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"vita vestra abscondita est cum Christo in Deo"
Colossians 3:3

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Narrative Echoes: The Words of Brother Jesus in Brother Jude's Epistle

James T. Dennison, Jr.

"A short epistle, yet filled with flowing words of heavenly grace" (Origen)

Is it possible to re-image the epistle of Jude as a narrative paradigm? May we detect a story line in the oft neglected, 'gets-no-respect' letter? If we regard narrative elements as those 'seen with the mind's eye', then may we not turn our attention (or, at least, explore) the visual imagery that a narrative biographical paradigm would suggest? An instructive example would be the OT allusions in Jude's epistle which resurrect pictures within the imagination of the reader/hearer and thus, the 'visualization' of past redemptive-historical events. Are there additional narrative visualizations arising from the story of Jude himself? and are these images embedded in the language of his letter? Does Jude use verbal, visual-image motifs which reprise his life with the life of his older brother, Jesus Christ? And beyond the potential narrative echoes of his own sibling biography, does the re-imaging move the affections or stir the emotions (i.e., "religious affections" in the [Jonathan] Edwardsean sense)? Jude's letter overflows with vehemence, intensity, passion—energy! Is there a mirror reflection of the passion, intensity, vehemence of his older brother and their mutual interface? If an energized life-experience is embedded in Jude's letter, does it not engage the narrative biography, the narrative interface and the narrative passion? In other words, is there not a powerful story in the life of the author of this epistle—a story which is transformed by the intersection of his own history with the eschatological turning point of the ages—and that through encounter with his elder brother whose own story is the life of the Son of God incarnate? If narrative movement from past to present requires an historical interface,[1] do we not have a potential identification of one life (Jude) in/with another (Jesus)? Surely, these are questions worth pondering.

The famous quip of D. J. Rowston (Jude is "the most neglected book in the New Testament"[2]) is now passé. Jude has been the object of a fertile spate of journal articles and commentaries during the past generation.[3] Special attention has been focused on his rhetoric, his (alleged) debt to intertestamental Jewish apocalyptic and his Semitic style, whereby he is labeled the NT "prophet". We now have a rich if not provocative literature on the twenty-five verses which stimulates reflection on additional—even alternate—perspectives *re* the character and composition of the epistle of Jude. With the new-found

[1] The work of Erich Auerbach and John David Dawson *re* "Christian figural interpretation" is very suggestive here; cf. Auerbach, "Figura", in *Scenes from the Drama of European Literature* (1984) 11-76 and John David Dawson, *Christian Figural Reading and the Fashioning of Identity* (2002).

[2] Cf. the author's "What Should I Read on the Epistle of Jude?" (http://www.kerux.com/documents/KeruxV10N1A4.asp).

[3] The works of J. Daryl Charles, Robert L. Webb, Gene Green and R. Bauckham deserve particular, if not critical, commendation. Cf. "Preaching Resources" website *sub* Jude (http://www.nwts.edu/commentaries.pdf).

interest in narrative theology/exegesis, is it possible to apply the story paradigm to Jude's letter? And if so, what story do we read in the words Jude has left us?

Mirror Relation

My suggestion is that Jude's epistle is a story of his life in relation to the life of his elder brother. This further suggests a mirror relationship. The mirror contains two phases: life outside of Christ (χωρις χριστου or αχριστος—no mirror reflection or a mirror image of hostility, enmity, unbelief); life in Christ/united with Christ (εν χριστω—a mirror image-reflection of *the* brother in the brother, i.e., an identification of Christ in his own life). In the latter case, Jude's former life is crucified in the death of his brother-Savior. There is a participation of his life in the new life of his risen brother-Vindicator (Jude raised up from death to life in Jesus' resurrection). He is found in union with the heavenly life of his older brother (Jude joined to the eschatological glory-life of his brother-Lord-and-Master). Thus, he is seated in eschatological glory with his ascended and glorified brother-God-and-Savior as a citizen of the domain of eternal life, light, perfect holiness, no more sin, the love of God in Christ Jesus by the Spirit and the *shalom*-peace of no more foaming, roiling turmoil and strife—all this with mercy (never-ending mercy) in a glory-arena before the all and ever-merciful triune God.

This mirror relation is similar to the narrative paradigm found in the life of Paul, Peter, John and other NT figures—a relation of *unio cum Christo* ("union with Christ"). With respect to Paul, that narrative union is unquestionably present. The apostle finds his life "hidden with Christ" (Col. 3:3) and so describes his own story as "Christ lives in me" even as he lives in Christ (Gal. 2:20 with 2 Tim. 1:1). Is it possible that the same transforming relation animates Jude's experience as the narrative background to his letter? That is, has Jude been transformed by finding his life in his brother even as that brother lives in him? Jude too has experienced *unio cum Christo*. And the essential narrative contrast (outside of Christ vs. in Christ) provides the antithesis that once dominated Jude's own personal biography. The cosmic antithesis; the redemptive-historical antithesis; the existential antithesis; the life and death antithesis: all this is embedded in Jude's life story, in Jude's epistle, in Jude's revelation. For the epistle *is* revelation—a disclosure of the kingdom of light and the kingdom of darkness; a revelation of life lived in and out of those two kingdoms—a life of godliness, holiness and the mirror of heaven in contrast to the revelation and existential demonstration of a life of wickedness, lust of the flesh and the mirror of hell. The epistle narrates the story of life (which Jude mirrors in his own personal spiritual transformation) and the story of death (which the intruders described in his letter mirror through their refusal to join the personal spiritual transformation which has been incarnated in the redemptive history of the Lord Jesus Christ—in the invitation and exhortation to chose life, to live life, to mirror life on earth as it is in heaven).

Such a narrative approach could lead to a richer and deeper penetration of the narrative in the letter—beyond the rhetorical (as confined to the target community's story, not the writing author's story); beyond the apocalyptic (and the limitations, indeed reductionism, of Jewish eschatological horizontalism); beyond the (merely) ethical (and its feckless

moralism) and doctrinal (and its all too deaf ear to *historia salutis*). This article will attempt to explore this matter of a proposed narrative paradigm for the epistle of Jude.

