imposition. Applied to the relations of the Father and the Son (leaving the Holy Spirit aside!), this would mean subordination. The other covenant type is a quid pro quo, a voluntary contract between two or more persons. This requires the parties to be autonomous agents. Applied to the Trinity, it implies that the Trinitarian persons each have their own will, entailing something approaching tritheism. Both of these elements are present in the *pactum salutis*. Constructions such as these veer toward either subordinationism or tritheism.[2]

Had Baptists continued to affirm the *pactum salutis* by leaning on Gill's work, and Keach before him, they would have headed off Letham's critique.

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[1] John Gill, *A Body of Doctrinal Divinity; or, A System of Evangelical Truths, Deduced from the Sacred Scriptures* (London: Printed for the Author, 1769), 1.II.VII, XIV.352, 394.

[2] Robert Letham, *The Holy Trinity: In Scripture, History, Theology, and Worship*, rev. ed. (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2019), 319.

I showed in the previous chapters that the notions of a distinct will and of subordination only apply to Christ insofar as he is considered in eternity for willing obedience in time as federal head, thus heading off criticism that the *pactum salutis* undermines key components of Christian orthodoxy. Of the five challenges given in the list at the beginning of chapter 4, the two that remain are:

2. How does the *pactum salutis* account for the Holy Spirit,[3] and

5. It seems "The focus of the *pactum salutis* on contractual agreement misses the heart of what God's covenant is all about. . . [because] to construe this covenant in *purely* legal terms is to miss the relation of the most intimate communion or friendship in which God reflects his covenant life in his relation to the creature."[4]

Answering these two questions will also further respond to the question about the *pactum's* compatibility "with historic Christian orthodoxy" and its biblical warrant.

This chapter seeks to demonstrate how the *pactum salutis* accounts for the work of the Holy Spirit, that is, the way the Holy Spirit's procession is revealed in his mission in covenantal terms. To do so, a sketch will be given of the doctrine of the Spirit as proceeding from the Father and the Son and of his proceeding as Love and Gift. Further, I will follow Fesko's example by tracing the works of the Spirit in the Son's Incarnation and the Spirit's personal mission to show forth the *pactum salutis*.[5] To conclude the chapter, I will combine the two arguments to say that the Spirit's procession as Love and Gift is refracted through a covenantal prism, showing again the fact that the *pactum salutis* is a means by which Christians affirm that the triune God determined to reveal the processions in the missions covenantally. Remembering the names Love and Gift as we express the *pactum salutis* both reaffirms our commitment to a thoroughly Trinitarian

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[3] Robert Letham, *Systematic Theology* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2019), 435-36; Letham, *The Holy Trinity*, 319.

[4] Letham, *Systematic Theology*, 437. Cf. Letham, *Holy Trinity*, 320-21.

[5] J. V. Fesko "The Covenant of Redemption and the *Ordo Salutis*," *The Master's Seminary Journal* 33, no. 1 (Spring 2022): 5-19.

doctrine—including the Spirit—and helps us avoid thinking of the *pactum* as something coldly contractual.

Western Procession: The Spirit's Origin
Ex Patre Filioque as Love and Gift

Those who confessed the doctrine of an eternal covenant also confessed the procession of the Spirit "from the Father and the Son" (Second London Baptist Confession of Faith [2LBCF]/Westminster Confession of Faith [WCF]/Savoy Declaration [SD] 2.3). This section will trace out the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son, followed by the names of the Spirit offered by Augustine and argued by later theologians, viz. Love and Gift. In this section, four authors are of particular help; namely, Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, Matthew Levering, and the Baptist theologian Gregg Allison.[6] Though the middle two in that list favor a Roman Catholic rather than uniquely Protestant presentation, it is appropriate to recognize Levering as a safe guide to interpreting Thomas, who had developed the thoughts of Augustine.[7] Thus, it is assumed in this section, and in this chapter as a whole, that Augustine laid the groundwork in his reflections on the Trinity, and in particular, the Holy Spirit. Augustine's reflections would go on to shape the theology reflected in the Second London Confession, in which we find the clearest confessional codification of the *pactum salutis* (Second London Baptist Confession of Faith 7.3, 8:1).

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[6] Augustine, *On the Trinity (De Trinitate)*, 2nd ed., trans. Edmund Hill, ed. John E. Rotelle, *The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century* I/5 (New York: New City, 2015); Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologia: Prima Pars, 1-49*, trans. Fr. Laurence Shapcote, ed. John Mortensen and Enrique Alarcón (Lander, WY: The Aquinas Institute for the Study of Sacred Doctrine, 2012) I.q36-38 (pp. 363-84); Matthew Levering, *Engaging the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit: Love and Gift in the Trinity and the Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2016); Gregg R. Allison and Andreas J. Köstenberger, *The Holy Spirit*, Theology for the People of God (Nashville: B & H, 2020).

[7] Augustine is understood throughout this dissertation as a Western church father rather than a distinctly Roman Catholic theologian, and even though Thomas Aquinas was canonized by the Roman Catholic Church, Reformed scholastics were evidently comfortable looking at him as an important theologian for their own thought, even while disagreeing with him at key points. Manfred Svensson and David VanDrunen, eds., *Aquinas among the Protestants* (Hoboken, NJ: WileyBlackwell, 2018).

Ex Patre Filioque Procedit: He Proceeds
from the Father and the Son

Though the *filioque* is a point of division between the East and West, the confessional traditions in Protestantism have affirmed it. The basic argument for the *filioque* is drawn textually from John 15:26-16:15 and theologically from the affirmation that the missions reveal the processions. In John 15:26, the Lord says that upon his ascension, he will send the Paraclete (Παράκλητος) from the Father, who proceeds from the Father (παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς ἐκπορεύεται). Likewise, in John 16:5, Jesus says he is going "to the one who sent me" (πρὸς τὸν πέμψαντά με), and in verse 7, Jesus will "send him [the Paraclete] to you" (πέμψω αὐτὸν πρὸς ὑμᾶς). There is a likeness between the Lord's being sent from the Father and the Spirit's being sent from the Son. Not only is there a likeness, but the Father's giving of the Spirit to the disciples and the Spirit's being sent is from the Son (14:16; 15:26). Though the argument for silence on this issue is drawn from the fact that Jesus only says the Spirit proceeds from the Father (15:26), if it is true that the Son's mission reveals his eternal procession as the only-begotten of the Father, and if the Son has everything that the Father has excepting paternity (16:15; cf. 5:26), and if the Spirit speaks in accord with the relations of origin (16:13),[8] then we are justified in confessing that the Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son (*filioque*) as seen in the mission of the Spirit from the Father and the Son.

The Spirit's procession from the Father and the Son is twofold, similar to the twofold procession of the Son. The Spirit's procession in God is from the Father and the Son, but the mission includes both the eternal procession and the temporal created effects. About the essential and eternal procession of the Spirit from the Father and the Son, John Owen says,

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[8] As noted in the previous chapter, there is an unfortunate translation in places such as John 16:13 which import the language of authority when that is not necessary. Jesus says the Spirit "will not speak from himself" (οὐ γὰρ λαλήσει ἀφ᾽ ἑαυτου). Whatever implications one might draw from that statement regarding authority among the Persons, the relation of origin (fromness) is concealed by translating it "on his own authority" (ESV).