Jude's Personal Biography

What do we know about the narrative biography of Jude? He was a brother (or half-brother) of our Lord and part of the circle that enfolded the family of Mary and Joseph at Nazareth in Galilee. We are immediately aware of a Palestinian Jewish context for the family, for the brothers, for Jude. His place on the list of Jesus' siblings suggests he was the youngest brother or next to the youngest brother (Mt. 13:55; Mk. 6:3). Judah ben Joseph, ben Miryam—the royal lineage preserved in the younger brother's name, even as that lineage is preserved in the oldest brother's patrimony (Mt. 1:2; 2:16; Lk. 3:33; cf. Heb. 7:14; Rev. 5:5). Well may we ponder family discussions in which, as was the case with the teachers in the Temple (Lk. 2:46), the elder brother instructs the family (including his parents) in the Word of God (and all in proper deference to their rôle as "honored" parents). Is some of the OT lore reflected in Jude's epistle derived from memories of these narratives as discussed and elaborated in the family circle at Nazareth? Jude's familiarity with OT redemptive-historical narrative would be commonplace in Palestinian Judaism and that reinforced in his own home.

And what of the synagogue in Nazareth!—a place where the family gathered Sabbath by Sabbath—the place in which the scroll of the Word of God was read by the oldest son (Lk. 4:16ff.). Was this *lectio* unprecedented or had that brother been privileged to read the Scriptures publicly before; and, in fact, that is why he was given the scroll of Isaiah on the occasion recorded by Luke? What *was* unprecedented on that occasion was Jesus' claim to be the fulfillment of Isaiah 61 (Lk. 4:21). That was disconcerting—even unnerving—to which the negative reaction of the audience attests (vv. 28-29). The older brother unnerves the congregation on the Sabbath day not once, but twice. Returning "home" in Matthew 13, he again teaches in the synagogue to the "astonishment" of the audience (v. 54). Designating the family members—carpenter father, mother Mary, brothers four and sisters plural (vv. 55-56)—the audience takes "offense" at him (v. 57). And Jesus remarks that a prophet is held in no honor in his own "household". What amazes the village amazes his own family. In fact, Matthew indicates that they did not believe on him (v. 58). Christ's self-disclosure surpasses the relationship of the family and village circle; his own are slow to believe that he is the "Son of God" (Lk. 3:38; Mt. 16:18; Mk. 1:1, 11). Mark suggests his own village circle consider him "mad" or "beside himself" (cf. 3:21) and they seek an audience with him (ironic that!) in order to "take custody" of him. That his mother and brothers are part of the crowd is made explicit in verse 31, now colluding with the members of the village who regard the older brother a danger and a threat. They wait "outside" (v. 32) the circle gathered around Jesus—an intimate "inside" circle which presages the new family of God of the age of the kingdom of heaven (vv. 33-35; cf. Mt. 12:48-50).

From whatever discussion and insights into the OT Scriptures had been shared in the family circle at Nazareth (even proclaimed by Jesus in the hometown synagogue), nonetheless Jesus' brothers (Jude included) did not believe he was the Christ, the Son of

God. Rather, they dismissed him as eccentric, even bizarre and out of his mind. NB: the location of Jesus with respect to his family in the narrative space of the pericopes reviewed thus far—i.e., "on location" in Nazareth. They are in or occupy the same locus as family, siblings, etc. as they grow from childhood to maturity. But a time arrives when the family bond is alienated even though they are all in the same Nazareth location. That alienation is signaled by Jesus' remark, 'My family consists of those who do the will of my Father in heaven (Mt. 12:50; Mk. 3:35); my family does not consist of those outside that circle, though they may occupy the same location as I.' Christ has signaled a radical redefinition of narrative space and relation—it is not spatio-temporal nor blood-familial. It is relational-personal (in intimate relationship with him by faith) and supernatural-eschatological (belonging to heaven to which he belongs).

Now, note the brothers proximate (spatio-temporal) to Jesus once more prior to the Feast of Tabernacles in John 7. Jesus and his brothers are in the same narrative space before and after the verbal confrontation in this sequence, which occurs in Galilee (v. 1). But now we discover an alteration in narrative space—from near proximity to narrative distance. The brothers depart from the same narrative space with Jesus to distance themselves from him in Jerusalem during the Feast (v. 2). However, while in that identical narrative space, they are remote from him spiritual-relationally—they do not believe on him (v. 5), are not united to him by faith, are alienated from him spiritually though in the same spatial location. Jesus allows them to remain outside his circle (of faith) as they depart from the circle of his location. But notice what Jesus then does—he alters his own narrative space by entering their location (Jerusalem) in his own sovereign manner. Is his shift in location a hint that a shift in disposition takes place in his brothers at the Feast? As Christ enters their space, does he bring transforming grace to his brothers—a grace pouring out upon them the "living water" (v. 38) which springs up out of him; a grace which sheds upon them the cosmic light of the heavenly "world" (8:11) of his origin, his life, his destiny? Do his brothers, in altering their distance from their brother to proximity at the Feast, discover that he has altered his distance from them by coming into the same festival space which they occupy and in that location declaring, inviting and *effecting* in them faith in him refreshing as "living water" and spiritual illumination through him as darkness-dispelling as "the light of the world"? We are certain that James and Jude become believers in Christ—embracing the relational and the eschatological paradigm of faith-union with Jesus. Did this transition in their disposition occur in their transition from Galilee to Jerusalem at the Feast of Tabernacles in John 7? Christ and his believing brothers mirrored in reverse paradigms—transition in narrative space indicative of spiritual transition in eschatological faith.

Galilee—Proximate Space: Jesus and his unbelieving brothers
Jerusalem—Remote Space: unbelieving brothers distant from Jesus
Jerusalem—Proximate Space: Jesus reverses location; declares himself fountain of living water and light of the world. ?Brothers reverse disposition and believe on him

After the crucifixion and the resurrection of their brother, the other brothers and their mother are found occupying the circle (space) of the disciples who believe on his name

and are gathered in Jerusalem (common narrative circle as with the Feast of Tabernacles) with the apostles in order to devote themselves "continually to prayer" (Acts 1:13-14). The circle of the crucifixion, resurrection and ascension is occupied by Jesus' brothers and his mother. And not only do they occupy the circle of their risen and glorified brother and son, they are devoutly attached to prayer in and through his name. The "upper room" (v. 13) narrative space is an inner, intimate circle (déjà-vu?—the family circle of Mk. 3:34 and Mt 12:49) of the post-resurrection "family" of God: apostles, brothers, mother and about 120 persons assembled (v. 15). Jude is in the circle; Jude is now a believer; Jude has taken in the death, resurrection, ascension and glorification of his older sibling and behold Jude is of "one mind", folded down into the circle of eternal life which his brother bestows and which his brother sustains. Jude now realizes Jesus is no ordinary brother—he is acquitted and declared Son of God with power by resurrection from the dead and reception into "heaven" (v. 11). Together with his brother James, Jude devotes himself to prayer and supplication as part of the inside circle of the eschatological family of God.

That diligent seeking of the Lord via prayer and believing fellowship will open an even larger circle to Jude. For according to 1 Corinthians 9:5, the "brothers of the Lord" are part of the apostolic circle which is devoted to evangelizing the nations. Jude moves in the circle of the apostles as one who labors with Paul in the spread of the gospel. Jude shows further growth and maturity by abiding in the circle of his brother, Jesus Christ, the Lord of creation, risen and seated at the right hand of glory, from whence he commissions his servants to preach the gospel to every creature—Jew and Gentile alike (Mt. 28:19). Jude expands the circle of the family of God in Christ Jesus to include the missionary outreach of the early church. And the integrity of that circle is crucial to his involvement and loyalty. Any intrusion which imports unbelief is the very antithesis of the circle of faith in which he now abides and which he thus promotes.

If we may credit the testimony of Julius Africanus (ca. 160-ca. 240 A.D.), the 'family' mission activity occurred in the Palestinian villages of Nazareth and Kokhaba (Eusebius, *HE* 1.7.14 [NPNF2 1:91-94, esp. 93]; cf. Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission: Jesus and the Twelve* [2004] 749). This indication of Christian evangelism in Galilee could coincide with the promise of the post-resurrection appearances there (Mt. 28:7, 10, 16; Mk. 16:7; Jn. 21:2) and would likely have led to planting churches in that region soon after the resurrection and ascension (cf. Acts 9:31). If Paul's Corinthian remark suggests a wider itinerary (Gentile regions), we may imagine the "brothers of the Lord" beginning in Galilee and advancing from there to Syria, Lebanon, perhaps even Asia Minor and beyond.

Symmetrical Narrative Circles

We observe a pattern of symmetrical circles integrated by a transition from unbelief to faith in the saving grace present in the life, death, resurrection and glorification of the family member conceived supernaturally, identified and endorsed supernaturally (miracles), raised from the dead supernaturally, received into heaven supernaturally, glorified at the right hand of the majesty on high supernaturally. This is a brother whose

life from beginning to end is possessed, empowered and in-dwelt by the supernatural. Such a brother transforms his brothers, James and Jude, as well as his mother with a new birth, a regeneration in the forgiveness of sins and in-dwelling of the Holy Spirit (which is poured out upon them at Pentecost, Acts 2). The two brothers, James and Jude, compose epistles out of the circle of the new family in Christ Jesus—namely the church community. These letters are the literary record of their respective narrative transformations—from unbelief to faith. And thus the emphasis in these letters on a living faith is part of their personal life story. Whatever indifference, suspicion, even hostility to their elder brother which was present before their transformation (conversion), is now positioned antithetically on the reverse side of saving faith. They have become genuine believers (indeed, "bond slaves") in their sojourn from the family circle limited to Nazareth to the circle of the new family in Christ Jesus from every nation, tribe and tongue under heaven. Having lived the antithesis, they provide strikingly antithetical remarks in their letters. What is often labeled "harsh" or "unloving" in their tone is, in fact, a passion of loyalty to their brother and his gospel—a gospel which has drawn their lives within his family circle leaving them profoundly convinced that they cannot go back to their former convictions—nor may the church community go back.

About Face

The narrative paradigm underlying Jude's epistle consists not only of his life with his older brother in Nazareth—a life of hearing and (no doubt) reflecting on the Word of God in synagogue worship, in family worship and discussion—it also consists of a period of antipathy towards his brother, followed by a genuine about face. The fruit of that transformation is his own vigilance against a return to enmity against the Lord and his servants. His pointed and sharp language is an existential identification with that which he himself demonstrated once-upon-a-time. His warnings arise from his own experience of antipathy with the realization of the eternal danger in which he lay. His own personal reversal underlies the reverse imagery of his epistle. What is more "harsh" than eternal fire and unending darkness? Strong language underscores the passion of the reverse—eternal light and unending glory.

Echoes of Christ in the Words of Jude's Epistle

We turn now to a consideration of the interface between language from one brother mirrored or echoed in the language of the other. As we sift the vocabulary of Jude's letter, we search for possible precedents in the vocabulary of his brother, Jesus, in the gospels. Our premise is a joint use of words or phrases suggests narrative circles of proximity: Christ's and Jude's. We may expect this given the family circle proximity and the new family of God proximity of the early church. In each case, the collective memory of Jude would be triggered, if not embedded, with words and phrases which his older brother used.

Jude labels himself a "slave/servant" (δουλος) of Jesus Christ (v. 1). This term of humility is echoed by his brother in John 13:16 (cf. 15:20). In a demonstration of servanthood, Jesus describes the enacted parable of his washing the disciples feet as a

"slave/servant" taking the rôle of subservience, i.e., Christ subservient to his Father ("the one who sent him") as his δουλος ("the one who is sent"). Jude will label Christ Jesus his "Master" and "Lord" (v. 4) placing himself in a symmetrical rôle of subservience—brother to brother. The powerful identification of Jude with his brother's servanthood draws him into the mimetic circle—he finds his own servanthood hidden in his brother's.

The word "called" (κλητοις), as commentators have noted, implies an elect of predestined status—those loved in God the Father and kept in the Lord Jesus Christ (v. 1). This drama of the divine story of sovereign grace and mercy is echoed by the words of the elder brother in Matthew 22:14: "many are called (κλητοι), but few are elected (εκλεκτοι)". Jude's own narrative story (one of the "many" called by his brother) is finally an identification with the "elect" of the sovereign Lord. He is an object of divine and supernatural grace, loved of God the Father and kept by the finished work of Jesus Christ. His narrative story is a reflection of the redemptive story proclaimed by his brother and he provides an echo of that precious story in the opening greeting of his epistle.

The result of the divine election is listed in v. 2: mercy, peace, love—and that out of the plethora (πληθυνθειν) of these divine blessings. Jude was the recipient of these benefits. He himself had received mercy, who deserved no mercy; he himself had been granted *shalom*-peace instead of the roiling antipathy towards his brother; he had found himself undeservingly the object of his brother's love—unconditional, unrequited, inescapable affection. And in its multiplication in his life, he found himself kept in that love, preserved in that peace, maintained in that mercy (cf. v. 21) with a fullness which multiplied each of these graces to him every day of his life. Once again, his own narrative biography is featured in stark relief—what he once was (wanting no mercy from Jesus Christ, seeking no peace from Jesus Christ, spurning the love of Jesus Christ) now transformed by the mercy of God the Father, through the love of God the Son, by the in-working peace of God the Holy Spirit (cf. vv. 19-20). The echoes of the narrative biography of the author of the epistle resound in the message of his brother Lord and Savior. Such an echo re-echoes as Jude draws his audience into the same narrative drama of his experience. It is to Jesus Christ, to whom he is indebted as "bond-slave," that he indebts his readers. Narrative existentialization recapitulated in author and audience; narrative identification recapitulated in author and audience; narrative symmetry recapitulated in author and audience. Jude draws his readers into the narrative—the narrative of his story in the story of Jesus Christ, his brother, Savior, Lord.