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The first and most general expression hereof is, that he [the Holy Spirit] *proceedeth* from the Father; and being the Spirit of the Son, he proceedeth from him also in like manner: John 15:26, "The Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me." There is a twofold ἐκπόρευσις or "procession" of the Holy Ghost. The one is φυσική or ὑποστατική, "natural" or "personal." This expresseth his eternal relation to the persons of the Father and the Son. He is of them by an eternal emanation or *procession*. The manner hereof unto us, in this life, is incomprehensible; therefore it is rejected by some, who will believe no more than they can put their hands into the sides of. And yet are they forced, in things under their eyes, to admit of many things which they cannot perfectly comprehend! But we live by faith, and not by sight. This is enough unto us, that we admit nothing in this great mystery but what is revealed. And nothing is revealed unto us that is inconsistent with the being and subsistence of God; for this procession or emanation includes no separation or division in or of the divine nature, but only expresseth a distinction in subsistence, by a property peculiar to the Holy Spirit.[9]

Owen allows for both the affirmation that God has revealed the processions in the missions, thus following the argument for the *filioque* and the apophaticism that characterizes the argument that what can be known about the internal relations—beyond the relations of origin—is inaccessible to man.[10]

The procession of the Spirit refers to the personal relation of the Spirit to the Father and Son as a joint principle.[11] The Spirit does not proceed from them as a creature from the simple divine essence shared by the Father and the Son but from them as a joint principle of Spirit's relation. Levering states this well:

It should be clear here that the Father and the Son are not one "principle" as an undifferentiated amalgam: the "one principle" of the Holy Spirit is not just the Father and the Son in their consubstantial unity (the Father and the Son as *one in essence*), but this "one principle" of the Holy Spirit is the Father and the Son in their mutual communion of love (that is, *as one in "spiration,"* a quasi-property common to the Father and the Son, and in which the Son receives from the Father in the act of generation).[12]

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[9] John Owen, *The Holy Spirit*, in *The Works of John Owen*, ed. William H. Goold (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1850-1853; repr., Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1965), 3:116-17.

[10] On the more cordial sides of the debates about Eternal Submission (ERAS/EFS), opponents to eternal submission have warned that proponents are transgressing the sort of theological apophaticism expressed by Owen here. See the comments by Bruce Ware quoted above in chap. 4 on the Trinity. Bruce A. Ware, "Unity and Distinction of the Trinitarian Persons," in *Trinitarian Theology: Theological Models and Doctrinal Application*, ed. Keith S. Whitfield (Nashville: B & H, 2019), 59.

[11] This affirmation is rooted in the Augustinian tradition.

[12] Levering, *Doctrine of the Holy Spirit*, 145-46.

That the Father has given all to the Son excepting paternity, and that the Spirit proceeds from the Father, which designates the relation of the Spirit, it follows that the Spirit proceeds from the Son as well, though not as a different principle. One way of arguing the *filioque* is to state the things it negates. Saying the Spirit proceeds from the Father alone seems to make the Spirit another Son since the oppositional relation to him would be Father.[13] Further, "when two things (differentiated by more than matter) proceed from the same source, they possess an order to each other," so saying the Spirit proceeds from the Father alone seems to leave three options regarding the Spirit and the Son, the first negative and the latter two positive.[14] First, it may negate any relation of opposition at all between the Son and the Spirit, but they must "possess an order to each other." Thus, second, it may form the Son into another Father to the Spirit, or third, it may form the Spirit into another Father to the Son. Surely all four of the options are inappropriate since only the Father is the Father and only the Son is the Son. Further, though two spirate the Spirit, there are not two "spirators," which would require two "spirations," thus requiring the argument of a joint principle.[15] It is rightly said, by means of biblical reasoning (John 14-16) and appropriate theological cataphatic and apophatic sensibilities, that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son (*ex Patre Filioque procedit*).

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[13] Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* I.q36.a2.

[14] Levering, *Doctrine of the Holy Spirit*, 156.

[15] Levering, quoting and expounding on Thomas Aquinas, says,

He [Aquinas] makes a rather fine distinction: "we can say that the Father and the Son are two spirating, by reason of the plurality of the *supposita*, but not two spirators by reason of the one spiration." There are two spirating persons, the Father and the Son. But there are not two spirators, because otherwise there would be two spirations, one coming from the Father and one coming from the Son. The spiration is in fact a unity, because the Father and the Son do it through their perfect sharing of the spirative power. The value of this distinction between "two persons spirating" and "two spirators" consists in its ability to resist amalgamating the persons while at the same time insisting that the spiration is one act that the Father and the Son truly share, due to the Father's communication of the spirative power to the Son. (Levering, *Doctrine of the Holy Spirit*, 161)

Dilectio Deus Est: Love Is God

One of Augustine's key contributions to Trinitarian theology was his exploration of the possibility of naming the Holy Spirit.[16] As he contemplated the Trinity, and specifically as he contemplated the Person of the Holy Spirit, he concluded that the Holy Spirit could appropriately be named "Love" and "Gift." Allison rightly cautions that this depends on a "faith-oriented approach to the interpretation of Scripture," which means that affirming it depends on a particular posture toward Scripture that expects to see the triune God revealing himself in the Word.[17] As one considers the Father and the Son, and the Father loving the Son as the one begotten of himself, and the Son loving the Father as the one from whom he is begotten, the Spirit is the bond of love between the Father and the Son. The key passage for seeing this is 1 John 4. Because his summary of Augustine's interpretation of the passage is so clear, Allison's bullet points are listed *in toto* below:

- Love is of God (v. 7)

- Love is God (v. 8)

- Therefore, love is "God of God."

- Two divine persons can be called "God of God": the Son and the Holy Spirit.

- God manifested his love by sending his Son as the atonement for our sins (vv. 9-10).

- In turn, we should love one another (v. 11).

- In so doing, God dwells in us when we love one another, and the way we love is by God's gift of the Holy Spirit (v. 13).

- Therefore, the "God of God" is the Holy Spirit whom God has given.

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[16] Though I have provided the subheading to this section, "*Dilectio Deus Est*," some Latin forms of this phrase use the word *caritas* or *amor* instead of *dilectio*.

[17] Allison and Köstenberger, *The Holy Spirit*, 264; Levering, *Doctrine of the Holy Spirit*, 54. One might categorize this as a hermeneutic of trust rather than a hermeneutic of suspicion. There is a real sense that this interpretive posture is necessary for the affirmation of the *pactum salutis* as well since the Scriptures pulsate with the concept, but the clarity of its reality is seen specifically by those who have already noticed the Trinitarian, decretal, and covenantal patterns of the Scripture. When these concepts are in place, the Christian reads Pss 2 and 110, Luke 22, Eph 1, 2 Tim 1, and Titus 1:2 as almost explicitly screaming that a supratemporal/eternal covenant exists for the glory of the triune God in the covenantal redemption of the elect.

- Conclusion: the Holy Spirit "is the gift of God who is love," and the two names "Love" and "Gift," implying each other, are proper names of the Holy Spirit.[18]

As the argument progresses, it becomes clear that Augustine and his followers employ Trinitarian reasoning, rather than an assumed neutrality or skepticism, in the interpretation. Since the relations of origin are true, and since one is said to be from God and be God, and since John identifies this one as the Spirit, the Spirit's proper name is Love, just as the Son's is "Word" (John 1:1, 14).[19]

While this reasoning may seem to be special pleading by Augustine and his followers, the argument does have a certain explanatory power in terms of both contemplation about the Trinity and the cumulative New Testament teaching on the Spirit. Christ comforts his disciples by saying that he will send another Paraclete (John 14:16-17) who will be in them as the love of the Father and the Son (14:23; 17:26).[20] He commands them to abide in his love as he has abided in the Father's love (John 15:10). Paired with the teaching from 1 John 4, it is hard to miss that the mutual abiding—the disciples in the God and God in the disciples—is by the Holy Spirit. Paired with Romans 5:5, which says the "Love of God is poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit," the argument continues to build.[21] But what is "the love of God?" Is it God's love or love to God? There are various debates about this question, but the reason for such debates is that both statements are true.[22] As seen in John and 1 John, the Spirit of God poured out in believers' hearts is the one by whom believers encounter the Love of God, and he is the

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[18] Allison and Köstenberger, *The Holy Spirit*, 265-66; Augustine, *On the Trinity*, XV.31.