"Beloved" (αγαπητοι, v. 3) is a family term—a term of close affection. It is also a relational term—relationships exclusive to the deity as well as relationships inclusive of humanity. The exclusive echo features the love of God the Father for God the Son: "this is my beloved (αγαπητος) Son" (Mt. 3:17; Mk. 1:11; Lk. 3:22; cf. Mt. 17:5 and parallels)—an intra-Trinitarian relationship of everlasting love and passion. That supernatural (and ontological) love now is shed abroad on God's elect—on Jude and the elect in his audience. A great mystery of divine and supernatural grace is multiplied—sinners (such as Jude and his audience) drawn into the love of God the Father in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, through the work of God the Holy Spirit—and that love lavished/multiplied in abundance of joy (cf. v. 24). Then, reciprocally, that love "divine

all loves excelling" re-echoed inclusively in the horizontal love of community, church, fellowship, like-mindedness, i.e., re-imaged narrative biography. The love of God is mirrored in the love of the brothers and sisters in Christ. Love magnified, amplified, in the new family of God created in the passion of Christ Jesus for Jude and his audience. Jude in union with the eschatological love of and within the Triune Godhead; Jude in union with the semi-eschatological love of the family of God spread abroad in Palestine, Syria, Asia Minor and beyond. What a magnificent story!

Jude's union with love mirrors his antipathy to hate—hatred of the love of God the Father, in Jesus Christ his Son, the Lord, by the in-working of the Holy Spirit. Hatred of familial love of Christian brothers and sisters embraced in that supernatural, eschatological and horizontal love. Hatred of the love of ungodliness and the evil of unbelief, murder, rebellion, subversion and perversion: all of these mirror antitheses to the love from heaven are the echoes of the hatred from hell. There is another cosmic and temporal narrative which Jude once embraced (however unwittingly)—it is the narrative of enmity against his brother, his message, his mission, his new, emerging church family. It is quintessentially hatred for the "faith once for all delivered to the saints" (v. 3). Jude is aware of the record of his elder brother's plan of salvation—salvation by/through faith in his name. He has heard the words of his brother repeated by the apostles, even as he heard many of them first-hand (cf. v. 17). And the delivery of these words is not only by the hearing of the ears, but by the recording of the pen. The written record of the revelation of Jesus Christ is part of the existential record which undergirds his writing. And he echoes the one in the other: the revelation in Christ passed on by the apostles re-echoed in the revelation of Christ passed on in the epistle of Jude.

What shall we say about "denial" of the "Master and Lord Jesus Christ" (v. 4)? Jude had "denied" him, at least insofar as he had not believed on him. This echo of his own rejection of Christ now mirrored in the interlopers who have insinuated themselves into the Christian community to whom he writes—that mirror ignites a confession of relationship—a confession of the power and authority of his brother to rule over his own life. The mastery of his life has been transferred to Jesus, his brother; the Lordship over his life has been surrendered to his brother, Jesus. Jesus had said, "Whoever shall deny (αρνησηται) me before men, I will also deny (αρνησομαι) him before my Father who is in heaven" (Mt. 10:33; cf. Mk. 8:38; Lk. 9:26; 12:9); Jude contemns those who "deny" (αρνουμενοι) his Lord, Master, Brother. Narrative echoes re-echoing from gospel revelation to epistolary recollection and reflection.

That Christ "knows all things" (οιδας παντα, Jn. 16:30; cf. 21:17) is an apostolic confession (Peter in John 21 and the disciples in John 16)—a confession reflecting and echoing Christ's own self-revelation: "all things (παντα) have been handed over to me by my Father" (Mt. 11:27). This is a confession and revelation which Christ expands in order to fold his sons and daughters into the remembrance (υπομνησει) of "all things" (παντα) which will be taught them by the Holy Spirit (Jn. 14:26). Jude, moved now by the Holy Spirit and joining himself to his audience, declares that they remember (υπομνησαι) "all things" (παντα, v. 5) which they "know" (ειδοτας). It is this wondrous inclusion or union with Christ which identifies the believing audience with the author

(and with the disciples in turn) in the drama of knowing and remembering that the Lord Jesus himself "knows all things". And the echo of this realization in measure (under the illumination of the Holy Spirit) informs their understanding and perception of all things known and remembered by their Lord. The Holy Spirit draws them into the remembrance and knowledge of all things mirroring their Lord (without transgressing the Creator-creature distinction). Jude had participated in this drama—his own narrative history/story had been transformed by the Holy Spirit so that he could identify with his brother's unique omniscience, while realizing an understanding of these things by the in-dwelling of that same promised Paraclete allowing him a measured 'science' of things wholly known to God the Lord.

Moving to v. 11 for the next narrative biographical echo of the language of the elder brother in the text of the younger brother—"woe (ουαι) to them!" Jesus used this declarative routinely in denunciation of the evil and hypocrisy of his opponents. Jude echoes his brother's language *re* the evil and hypocrisy of his opponents (at the same time opponents of his brother). Jude's assumption of prophetic asseveration unites him to the idiom and intensity of his brother in a virtual recapitulation of the emphatic style. Brother like Brother!—an identification which may originate in the one listening to the words of the other (cf. "woe [ουαι] to you," Mt. 11:21; 23:13, 15, 16, 23, 25, 27, 29 and parallels in Lk. 10:13; 11:42, 43, 44, 46, 47, 52, etc.). Jude's "woe" saying echoes the "woe" oracles of Jesus, his brother (as Jesus echoes those of the OT prophets—an aspect which may further explain Jude's review of OT narrative incidents, vv. 5-11, 14-15).

"Trees with out fruit" (v. 12) is also an echo of imagery used by the Lord Jesus (Mt. 7:16-20; 12:33; Lk. 13:8ff.; Jn. 15, passim). The "shepherding" (ποιμαινοντες) of these intruders is the very antithesis of the care of the Good Shepherd (Jn. 10). The antithetical element here underscores the stark opposition between the person and word of the elder brother and the bastard intruders. The younger brother's letter is a plea for identification with Christ in the radical otherness which his gospel, his narrative biography, his Spirit incarnates in the narrative of those united to him in faith and devotion. The power (intensity/vehemence) of Jude's language is anchored in the stark opposition between the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ and the kingdom of darkness—the arena of blessing and righteousness and the arena of cursing and evil.