[19] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* I.q37.a1.

[20] This argument depends on the connections made in the other parts of the chapter.

[21] Augustine, *On the Trinity*, XV.31; Allison and Köstenberger, *The Holy Spirit*, 266-67.

[22] For an explanation of the two views and argument that it is God's love, see Douglas Moo, *The Letter to the Romans*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2018), 331-33; Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testamen, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2018), 264-65. Augustine himself moves quite quickly from his connection of the Love being poured into believers' hearts to the manifestation of this in the gifts of the Spirit (1 Cor 13:1-3). Augustine, *On the Trinity*, XV.32.

one by whom believers love God. In other words, creatures' love of God is the manifestation of the Love of God.

Since the Spirit's mission manifests him as the Love of the Father and the Son proceeding, the Christian considers the way this manifests the eternal relations of origin; that is, how is the Spirit the Love of the Father and the Son? Aquinas argues that the mental analogy of the procession of intellect and will, which follow a particular order without division, is apt in that the procession of the intellect (Word) precedes the procession of will/love (Spirit).[23] The mental analogy seeks to make use of the known relations of origin (Son from the Father, and Spirit from the Father and the Son) with the names of the Son and Spirit (Word and Love) to conceptualize the processions. Levering explains, "In the analogy, the key point is that 'to will' or 'to love' is an action (an interior procession) that, by producing an interior term ('love spirated'), constitutes a relation."[24] One need not necessarily follow the mental analogy as far as Aquinas to affirm what was just argued from Augustine. The desire is to say something, with proper caution, about the Love as the proceeding relation to the joint principle of the Father and the Son. The Spirit is the Love from the Father and the Son, revealing in some way his relation to the Father and the Son as the bond of Love from the Father and the Son.[25]

Donum Dei: The Gift of God

In many ways, the arguments for naming the Spirit "Love" and "Gift" are mutually entailing since love proceeding is the gift that manifests itself in gifts. Summarizing Aquinas' argument, Levering says,

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[23] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* I.q27.aa2-5; Levering, *Doctrine of the Holy Spirit*, 98-103.

[24] Levering, *Doctrine of the Holy Spirit*, 100.

[25] Owen says, "The Spirit is the mutual love of the Father and the Son, knowing them as he is known, and 'searching the deep things of God." Owen, *The Holy Spirit*, 67.

[Aquinas] asks why one would give something freely without seeking a return, and he answers that the reason must be love. Before we give someone a gift, we give that same person love. Love, then, "has the nature of a first gift, through which all free gifts are given. . . ." [B]ecause the Holy Spirit proceeds uniquely as "Love," he must therefore proceed uniquely as primal "Gift." It is because the Holy Spirit is eternal Gift, the first gift, that the Holy Spirit is the source of the gifts that believers receive.[26]

This is deductive from Allison's "faith-oriented approach" to the biblical patterns. Psalm 104:27-30 appropriates the gift of life to the work of the Spirit so that for the Spirit to be sent is for God's works to receive the gift of life, while the termination of their life would be evidence of God's hiding his face (v. 29). Life is given in the sending of the Spirit. Jesus reiterates this, saying, "It is the Spirit who gives life" (John 6:63). It should be noted that the context of this statement is that Jesus just said that those the Father has given to him will come to him (6:37) and that Jesus has come to do the will of the Father in securing the elect that were given to him (6:38-39). The Spirit will give life upon the Son's ascension (6:62) so that those who have it given to them from the Father that they should come, do in fact come (6:65).

In the next chapter, John says the Holy Spirit is poured out from the Son, "given," when the Son completes his work in the *pactum salutis* (7:37-39). This statement by Jesus at the feast recalls his earlier conversation with the Samaritan woman. There he had confounded her by saying, "If you had known the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water" (John 4:10, ESV; cf. Isa 12:3). "Gift of God" is not always a direct reference to the Holy Spirit since it sometimes refers to the graces a person receives from God (e.g., Eph 3:7), but it often refers to at least the working of the Spirit and sometimes to the Spirit himself. This is seen by noting the connections in John 4, 6, and 7, but also in Acts 2:38, where those who believe in Christ will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. This could be the gift of regeneration worked by the Spirit, but it is better to say that the gift of regeneration is the manifestation of the Gift who is the Spirit. In the context of the giving

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[26] Levering, *Doctrine of the Holy Spirit*, 106-7; Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologia* 1.q38.a2.

of the Spirit in Acts 2, the Baptist Andreas Köstenberger earlier provides a fourfold

"characterization":

> (1) the Spirit testifies to the risen Jesus, Israel's Messiah and Lord and Savior of all; (2) the Spirit transcends all boundaries of gender, age, race, or socioeconomic background; (3) the Spirit is given freely to all on the basis of repentance from sin and trust in the crucified sin bearer, the Lord Jesus Christ; (4) the Spirit is the Spirit of mission, persistently seeking to bring about repentance and faith, drawing more and more people to God, as his people, represented by leaders such as Peter and the other apostles, testify boldly to God's work in and through the Lord Jesus Christ.[27]

The mission of the Spirit that manifests him as Gift is intimately connected to and flows

from the mission of the Son as the consummation of Old Testament prophecies. The Spirit

proceeds from Christ and draws Christ's people to him.

Like the patterns of love, from these biblical patterns of "giving" in Scripture,

inquiry is made into what is meant in connecting them to the Spirit. A step forward in

pneumatology "seems to be Augustine's decision to trace the characteristic gift-ness of

the Spirit back from the church's experience into the immanent being of God."[28] If the

Spirit of God is the Gift of God to the church, then the question Augustine probes is

whether the Spirit "became" Gift. Fred Sanders points out the interrelated Christological

and Pneumatological deductions, similar to the argument for naming the Spirit "Love":

"If Christ is the Son of God for us, he must have been the eternal Son of God; and if the

Spirit is gift to us, he must have always had the character of gift."[29] Though the Spirit's

mission is manifest to man in that there is a new manner by which man relates to God, a

created effect, the origin must still be eternal as in the case of the Son's mission. Before

moving on, it is helpful to heed Sanders' caution:

> As for the decisive step of transposing this insight about the gift into the eternal being of God, it functions properly for pneumatology as long as we keep in mind that it is intended as a heuristic help to making sense of what Scripture actually says, and that

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[27] Allison and Köstenberger, *The Holy Spirit*, 86-87.

[28] Fred Sanders, *Fountain of Salvation: Trinity & Soteriology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2021), 122-23.