This same graphic antithesis is found in the language of his older brother. "Darkness" (σκοτους, v. 13) is eternally (εις αιωνα) reserved for those cast into it (cf. σκοτος, Mt. 8:12). Its inhabitants include the children outside the kingdom of heaven (Mt. 8:11). These are the "sons of evil" (or "the evil one," Mt. 13:38) whose "weeping and teeth gnashing" is the fruit of habitual ungodliness—the entrenched and refuse-to-repent enmity against God and his kingdom (cf. Mt. 22:13; 25:30). These refuse to walk in the light; rather, they prefer the darkness (Jn. 8:12 which Jesus declares at the Feast of Tabernacles to which his brothers went preceding him; cf. comments above). Whoever believes in Jesus does not abide in darkness (Jn. 12:46), either now or forevermore. Once more, the echoes of the language of Jesus reverberate in the prose of Jude (cf. also v. 6). Stories of parallel narrative ripples.

Enoch's prophecy of the "coming" (ηλθεν) of the Lord with his myriad angels in order to pronounce judgment on all ungodliness (defined as speech and deeds opposed to/antithetical to him, vv. 14-15) contains an echo of the "coming" (ελθη) of the Son of Man (Mt. 25:31; cf. 16:27; also Mk. 8:38 and Lk. 9:26 where the "coming" = ελθη). This is projected by the prophet of that former era (Enoch) whose Immanuel relationship (God "walked with" him, Gen. 5:24; cf. Heb. 11:5) draws him into the same narrative paradigm of the prophet of these last days (Jesus Christ); the latter's "coming" is echoed by his brother (Jude)—also one who experienced the Immanuel presence of "God with him" (i.e., his elder brother). The eschatological language of the "seventh from Adam" functions as a futuristic present, projecting the end from the beginning and characterizing every age in between. If Adam was a prototypical "son of man" (cf. Ps. 8; Heb. 2:6-7), then the eschatological Son of Man perfectly performs the critical task of judging the ungodly for their crass ungodliness. Jude's story echoes Jesus' story via Enoch's story.

Is there a narrative biographical echo of the term "grumblers" (γογγυσται, v. 16) with the cognates in John 6:41, 43, 61? If Jude and his brothers appear in John 7:3, is it possible they were shadowing their older brother's movements as he taught in the synagogue at Capernaum (Jn. 6:59)? If so, the "here" of John 7:3 may be continuous narrative space with the Galilean itinerary of the previous chapter. To put an end to the grumbling, his brothers urge Jesus to "show [himself] to the world" (Jn. 7:4). They therefore include themselves with the "Jews" of 6:41 and 43, while folding the disciples into identification with their own "grumbling" ("your disciples," 7:3 with "his disciples" in 6:60 and 61). Grumbling therefore is something in which Jude once engaged (with fellow Jews and disciples alike) and that against his brother, Jesus (again, the antithesis directed against Jesus). Having been delivered from grumbling by grace through faith, Jude urges his readers to heed what he once heeded in his own transformation—"Do not grumble among yourselves" (Jn. 6:43).

The remembrance of vv. 17 and 18 is a dramatic signal of personal involvement with the apostolic circle. The apostles of his brother have declared to the community to whom Jude writes that the last days will be accompanied with scoffing and immorality. This reinforces a likely Palestinian-Jewish milieu for the recipients of this letter, for the apostles first itinerated in Galilee and Judea preaching and teaching the message of the risen Lord. That Lord's own proclamation of the last days was trans-adventual, i.e., "now" realized in principle while spanning the interim to the consummate crisis "not yet". The era which dawned with the Lord Jesus Christ, attested by the apostles, heard and remembered by Jude and his audience is the inauguration of the eschatological times (εσχατου του χρονου, v. 18)—an era in which the younger brother of Jesus participates, along with all those identified with the era which the older brother inaugurates. They "remember" the message of the last time because, in Christ, they are living in the last time—an emphatic revelation of the advent, not to mention, the incarnation, of Jesus Christ. If it is a modern scholarly given that Jesus of Nazareth proclaimed a now/not yet eschatology, then Jude has identified with that proclamation of his older brother and draws his audience into the reminder of its presence in history and their story. The narrative echoes here in vv. 17-18 are dramatically semi-eschatological and contain the

participation of the younger brother in the "time" which the older brother brings, so that he may further fold the audience of his letter into the same story era.

An apostolic echo of the term "mockers" is found in 2 Peter 3:3. Like Jude, Peter recalls the apostolic words about the "last days". This apostle's words verify Jude's remark about the words of the apostles. And while Jude's concern may be more ethical ("lusts," v. 18), nonetheless both he and Peter concur in the dominical *and* apostolic prescience (cf. "beforehand", προειρημενων—Jude 17 and 2 Pet. 3:2).

But is Peter's allusion to the mockery a recapitulation of the reality suffered by his Lord? Jesus was mocked during his trial (Mt. 27:29, 31); Peter was in the vicinity, tacitly concurring with the denigration of his Lord (Jn. 18:25-27 and parallels). Having bitterly 'mocked' (even "cursed"!) his Master (Mt. 26:72, 74), Peter enters into the dark betrayal of the Savior. He has felt the horror and shame of "mocking" the one who loved him and gave his life for him. Hence, projecting the mocking calumniation of his Lord and Savior to the "last days" is but a continuation of what occurred to Jesus in the former days. Jude too is conscious of this ironic recapitulation (as they did to his brother in the days of his life, so they will continue to do to his brother to the days of his parousia); and that recapitulation realized in the mockery of the intruders who have brought their ridicule into the community of his audience.

The three-fold mercy in vv. 21-23 echoes source ("our Lord Jesus Christ"), recipients (those who are "waiting" for it have received it), and participant sharers (bestowing on others what was once received by them). Mercy is what Jude received from his "Lord Jesus Christ"—a gift to the miserable, i.e., a sinner mired in the misery of his iniquity and unbelief. If "doubting" (διακρινομενους, v. 22) is the correct translation of the hapax,[4] we find a thematic echo of Jude's own doubts about his elder brother—he regarded him as "beside himself" and did not "believe" on him, thus underscoring his doubts about his identity (Son of God and Lord) and his ministry (bring in the "last time" by showing yourself to the whole world, thus inaugurating the golden age of Jewish messianism and triumphalism). Mercy for other "doubters" (even "disputers") is but the reflection of what Jude had been granted by his brother. Surely, that grace was available to others as a narrative biographical echo of the experience of the author's own story.