[29] Sanders, *Fountain of Salvation*, 123.

it is carefully designed to solve certain problems we would encounter if we tried to do pneumatology by working exclusively with the data of the revealed names. It leverages the Spirit's mission to make the most of the insights delivered by the names.[30]

Christ Anointed by the Spirit

As seen in chapter 4, Christians must maintain the affirmation that the operations of the Trinity are inseparable. Due to the affirmation of the inseparable operations of the triune God, two related questions press to the foreground: (1) how can it be said that the Son alone is incarnate? and (2) how can it be said that the Son alone accomplishes his human works as the Christ? In answering these questions, we will be aided in appropriately identifying the work of the Spirit in the work of Christ.

In the work of the Incarnation, a human nature is united to the Son such that the human nature is completed—or terminates—on the one of the Trinity who proceeds as begotten.[31] As "there never was or will be an actual human nature that is not the human nature *of someone*, or *of whom*," it can be said that "personhood *terminates*, or completes, the being of a rational nature."[32] Who the human nature belongs to, or who "terminates" or "completes" it, is uniquely the Son, who "pre-exists and actualizes the human nature, which does not have its own hypostasis."[33] However, in stating the matter this way, it is also affirmed that no transformation of the Son occurs, but rather, a change in the human nature occurs, both in its initial passing from not existence to existence and in the movement from "status A" to "status B." Though there had never been a child in the womb of Mary, by the working of God a human nature is created which has its "who-ness" in

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[30] Sanders, *Fountain of Salvation*, 123-24.

[31] James Dolezal, "Neither Subtraction, Nor Addition: The Word's Terminative Assumption of a Human Nature," *Nova et Vetera* 20, no. 1 (Winter 2022): 133-57. See also Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* III.q3.A1.

[32] Dolezal, "Neither Subtraction, Nor Addition," 151.

[33] Adonis Vidu, *The Same God Who Works All Things: Inseparable Operations in Trinitarian Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2021), 193. Stated this way, it is clear that I am seeking to avoid Nestorian Christology.

the Son (Luke 1:32), and this human, who is the Son, will increase in wisdom and stature (Luke 2:52). Since Christ's human nature has its "who-ness," its Person, in the Son, it is appropriate at all times to speak of him as the God-man, the divine Son incarnate who lives a righteous life, suffers, and rises again as man's representative.

Nevertheless, in terms of the efficient causality, or what Owen calls "original efficiency," the Trinity creates the human nature that is united to the Son. Owen says, "As unto *original efficiency*, it was the act of the divine nature, and so, consequently, of the *Father*, *Son*, and *Spirit*."[34] While the Person assuming is the Son, the work of forming the assumed nature is that of the inseparable Trinity, and so of the Holy Spirit as well as the Father and Son. Thus, it is said, "a body you have prepared for me," in which "you" is the Father and "me" is Christ (Heb 10:5). It is said that he, the Son, actively took the form of a servant (Phil 2:6). In the announcement of the Incarnation, Gabriel tells the virgin, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you" to form the child who will sit on the throne of David (Luke 1:35). In Matthew's account, likewise, the conception of Christ's human nature in the womb of Mary is "from the Holy Spirit" (1:18, 20). Also, like Luke, Matthew places this marvelous mystery in the context of the declaration that Jesus is the Davidic son (Matt 1:1, 17, 20; Luke 1:27, 32). Considering the importance of the Davidic line noted in the previous chapter, the Incarnation as David's greater Son, who fulfills the covenantal terms on behalf of the people, occurs in the power of the Holy Spirit. His work in the Incarnation is distinctly placed in the same covenantal context as the Son's, even while readers should note the Persons' distinction. As the Holy Spirit was hovering over the waters at the first creation (Gen 1:2),[35] and as he had given life to the first Adam (Gen 2:7; cf. Gen 6:3, 17;

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[34] John Owen, *The Glory of Christ*, in *The Works of John Owen*, 1:225, emphasis original.

[35] The Spirit's hovering over the water is reiterated at the transition point of the flood narrative. Gentry writes,

> The flood story is presented in the narrative as a new creation. Just as God ordered the original heavens and earth out of the chaotic deep or ocean (Gen. 1:2; Heb. *tehom*), so here God orders the present heavens and earth out of the chaotic floodwaters. Genesis 8:1 records that God caused a wind (Heb. *ruah*) to pass over the waters of the flood covering the entire earth, which reminds one of the creation

Ps 104:30), so he overshadowed the virgin Mary and formed the body of Christ in her womb. The Son comes from the Father by the Holy Spirit as the Davidic Son of Mary.

When Christ had grown, at the appropriate time, he went to John the Baptist to be baptized. The prophet was told, "The one whom you see the Spirit descend and remain upon, this is the one who baptizes in the Holy Spirit" (John 1:33). Indeed, John testified that he had seen "the Spirit descend as a dove from heaven and remained on" Christ (John 1:32; Matt 3:16; Mark 1:10; Luke 3:21-22).[36] Owen suggests there is a connection here with the original creation as well, saying, "in the [Spirit's] assumption of this form [of a dove] there may be some respect unto that dove that brought tidings to Noah of the ceasing of the flood of waters, and of the ending of the wrath of God, who thereon said that he would curse the earth no more, Gen. viii. 11, 21."[37] Jesus's baptism, and the pneumatological expression it takes, was not new in John's time. Fesko draws several Old Testament connections:

> The pneumatic character of the Messiah's mission first unfolds in the shadow lands of the Old Testament in a number of passages where various figures have the Spirit descend or "rush" upon them. Joshua was "full of the spirit of wisdom" (Deut. 34:9; cf. Num. 27:18; Isa. 11:2), and the Spirit fell upon a number of the judges and empowered them to carry out their missions (Jdg. 3:10; 11:29). The Spirit of Yahweh rushed upon Samson and empowered him to strike down thirty men from Ashkelon (Jdg. 14:19). The Spirit of God similarly rushed upon Saul and inspired him to prophesy (1 Sam. 10:10). The Spirit rushed upon David when Samuel anointed him king of Israel (1 Sam. 16:13). At one level, the Spirit endowed these different Old Testament individuals to carry out various tasks. . . . But there is more to the Spirit's

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narrative where the Spirit (Heb. *ruah*) of God hovers over the waters of the original chaotic deep. (Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants*, 2nd ed. [Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018], 195)

[36] Maintaining the affirmation of inseparable operations, it is worth noting that this event is what sparked Augustine's famous reflections in *Sermon 52*. How is it that there is such a clear distinction between the Father's voice, the Son being baptized, and the Spirit's descent as a dove, if God works inseparably? Augustine concludes by calling his listeners to "believe that the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit can both be separately indicated by certain visible signs and certain created appearances take over for the occasion, and also that they operate inseparably." Augustine, "Sermon 52," in *Sermons*, trans. Edmund Hill, ed. John E. Rotelle, *The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century* III/3 (New York: New City, 1991), 62.

[37] Owen, *The Holy Spirit*, 75. Cf. Michael Horton, *Rediscovering the Holy Spirit: God's Perfecting Presence in Creation, Redemption, and Everyday Life* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2017), 100.

activity with these Old Testament figures. The Spirit endowed individuals with pneumatic gifts to foreshadow the pinnacle of his work, the anointing of the Messiah.[38]

The messianic types in the Old Testament are identified by their being anointed with the Spirit, but they also point forward to one who would be full of the Spirit.

While a pneumatology drawn from the Old Testament would be appropriate, here I note just one passage in particular. In Isaiah 11, which reverberates in Isaiah 42:1 and finds its culmination in Jesus's baptism, we read of a "shoot" and "root" from the stump of Jesse. "One of the most striking features of this remarkable passages," says J. Alec Motyer, "is the dual title of the coming King as both the *shoot* (1) and the *Root* (10) of Jesse."[39] He points out that this means he is not just a son of David, but another David, and more than that, the one from whom Jesse himself sprang. Isaiah says this new David, the Messianic hope for the people of God, will have the "Spirit of the LORD rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD" (11:2, ESV). This is a sevenfold attribution, teaching that there will be a fullness of the Spirit upon the Messiah, one John would later behold. The anointing of the Mediator as the Davidic heir pursuant to the fulfillment of the *pactum salutis* would be noticeably pneumatic in character. As Isaiah continues this prophecy, he says the consequence of the fullness of the Spirit upon the shoot and root of Jesse is the ingathering of the nations (11:10), pointing forward to the relation of the *pactum salutis* to the covenant of grace.[40] As Christ appears publicly in his baptism, the Spirit rests upon

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[38] Fesko, "The Covenant of Redemption," 7.

[39] J. Alec Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah: An Introduction and Commentary* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1993), 121.

[40] More recent commentators, such as Motyer, see 11:6 as a restoration of the natural order. This is not excluded; in fact, it is closely related to the new Adam image portrayed by Mark 1:13 noted in the previous chapter. In that way, it is related to Hos 2:18 in which the inbreaking of the new covenant establishes peace will all creation, which Paul says is awaiting final consummation (Rom 8:19-22), the deposit of which is the Spirit dwelling in believers. However, it seems more likely that older commentators (e.g., Calvin, Gill) are correct in noting Isaiah's use of images that typically represent the nations in prophetic literature (e.g., Dan 7-8, Hab 1:8). If this is correct, and the serpent represents the satanic kingdom, then Isaiah is depicting peace between the kingdoms of the world brought in by the child (Isa 7:14) who puts his hand

him, and the pneumatic works prophesied by Isaiah and the rest of the Old Testament come to pass, such as healing, the proclamation to and gathering of the nations, and the defeat of God's spiritual foes (Isa 61:1; Matt 12:15-28). When Christ comes in fulfillment of the *pactum salutis*, he does so in the Spirit, showing that the Spirit works in equipping the Son in his human nature to carry out the work of the last Adam for the people chosen in the decree.[41]

The Covenantal Seal: The Spirit Brings
the Elect into Communion

While some worry that the Holy Spirit has been left out of discussions of the *pactum salutis*, it could be that treatments of the doctrine appear to fail in speaking much of him because his work appears so clearly in the covenant of grace. As Michael Horton remarks, "The intratrinitarian covenant of redemption is realized in the covenant of grace by the union of believers to the Father, in the Son, by the Spirit."[42] If this relation between the two covenants is maintained, the one grounding the other, and if the effects of God's saving work that are manifest in the covenant of grace are appropriated most directly to the Holy Spirit, then it makes sense that treatments of the *pactum salutis*—centered on Christ's federal work—would consider the Father-Son relation while the Spirit's work would be treated more fully in works on the covenant of grace.[43] Still, it is important to

over the serpent's hole, and this child is the son of David and root of David, full of the Holy Spirit. Even without 11:6, this is the point of the surrounding verses, esp. 11:9-11.

[41] The answers this section has given to the two questions about the Spirit's role in the Son's mission—his Incarnation and Messianic work—provide the material necessary to expand on the Spirit's role even to the crucifixion and resurrection. As Fesko says, "According to the author of Hebrews, Jesus offered himself up on the cross 'through the eternal Spirit' (Heb. 9:14). Hebrews connects Christ's sacrificial offering to Isaiah's Spirit-anointed Servant, the suffering Servant who bears the sins and justifies the man (Isa. 53). And Christ was raised from the dead by the power of the Spirit (Rom. 1:4; 8:11), which constituted his justification (1 Tim. 3:16)." Fesko, "The Covenant of Redemption," 9.

[42] Horton, *Rediscovering the Holy Spirit*, 280.

[43] As seen previously when lookeding at Keach, some have in fact made a real distinction rather than a mere oversight. For instance, for the early exponent of the *pactum salutis*, Patrick Gillespie said, "The *Parties* are different [in the covenants of redemption and grace]. In the Covenant of Suretiship and

recognize the Spirit's work in the *pactum salutis*. Stephen G. Meyers says, "Generally speaking, those who have seen the counsel of peace as part of the covenant of grace have tended to emphasize the role of the Spirit therein, while those who view the counsel of peace as a separate covenant of redemption have tended to view that covenant as only between the Father and the Son."[44] Accordingly, both Keach and Gill serve as Baptist representatives of the former in that their advocacy for a singular covenant also explicitly incorporated the Spirit's work. If the *pactum salutis* is to be distinguished from the covenant of grace, the theologian of the *pactum* ought to be careful not to neglect the Holy Spirit's role, even if he provides more thorough treatments in the context of the covenant of grace. In this closing section of the chapter, we will see the attribution of the will of God to the Spirit and his work in the economy of redemption which will demonstrate that the Spirit is not a bystander to the covenant.

The Holy Spirit wills the salvation of man in the economy of redemption. That said, Letham rightly expresses concern about the tendency to sometimes use univocal language in speaking of multiple wills when speaking of each divine Person willing something. I have noted his warning before: "This has sometimes been an impression from certain articulations of the Reformed doctrine of the covenant of redemption (*pactum salutis*)."[45] Again, using the analogy of three humans creating a covenant, in which they each engage their wills to codify a unified will, it is not uncommon to think

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Redemption, the Parties are *Jehovah* and his only Son Christ (as before proved); but in the Covenant of Reconciliation [Grace], the Parties are God the Father, Son and Spirit, and lost Sinners, *2 Cor. 5.19*." Patrick Gillespie, *The Ark of the Covenant Opened, Or, A Treatise of the Covenant of Redemption Between God and Christ, as the Foundation of the Covenant of Grace the Second Part* (London: Printed for Thomas Parkhurst at the Bible and three Crowns in Cheapside near Mercers Chappel, 1677), 118. He also says the connection between the two covenants cannot be ignored (123-28).

[44] Stephen G. Meyers, *God to Us: Covenant Theology in Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage, 2021), 84n19.

[45] Letham, *Holy Trinity*, 463.

univocally about what is properly only an analogy. Letham then quotes Owen—a proponent of the *pactum*—favorably, saying,

> John Owen, fully aware of the historical debates, avoided this mistake by referring to the one will of God in its particular hypostatic manifestations. He writes that "the will of God as to the peculiar actions of the Father in this matter is the will of the Father, and the will of God with regard to the peculiar actings of the Son is the will of the Son; not by distinction of sundry wills, but by the distinct application from the same will unto its *distinct acts* in the persons of the Father and the Son."[46]

It is appropriately said that the Father wills to create, redeem, and perfect; the Son is said to will to create, redeem, and perfect; and the Spirit is said to will to create, redeem, and perfect, but it is not said that there are three wills. There are three that will, but one will. In Meyers's words, "Within the one, perfectly united divine will, the Spirit is as active as the Father and the Son, and His joyful acquiescence to the terms of the counsel of peace [covenant of redemption] is as free as Theirs. In His application of redemption, the Spirit has as much active agency as the Son in obtaining it or the Father in bestowing it."[47] In using this language, one must be careful to avoid speaking univocally of this covenant as though three wills are present.