Finally, did Jude see his brother ascend into glory (δοξα)? He is present in the upper room at Jerusalem in Acts 1:13-14—a narrative sequential to that of Luke's ascension narrative. Present at the one, yet absent from the other? Possible, but perhaps not likely—especially in view of the narrative integrity of Luke's story. His characters and events presume a particular narrative continuity. On this point, we will suggest—present in the one, even as present in the other (unless proven otherwise). This suggests that the "glory" (Jude 24) may reflect the arena into which Jesus himself ascends—an arena as "blameless" or sinless as Jesus himself (cf. 1 Tim. 3:16; 1 Pet. 1:21; Lk. 24:26; cf. Jn. 17:24). This was an arena familiar to Jude because he was an eyewitness of his older

[4] Cf. Peter Spitaler's major challenge to this wording (he prefers "disputing")—"Doubt or Dispute (Jude 9 and 22-23): Rereading a Special New Testament Meaning through the Lense of Internal Evidence." *Biblica* 87 (2006): 201-22.

brother's assumption into it. The glory-arena to which my brother belongs is the arena opened to me at his ascension and an arena to which we are destined with exceeding "great joy" (v. 24). And why not? Jude's great joy at his own narrative inclusion/participation/identification with the redemptive story of his brother is cause enough for the climactic doxology.

This brief epistle brings us full circle—not only in the symmetry of its salutary inception, but also in its doxological conclusion. As if the life of Jude, summarized briefly in his letter, lest he detract from the majesty and glory of his brother-Lord, this life of the bond-slave of Christ is a mirror reflection of his narrative biography expressed in terms, incidents, cameo clips of the all too brief earthly career of the younger brother with his older brother. A life in which all things became new—Jude united to Jesus; Jude transformed by Jesus; Jude defending Jesus and the faith once for all delivered, even as that faith is echoed and re-echoed in this epistle. The narrative echoes of the words (and life) of brother Jesus in the words (and life) of brother Jude.

Conclusion

I have attempted to put some flesh on the bones of the epistle of Jude. To explore the life of the author behind the letter; to consider the narrative story, not of the audience (the focus of rhetorical criticism), but to draw out the story of the brother of Jesus from the narrative story embedded in his short letter. While all may acknowledge that there is a human story behind the epistle, too many regard it as pseudonymous, contrived or obscure and incidental. The study of the epistle then becomes a platform for agendas of several kinds: esoteric Jewish apocalypticism (imagined and fabricated with little to no primary document attestation); ethical reductionism which is embarrassed by Jude's vehement language and thus concludes that the bulk of the letter is irrelevant and only the "loving" words can speak to a modern audience awash in evil and hatred. Jude would have called this denial. Then there is the traditional doctrinal exposition which moves in abstractions without historical interface. That misses the very point of Jude taking up his pen—he is writing out of his own existential life-experience which he knows is parallel to the life-experience of his recipients. No abstractions here, but life and death clashes with heaven and hell.

Augustine: Christ's Merit and Ours

For as he [the Lord Jesus] alone became the Son of Man so that through him we might become children of God, so on our behalf he alone without meriting any evil underwent punishment so that through him we might without meriting any good attain grace. After all, as nothing good was owed to us, so nothing bad was owed to him. Hence, in order to show his love for those to whom he was going to give a life they did not deserve, he chose to suffer on their behalf a death that he did not deserve (Augustine, "Answer to the Two Letters of the Pelagians," Book 4, 4.6 in *The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century. Answer to the Pelagians II* [New City Press, 1998] 190-91).

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Muller on the Trinity: A Review[1]

Scott F. Sanborn

Muller introduces this volume by noting that the scholarship in this area differs from that dealing with prolegomena, Scripture and the divine attributes. Thus, this volume begins with a survey of the scholarship in this area, including a discussion of historiographical issues.

Muller examines the historical development of the doctrine of the Trinity from the early Middle ages to 18th century late Reformed scholasticism. In accord with the general pattern of the other volumes in *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics* (hereafter referred to as *PRRD*), this is followed by an examination of the doctrine of the Trinity in Reformed orthodoxy using a more topical arrangement.

Muller points to the predominance of Patristic studies with respect to the Trinity. This is why he begins his historical analysis in this volume with a discussion of the Medieval background to the doctrine of the Trinity and not with the Patristic period. We will take space here to highlight a few of these developments briefly.

Muller examines how Anselm sought to refute Roscellin's conception of the Trinity, leading up to the Synod of Soissons in 1092. Roscellin applied his nominalism to the three persons of the Trinity. As a result, for Roscellin, the names Father, Son, and Spirit were simply names applied to the divine nature. They did not represent personal distinctions within the Godhead. Anselm rightly rejected this, in part using his realist philosophy. Muller also deals with Abelard and his conceptualist approach to the Trinity.

The definition of a person takes on significance in the doctrine of the Trinity beginning with Boethius. Muller notes the original definition of person suggested by Boethius: "person is an individual substance of a rational nature" (34). He also recounts how Richard of Saint Victor provided two alternative definitions of a person. "A person is something that exists through itself alone, singularly, according to a rational mode of existence" (34); and "A divine person is an incommunicable existence of a divine nature" (34). Richard was generally followed by his Medieval contemporaries because the Boethian definition tended toward tritheism.

In the course of his discussion, Muller deals on one side with the heretical Trinitarian doctrine of Joachim of Flora. On the other, he examines the developments in the prominent Medieval doctors such as Alexander of Hales, Albert the Great, Bonaventure and Thomas Aquinas.

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[1] Richard A. Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics: The Rise and Development of Reformed Orthodoxy; ca. 1520 to ca. 1725, Volume Four: The Triunity of God*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003. 545 pp. Cloth. ISBN: 978-0-8010-2295-1. $ 59.99.

Medieval theologians described the Son of God as the procession of the divine intellect and the Holy Spirit as the procession of the divine will or love. In doing this however, they did not deny the fact that all the three persons in their relation to the divine essence possess the divine mind and will of God.

While we are only providing a brief survey in our review, it should be noted that Muller's discussion of these figures often examines fine points of development (or deviation). For instance, Muller has a short but precise discussion of Dun Scotus's Trinitarian theology. Scotus differed from Aquinas in explaining the nature of the procession of the Holy Spirit. Aquinas had argued that the eternal begetting of the Son was natural and necessary to God the Father as an expression of the Father's intellect. Here Scotus agreed. At the same time Aquinas argued that the Holy Spirit naturally and necessarily proceeded from the Father and the Son. On this later point, Scotus disagreed. Since the procession of the Holy Spirit was an expression of the will of the Father and Son (which was free), the procession of the Holy Spirit must be free to the Father and Son rather than necessary. At the same time, as he introduces Scotus on the Trinity, Muller states that for Scotus, the procession of the Spirit is necessary to the being of God. Does Muller mean to say that for Scotus the procession of the Spirit is necessary to the being of God but not the persons of the Father and Son? As Muller points out later, Reformed scholastics did not speculate on the relationship between the Son as intellect and the Holy Spirit as will in this way. Thus, they presumably would not have agreed with Scotus's suggestion that the procession of the Spirit was free (rather than necessary) to the Father and the Son.

Muller also points out how Scotus anticipates the more precise formulations of the Council of Florence. Following the catholic tradition, Scotus held that the Father gave the Son to have life in himself, thus communicating to him the life by which the Spirit will also proceed from the Son as well as the Father. At the same time, Scotus claims that the Father continues to be the principal source of this life and thus the final fount of the Spirit's procession. In this way, he anticipates the Council of Florence's attempt to reconcile East and West, claiming that the Father is the fount of deity and the source of life by which the Spirit proceeds from the Son.

William of Ockham also receives treatment. According to Muller, while Ockham believed in the Trinity, his nominalism kept him from providing a satisfying philosophical justification for the theological language used to describe it. Muller also discusses the precise formulations of the Council of Florence. In addition to that noted above with respect to Scotus, he notes the council's insistence in discussion with the Jacobites that the procession of the Spirit from the Father and Son is one unified procession from both persons rather than two separate processions.

Muller next examines the doctrine during the Reformation and Post-Reformation periods. He argues that the Reformers placed such a high view on Scripture that (while they followed the orthodox formulations of the ecumenical counsels) they articulated the doctrine primarily using exegetical considerations from the Word of God. Thus, Muller examines the Reformers use of Scripture as the primary norm with the tradition only as a

secondary norm. As a result, the doctrine of the Trinity is upheld in all the Reformed confessions of the Reformation and Post-Reformation periods.

Muller also examines the anti-trinitarians of the era such as Michael Servetus and the Italian anti-trinitarians. Interestingly, in discussing Servetus's rejection of the Trinity, Muller notes Servetus's almost pantheistic views which he got partially from reading the Hermeticus. Servetus taught that the creation was an emanation of the divine essence. Perhaps here is another reason to understand why Servetus rejected the transcendent Trinitarian God of Scripture.

Dr. Muller continues with a discussion of doctrine of the Trinity during the Post-Reformation era, first in early orthodoxy and then during the era of high orthodox. We are introduced both to developments on the continent and among the English Puritans. He also examines the Reformed response both to the Socinian and Deist onslaughts. Muller's discussion of the doctrine in Britain in the late 17th and early 18th centuries broadens to include deviations from Trinitarian orthodoxy among figures such as Bishop George Bull and William Sherlock together with William Whiston and Samuel Clarke.

After his history of the development of the doctrine, Muller discusses preliminary issues surrounding the Trinity as articulated by Reformed orthodoxy. He first shows that the orthodox believed that the doctrine of the Trinity is a fundamental article. That is, they taught that for one to be justified in Christ, he must believe in the Trinity. Ignorance of the Trinity was damnable. This does not mean that believers need to be able to articulate the doctrine with the theological precision discussed in the academy. But true Christians believe that the Father is God, the Son is God and the Holy Spirit is God, that they are three distinct uncreated persons and yet one God.

Muller then shows how the Reformed orthodox believed that the Trinity was a mystery beyond reason. They did not believe that the doctrine was revealed in natural revelation. They sought to follow this out consistently in the way they used reason in its articulation and with their use of the supposed "vestiges of the Trinity" found in nature. Since the doctrine could not be known by reason, reason could not be used to materially construct the doctrine of the Trinity in the way that it could be used by the regenerate mind to articulate a natural theology of the one God. Instead, reason could only be used instrumentally in understanding the doctrine of the Trinity as revealed in Scripture.

This also meant for most of the Reformed that there were not vestiges of the Trinity in nature. As a result, most of them did not use Augustine's analogy of the Trinity based on the supposed tripartite nature of the human soul. Further, most of them rejected the notion that Plato recognized vestiges of the Trinity in nature. Yet there were a few exceptions among the Reformed on these points.

Muller also deals with Cartesianism and its rejection by most of the Reformed. At the same time, he notes that Burman, while mostly articulating the doctrine from Scripture, gives three rational arguments for it. One of these is the argument that if God is good the very nature of goodness is self-communicative. Thus, God could only be considered

eternally good if he communicated that goodness eternally, requiring another eternal person in the divine Godhead. However, most of the Reformed did not use arguments of this nature, though some did use rational arguments to show the reasonableness of the doctrine once the doctrine was accepted on the authority of Scripture.

Next, Muller discusses the terms used in the articulation of the doctrine of the Trinity such as Trinity, substance, essence, *homoousios*, *persona*, *hypostasis*, *perichoresis* and *relationes*. While these terms are not in Scripture, they can be used to articulate the substance of its doctrine. If we cannot use human words to articulate the doctrine, then we can only repeat the words of Scripture without explanation, which is absurd.

Muller also deals with the connection between theology and exegesis in the 16th and 17th centuries. Muller argues that the doctrine of the Trinity is founded on patterns of pre-critical exegesis and he discusses the hermeneutical assumptions of the Reformed orthodox.

Then Muller examines particular issues of exegesis in both the Old and New Testaments. To the question, "Does the Old Testament reveal the Trinity?" The Reformed orthodox answered, "Yes". Many of them acknowledged that the clarity of the doctrine was progressively revealed from the Old to New Testaments. However, most of them believed that it was revealed as early as creation, including the creation of man—"Let us make man in our image" (Gen. 1:26). The Reformed regularly rejected the Jewish interpretation of this passage in which God was said to be addressing the angels. Muller's discussion here reminds one of Turretin's in his *Institutes*. As Turretin noted, the angels could not be here addressed because they were not instruments of creation. They could not be since there is an infinite gap between being and non-being. Only an infinite power can bridge that gap so that man might become a living soul. The angels do not have infinite power and their finite natures are incapable of being the conduit of infinite power. Even the apostles when they performed miracles did not create anew as if the divine power flowed through them. They always attributed the power of producing miracles to Christ. They were simply the moral instruments God used to proclaim his word, with which he simultaneously produced the miracle directly by his infinite power. Muller's discussion follows a similar line of argument adopted by the Reformed orthodox of which Turretin was simply one representative.