Following the order of subsisting (*taxis*), man's redemption is accomplished from the Father through the Son in the Spirit. The analogical language employed by Scripture to convey the singular acting of the will of "two or more persons in solemn agreement" is the language of a covenant. This language is the given means by which man contemplates the divine decision (decree) to manifest the processions in the missions in covenantal context, and so it is properly employed. Meyers later demonstrates the pattern of the missions from Galatians 4:

> Throughout the Scriptures, one finds this important strand of teaching. God's people are gathered because the Holy Spirit applies redemption to them as the Son's reward for His obedience to the Father. . . . This entire, gracious, sovereign economy is sketched in Galatians 4:4-7. . . . At the time appointed in the counsel of peace ("the

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[46] Letham, *Holy Trinity*, 463-64; John Owen, *Hebrews*, ed. William H. Goold (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1991), 2:88.

[47] Meyers, *God to Us*, 84-85.

fullness of time," v. 4), God the Father "sent" (v. 4) the Son, who came to "redeem" (v. 5) those who were given to Him. Because of this redeeming work, the Holy Spirit is poured out (v. 6) in order that God's people might have sealed to them the reality and the enjoyment of what the Son had secured for them (vv. 6-7).[48]

The Gift is poured out upon the elect as they are united to the Son for their redemption according to the eternal plan that this would be the means by which the processions were manifest. The covenant of grace is the manifestation of the one whose name is Love as he regenerates and forms human hearts to love the triune God in covenantal communion.[49] Grounding this covenant of grace, though, is the covenant of redemption in which the promise that the Holy Spirit would work covenantally was eternally determined. It would be inappropriate and unbiblical to say that the Spirit worked unwillingly both in the determination of this work and in its execution (e.g., John 3:8; 1 Cor 12:11). Though Christians must reiterate the need to avoid speaking of multiple wills, Christians nevertheless affirm that the three willed this covenantal communion with the Trinity from eternity for the glory of the triune God.

The Substantial Change in the *Historia Salutis*

As I noted at the end of the previous chapter, it would extend the purview and overwhelm the length of this dissertation to pursue the manner in which affirmation of the *pactum salutis* favors a Baptist understanding of the new covenant. As noted in chapter 5, however, the mission of the Son forms a substantial change in the history of redemption since the types are now culminated in the advent their antitype. Likewise, though, the mission of the Spirit marks a substantial shift in the history of redemption. Christians have consistently resisted speaking of the missions of the Son or Spirit as occurring before the Incarnation. Since the *pactum salutis* is about the missions of the Son and Spirit, and

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[48] Meyers, *God to Us*, 85.

[49] It is not my purpose to argue for the covenant of grace in this this chapter. My understanding of the covenant of grace is represented in the *Second London Baptist Confession of Faith* 7, and closely aligns with that expressed in Samuel Renihan, *The Mystery of Christ, His Covenant, and His Kingdom* (Cape Coral, FL: Founders, 2019). It is distinct, then, from the views of Horton and Meyers.

since those missions are uniquely associated with the Incarnation and the new covenant, the sign of membership in the new covenant ought to be applied only to those who manifest evidence of the work of the Spirit as a fruit of the Son's mission. As one is regenerated and exercises saving faith, the Spirit's work according to the *pactum salutis* is manifest. Thus, only those who are regenerated and believe ought to receive the baptism as the sign of union with the Christ who has now come. To include one in the visible community by the sign of the covenant of grace/new covenant is to divide the fruit of the *pactum salutis* since it includes one in the covenant body of Christ before they have been recipients of the fruit of Christ's work in time.

Conclusion

Horton says, "Reaching back all the way to the eternal covenant between the persons of the Godhead for the salvation of the elect, the Spirit's saving agency reaches forward to glorification (Rom 8:11)."[50] The decree to save the elect through the incarnate work of the Son is the means by which the triune God manifests his glory. He does so, though, in the context of covenant. As the Father willed that the Son would come, and the Son willed that the Son would come, so too the Spirit willed that the Son would come, yet not by three wills. Though Scripture provides the analogy of covenant to understand the work of the triune God to save sinners, this analogy does not intend a complex God; rather, it is the biblically warranted prism by which man recognizes the carrying out of a singular will by three Persons according to the ratified decision of the three. As the Son comes in his assuming to himself a human nature as the second Adam and greater David for the elect, he does so from the Father by the Spirit. When the Spirit works in the Son's incarnation and obedience, he does so as neither a mere force nor an angelic being doing what he is told. He does so as the sovereign Lord who overshadows the virgin's womb, rests upon and leads the Incarnate Son in all his work, and moves the hearts of the elect to

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[50] Horton, *Rediscovering the Holy Spirit*, 285.

come to Christ (Acts 2). He is the Love of the Father and the Son manifest in the covenant between the Father and Son, and he is the Gift given to the Incarnate Son to accomplish all his work as the federal head of the elect. In emphasizing that he is given to the Son as Incarnate, this is to maintain the order (*taxis*). The Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son to equip the Son in his human nature for his work as Mediator and Surety. When Jesus's baptism publicizes his work as the new Adam and greater David, the Father calls him "beloved" and gives him the Spirit without measure. His fulfillment of the covenant of redemption, then, is accomplished from the Father by the Spirit.

Further, in the Spirit's mission to the church, he is known more fully as people are brought into covenant with God through the Son. Allison says, "With the names 'Love' and 'Gift,' the Holy Spirit's work among the new covenant people of God gains a certain clarity."[51] It is as the people of God are united to the Son by the Spirit in the new covenant, i.e., in the context of the Spirit's mission, that the people of God confess him more clearly to be the Love and Gift of the Father and the Son. If the missions reveal the processions, if the missions are undeniably covenantally charged, if the decree encompasses all created effects that distinguish the processions and missions, and if each Person can be said to will the same act without thereby dividing the will, then it follows that the Spirit from the Father and the Son willed to covenantally make known his procession in his mission from the Father and the Son. The *pactum salutis* need not neglect the Holy Spirit, nor be stated in cold, merely contractual terms.

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[51] Allison and Köstenberger, *The Holy Spirit*, 269.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION: ETERNITY SUMMARIZED, OR
A CUMULATIVE CASE FOR THE
ETERNAL COVENANT

The eternal covenant, or *pactum salutis*, is not a uniquely Baptist doctrine, nor is it the only context in which Christian theologians have confessed that the missions reveal the processions. However, this dissertation has demonstrated that the *pactum salutis* has precedent in the Baptist tradition, though with a particular modification, and is consistent with the broader catholic Christian tradition. While Baptists did not invent the doctrine, and though Baptists have not given a thorough treatment of the *pactum salutis* in over two centuries, early Baptists of the past did incorporate the concept of an eternal covenant into their polemics, theology, and preaching. Like in the past, the *pactum salutis* helps guard Christians from error. In contrast to the proposals by Baptists Erickson and Grudem, the *pactum* provides a better key—a better prism—by which readers of the Bible affirm classic Christian doctrine while making sense of Scripture's testimony that the Son was sent in obedience to the Father to redeem a people. Further, drawing on the work of present Baptists, such as Dolezal and Vidu, Gentry and Wellum, and Allison and Köstenberger, I have shown that the theological arguments presently being developed are conducive to a recovery of the *pactum salutis* in Baptist theological discourse. In other words, though it is not uniquely Baptist, it is comfortably Baptist.

In terms of its catholicity, it may be the opposite in some ways. The *pactum salutis* was a unique contribution of Reformed Protestants to the articulation of doctrine around the interface between *theologia* and *oeconomia* drawn from the covenantal shape of Scripture. In the *pactum salutis*, readers are helped to see that the eternal covenant is the prism through which God manifests his triune glory in the missions of the Son and the

Spirit. Though some have invoked the *pactum salutis* to argue for multiple wills or eternal submission, I have used Robert Letham's arguments against the *pactum salutis* as a foil to develop an argument fully conversant with the "historic Christian orthodoxy" of the past while providing initial responses to the proposals of Erickson and Grudem, two dominant Baptist systematic theologians today. This conclusion will summarize the points argued in throughout the dissertation and close by providing possible avenues for further research.

Baptist Theologians: Gill and Keach

Benjamin Keach and John Gill served as particular representatives from the Baptist tradition in their affirmation of the eternal covenant. Though Keach was not the first to hold to the covenant of redemption among those called Particular Baptists, as seen in the Second London Baptist Confession and the work of Nehemiah Coxe, he did nevertheless provide an early, large, and sustained articulation of the everlasting covenant. He argued against the distinction between the covenant of redemption and the covenant of grace, preferring to speak only of the everlasting covenant of grace and distinguish between the "eternal" and "temporal" aspects. While it would be an imposition on his wording, it may be helpful to think of him as denying the covenant of grace (historically understood) rather than saying he denied the covenant of redemption since what he argued for was more closely aligned with the *pactum salutis*. He was at pains to resist turning the covenant of grace into a new covenant of works, and to do so he focused almost solely on that doctrine historically known as the covenant of redemption. Less than two decades later, Gill took up Keach's pulpit and incorporated the everlasting covenant into his own positive and polemical theology. While Keach argued that the "Baxterians" were leading people to Arminianism, Gill argued with an Arminian directly (Daniel Whitby) and he also demonstrated by example the way the eternal covenant bears on the task of biblical exposition and dogmatic construction. From Gill, I noted various other Baptists in an array of contexts affirming the eternal covenant for the next hundred years or more.

While recent generations of Baptists have not given it a thorough treatment, the *pactum salutis* does have historical Baptist precedent.

The Trinity and the Eternal Covenant

In chapter 4, on the Trinity and the eternal covenant, the classical framework for articulating the doctrine of God was presented before pressing into an exposition of the classical expression of the decree and then the *pactum salutis* within that. It was conceded that some advocates could present the *pactum* in ways that altered classical categories, such as positing distinct wills, but it was also shown that such alterations are not necessary to the doctrine of the *pactum salutis*. Analogy must govern all talk about the incomprehensible God. This triune God is simple and eternal. The simple and eternal God decreed things outside of himself for his own glory, particularly by the redemption of his people. Since all things outside of God are decreed by God, and since the most important thing to happen in creation is the manifestation of the triune glory by means of the missions of the Son and Spirit, and since these appear in covenantal contexts, it stands to reason that advocacy for something like an eternal covenant should be affirmed. In contrast to Erickson, this proposal does not affirm a change in the Son's status from equality to inferiority. Further, when the scriptures are examined, the pattern appears of an eternal decision that the Son would be sent as the covenant head of man. Sample texts include Psalms 2 and 110, but also their fulfillment in Luke 22:29, John 17, Ephesians 1, 2 Timothy 1, and Titus 1:2. The doctrine of analogy continues to constrain the theologian so that he does not speak univocally of a "time before time" or a succession of events or a council of three wills; but the analogy of covenant is what is given in Scripture. While the affirmation of the covenant being eternal may at first seem to posit submission *ad intra*, advocates of the *pactum* are speaking in ways similar to the affirmation that the elect are chosen in Christ from eternity. In other words, they are speaking of the way redemptive history has its ground in the decree of God with a special focus on the covenantal shape of the missions of the Son and Spirit.

The Son and the Eternal Covenant

Having laid some of the Trinitarian groundwork, and having begun to look at some of the texts that point to further exploration of an eternal covenant, chapter 5 looked at dyothelitism and the Adamic patterns provided in Scripture in order to demonstrate that Scripture's attestation to the Son's submission is attached to his work as covenant head. First, the history behind the catholic doctrine of dyothelitism was rehearsed, explaining that the Son's assumption of a true human nature included that faculty of the soul called a will. From there, the Adamic patterns of Scripture were explored to show that Christ came not generically as a man but specifically as a covenant head of his people. The importance of his assuming a second will becomes clear if he is to obey the law as covenant head for his people. Further, since Adam was a type immediately—that is, Paul did not invent the typological correspondence between the first and last Adams—theologians are encouraged to further contemplation about what preceded Adam. Before Adam is only eternity, so for Adam to be a type immediately is for him to be formed in the pattern of the one to come. This pattern was set in the decree of God before the ages began as the last Adam is considered the *Filius incarnandus*, the Son to be incarnate for his people. Before closing, chapter 5 demonstrated that the *pactum salutis* better accounts for the texts Grudem leveraged for speaking of the Son's submission without thereby undermining the eternality of the Son. Rather than moving the submission to the eternal relations as such, the texts are better understood in light of the Son's Incarnation and submission as covenant head. While some may claim that no one text says that a trinitarian covenant existed before the foundation of the world, the patterns provided in Scripture point to the Son's coming in view of fulfilling a covenant.[1]

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[1] Many texts do approach very close to saying there was a Trinitarian covenant in eternity, perhaps none more than Luke 22:29.

The Spirit and the Eternal Covenant

The charge that articulations of the covenant of redemption regularly neglect the Person of the Holy Spirit reaches back to at least John Gill. First, if Baptists had retained their affirmation of the *pactum salutis* by building on Keach and Gill, then they would have had a foundation from which they could immediately demonstrate their inclusion of the Spirit. Chapter 6, on the Holy Spirit, demonstrated that the Holy Spirit's procession as Love and Gift is manifest in the context of covenant, and specifically the Son's fulfillment of that covenant between himself and the Father for the redemption of the elect. This reinforces again the argument that covenant was the means by which God eternally decreed to manifest his triune glory. As this decree was made before the foundations of the world, and as the Holy Spirit truly confirms and seals this decree, completing the works of the triune God in time by equipping the Son in his human nature and bringing the elect to the Father in the Son. Therefore, it is appropriate to speak of the Spirit as party to the covenant of redemption made in eternity and consummated in time. The Son was full of the Spirit (Isa 11; Matt 3:16-4:2) as he did the work put in his hand by the Father (John 6:37-38). The Spirit is then given in love to the elect, giving them life by bringing them to the Son who sits on David's throne (John 6:62-63; 7:37-39; Acts 2). Since the Spirit does not act unwillingly, and since the will of redemption (i.e., the decree) was determined by the triune God before the foundation of the world, and since it is characterized in covenantal terms and actualized in covenant, then it is appropriate to say both that there is an eternal covenant and that the Spirit is party to that covenant.

Ways Forward

The fact that the *pactum* lies at the cross-point of several disciplines means it could be incorporated in various ways, but a few come immediately to the fore. In historical theology, three avenues for further exploration immediately present themselves. First, one could provide more extensive treatment to the relation between the single-covenant model posited by Keach and the larger discussion about the new covenant as the

covenant of grace for the Particular Baptists. An historian could then explore whether this had a direct or indirect influence on their view of the proper subjects for Baptism, particularly due to Keach's insistence on the covenant of grace being between the Father and the Son and the Spirit. Following this strict unity of the covenant, it would be inappropriate, then, to administer the sign of that covenant (baptism) to one who does not evidence their being a member of that covenant head by the work of the Spirit. In chapter 2, I demonstrated that the single-covenant view was not exclusively Baptist, but it is not unlikely that Keach viewed Baptist practice as most consistent with the view.

Second, one could explore the relation of a single-covenant model to the doctrine of eternal justification.[2] Many debates surround Gill's doctrine of eternal justification, but for those who are concerned about his adherence to the doctrine, an argument likely presents itself by way of the single-covenant model and the close relationship of the two doctrines. An historian or theologian could evaluate whether the single-covenant model necessitates the affirmation of eternal justification, and the impact of that view on the pulpits and evangelistic efforts of single-covenant adherents. The same historian might then compare the effects on churches that held to a two-covenant model in the same era.

Finally, one could undoubtedly explore the impact of various other changes in Baptist life and thought upon their affirmation of the doctrine of the eternal covenant. Such studies could evaluate the impact of Dispensationalism as an alternative covenant theology or the effects of an often-minimalist Fundamentalism and the anti-creedalism of the twentieth century. Since the *pactum* was embedded in the Second London Confession, a continued embrace of that Confession would have increased the likelihood of Baptists retaining the doctrine. While some churches continued to embrace confessions of faith,

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[2] Some initial work has been done in this area by David Mark Rathel, "John Gill and the History of Redemption as Mere Shadow," *Journal of Reformed Theology* 11, no. 4 (2017): 377-400.

such as the New Hampshire Confession, these often did not include an explicit reference to the doctrine.

Two doctrinal paths lay open in consideration of the *pactum*, namely, its relationship to Baptist covenant theology and to the beatific vision. Two forms of covenant theology have recently been proposed among Calvinistic Baptists under the monikers 1689 Federalism and Progressive Covenantalism.[3] I have argued elsewhere that, though there are clear differences between them, there are also similarities between the two systems.[4] Like the argument open to historians of Keach's covenant theology, one could present a theological argument that the *pactum* favors a baptistic understanding of the covenant of grace.[5] Since theologians must take seriously the difference the missions make in the *historia salutis*, and since the two groups of Calvinistic Baptists mentioned here advocate for a substantial difference between the old and new covenants, an argument opens itself to the way the missions effect that covenantal difference. Those who are given the sign of membership in the covenant of grace, or new covenant, ought to be those who have been united to the Son as their federal head by the mission of the Spirit. In the coming of the Son, the fulfillment of all the Old Testament types had come, which substantially transformed the visible community so that those who manifest the work of the Spirit by saving faith then receive the visible sign (baptism) of union to the federal head.

[3] Two others that could be mentioned are various forms of Dispensationalism and New Covenant Theology. The latter has largely been replaced by Progressive Covenantalism. It should also be noted that some Calvinistic Baptists also hold to a covenant theology not very different than their Presbyterian/Reformed brothers.

[4] Daniel Scheiderer, "Progressive Covenantalists as Reformed Baptists," *Westminster Theological Journal* 82, no. 1 (2020): 137-52.

[5] A distinctly baptistic understanding of the covenant of grace is presented in Pascal Denault, *The Distinctiveness of Baptist Covenant Theology: A Comparison between Seventeenth-Century Particular Baptist and Paedobaptist Federalism*, rev. ed. (Vestavia Hills, AL: Solid Ground Christian, 2017); Samuel Renihan, *The Mystery of Christ, His Covenant, and His Kingdom* (Cape Coral, FL: Founders, 2019). A distinctly baptistic understanding of the unfolding plan of redemption by Progressive Covenantalists that would fit well within the traditional Baptist concept of the covenant of grace can be seen in Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*; Stephen J. Wellum and Brent Parker, eds., *Progressive Covenantalism: Charting a Course between Dispensational and Covenant Theologies* (Nashville: B & H, 2016).

This dissertation has begun to pursue the way the doctrine of the *pactum* is the beginning of God's works toward us—and as it has tied the *pactum* into the works of God in the economy of redemption—which could be further developed by tying it to the great end of man as the final blessed rest in God's glorious presence. It may, therefore, be possible to leverage an argument for how the *pactum* has bearing on man's glorification in the sight of God. This was hinted at earlier in a quote from Horton, who said, "Reaching back all the way to the eternal covenant between the persons of the Godhead for the salvation of the elect, the Spirit's saving agency reaches forward to glorification (Rom 8:11)."[6] Perhaps it could be stated only slightly more explicitly, that the Spirit's saving agency completes the *pactum salutis* by bringing the elect to glorification.

Conclusion

It is a great joy to think about the triune God as the saving God whose saving work is accomplished in the covenantal missions of the Son and the Spirit. Since the early church, it has often been the case that some introduce strange notions into the doctrine of the Trinity while others neglect or reject talking about the Trinity altogether. However, in a world of such theological confusion, Baptists and other Christians have regularly taken to Scripture and taken up their pens to defend this doctrine. They have pointed to the biblical affirmation that God is one in essence and three in Persons, and this is specially made known in the Incarnation of the Son as the covenant head of his people and the sending of the Spirit to unite them to him. In the process of so doing, they found that contemplating the doctrine of the covenant of redemption serves as a means of affirming the truth that the "doctrine of the Trinity is the foundation of all our Communion with God, and comfortable dependence on Him" (2 LBCF 2.3).

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[6] Horton, *Rediscovering the Holy Spirit*, 285.

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ABSTRACT

ETERNAL COVENANT:
THE TRINITARIAN SHAPE OF AN
HISTORIC BAPTIST DOCTRINE

Daniel David Scheiderer, PhD
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2022
Chair: Dr. Stephen J. Wellum

This dissertation argues that the eternal covenant is the prism through which God manifests his triune glory in the missions of the Son and the Spirit. Negatively, this argument is made against the background of historical neglect of the doctrine since no Baptist has provided a substantial treatment of the *pactum salutis* in over two hundred years, and current Baptist systematic theologies have introduced deficient models for understanding the doctrine of the Trinity and the Scripture's testimony to the Son's submission. Positively, the background for this dissertation is the recent recovery by Baptists of both covenantal biblical theology and classical theism. If Baptists are to recover the doctrine, however, they will need to respond to the clear critique leveraged against it by Robert Letham, namely, that it undermines historic Christian orthodoxy and is insufficiently grounded in Scripture. Thus, by correcting a deficiency in some theological developments and embracing the advances in others, this dissertation demonstrates that biblical doctrine of the *pactum salutis* is worthy of recovery and fruitful for still further work.

VITA

Daniel David Scheiderer

EDUCATION
      BA, Boyce College, 2016
      MDiv, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2016

PUBLICATIONS
      "Theology Is a Cathedral and a Science: Warfield's Use of Historical Theology in His Theological Method." *Puritan Reformed Journal* 11, no. 1 (2019): 85-104.
      "Progressive Covenantalists as Reformed Baptists." *Westminster Theological Journal* 82 (2020): 137-52.
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      Review of *Simply Trinity: The Unmanipulated Father, Son, and Spirit* by Matthew Barrett. *Journal of the Institute of Reformed Baptist Studies* (forthcoming).

ORGANIZATIONS
      The Evangelical Theological Society

ACADEMIC EMPLOYMENT
      Teacher, Sayers Classical Academy, Louisville, Kentucky, 2017-2018
      Teaching Assistant, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky, 2017-

MINISTERIAL EMPLOYMENT
      Elder, Kosmosdale Baptist Church, Louisville, Kentucky, 2016-2019
      Pastor, Long Plain Baptist Church, Acushnet, Massachusetts, 2019-2020
      Pastor, Grace Baptist Church, Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, 2021-