Muller also deals with the Trinity as it was recognized in the gospels, the epistles, and the book of Revelation. He also notes the use of the Johannine comma (1 Jn. 5:7) among the Reformers and Reformed orthodox in support of the Trinity. Its acceptance was based partially on the authority of Erasmus. But it also drew upon the observation of scribal errors such as the recognition that scribes sometimes skip lines accidentally. Perhaps, some thought, this may account for its absence in early manuscripts. However, as the textual evidence increased, its use was gradually abandoned.

Muller follows this by a detailed discussion of the loci of the Trinity as articulated by Reformed orthodoxy. He proceeds by discussing each of the persons of the Godhead. First, he deals with the person of the Father, noting the primacy accorded to the Father

among the distinct persons of the Trinity. According to Muller the Reformed treated some biblical references to the Father as a specific reference to the person of the Father. This is especially clear where the Son and Spirit are differentiated from the Father such as in Matthew 28—"baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." At the same time, in some places where God is addressed as Father, Reformed exegetes believed that the whole Trinity is included. In this respect, Muller notes the Lord's Prayer ("Our Father") in which at least some Reformed exegetes regarded as an address to the whole Godhead.

Muller speaks of the distinction between God's works *ad intra* and *ad extra*. He claims that God's works *ad extra* are works of the whole Godhead even when they terminate on one person. So for instance, the work of incarnation terminates on the Son, but it is the work of the whole Godhead. This helps answer the questions, "How is it that Christ alone becomes incarnate, even though all three persons of the Trinity share the same essence?" "How is it that the Father and the Spirit are not incarnate?"

The answer is implicitly given here by Muller when he states,

> One and the same external work, in a different consideration, is both personal and essential.[2] Inasmuch as "the essence is common to all of the persons," the "essential operations" are also common operations that can be considered both essentially and personally.[3] Thus, by way of example, "the incarnation of Christ, in respect of inchoation or initiation, is the essential work of the whole Trinity, but in respect of bounds or termination, it is the personal work of the Son alone," given that Father, Son, and Spirit are equally the "cause" of the incarnation, but only the Son is incarnate.[4]

The fact that God's *ad extra* works are the work of all three persons of the Trinity even when they terminate on one of the persons is also the case with election. In Scripture, election is primarily referred to the Father. But for the Reformed scholastics, this is not meant to exclude the Son and Spirit. Thus, while the work of election terminates on the Father, the Son and Spirit are also involved. Though Muller does not add to this the following observation, this may relate to the fact that for the Reformed the Trinity only had one mind and one will, even though it lives in three modes of subsistence. This is also the case for Turretin with reference to Christ's words, "You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you." While Turretin interprets this in one place to refer to regeneration, in another he states that this should not be thought to exclude election, which is realized in time by regeneration. Thus, Turretin suggests that the Son also is involved in election. Muller's examination of this issue is helpful.

Muller also deals with the person of the Son. Here we will focus our attention on the issue of the eternal begetting of the Son. For the Reformed, following the catholic tradition, eternal begetting has no beginning in time or end in time. It describes the

[2]Muller, *PRRD*, vol. 4, 259, quoting Wollebius, *Compendium*, I.iv, canons A.i.
[3]Ibid., quoting Wollebius, *Compendium*, I.iv, canons A.ii.
[4]Ibid.

eternal relationship between the Father and the Son that is always perfect and complete. Numerous texts are used to prove this doctrine. However, the Socinians contended that these texts only spoke about what God did in history. For instance they relegated the begetting of the Son to his incarnation or resurrection. They also relegated the procession of the Spirit to the giving of the Spirit at Pentecost. Muller deals with Reformed responses to the Socinians, dealing with texts such as Micah 5:2, Psalm 2:7, Psalm 110:3, and Proverbs 8:23 (284).

Muller's insistence that the Reformed related these texts to eternal generation is significant. For Socinians thought that a text like Ps. 2:7 is simply a reference to a redemptive historical event such as the resurrection. But the Reformed believed that such redemptive historical events revealed something about God's own eternal life and the eternal relationship between the Father and Son. This can be seen in Turretin when he deals with Ps. 2:7 and its quotation in Acts 13:33. He writes as follows:

> Nor is the passage in Acts 13:33 an obstacle, where Paul seems to refer this oracle to the resurrection of Christ. For Ps. 2:7 is adduced by the apostle not so much to prove the resurrection of Christ (which he does, Acts 13:35 from Ps. 16:10), as to prove the fulfillment of the promise given to the fathers concerning the raising up of Christ and the sending of him into the world. These things are not to be opposed, but composed; not that generation consists in his resurrection, since even from the beginning he was with God (Jn. 1:1), yea even from everlasting (Prov. 8:22), and God speaking from heaven at his baptism testified that he was his Son; but by reason of manifestation (*phaneroseos*) and declaration a posteriori because he is made known by it (as Paul interprets when he says that "Christ was declared [*horisthenta*] to be the Son of God by the resurrection from the dead," Rom. 1:4) according to Scripture usage by which things are said to become or to be born when they are manifested. [5]

Turretin concludes:

> Because, therefore, the resurrection was an irrefragable proof of his divinity and eternal filiation, the Holy Spirit, with the Psalmist, could join both together and refer as much to the eternal generation as to its manifestation (which ought to be made in the resurrection).[6]

Thus, Ps. 2:7 proves the eternal begetting of the Son which in turn proves his divinity. In this way, the Reformed believed that the eternal relationships between the Father, Son and Spirit were the ground of their manifestation in history. This is only one example of how a Reformed scholastic interpreted a text used to prove eternal generation. This was no mere proof-text approach. Reading Muller will provide you with even more proof from Scripture that these texts do in fact speak of eternal generation. At least, the Reformed orthodox thought so. But even after proving the doctrine, there is much that needs clearing up on this subject.

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[5] Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, III. xxix. 8.
[6] Ibid.

In discussing Calvin, Muller notes his insistence (following the tradition from Peter Lombard) that in the Trinity there is a begetting and procession of divine persons, not of the divine essence. That is, the divine essence does not beget, but the person of the Father begets. The Reformed do not deny that the Father communicates the divine essence to the Son in the begetting of the Son. But they do deny that the divine essence itself begets the Son. That Muller implies that the Father communicates the divine essence to the Son in begetting is seen by his use of the term *emanation* (also used by Turretin) to describe begetting. That is, for the Reformed, the Father communicates his divine essence to the Son in begetting the Son. The implication is that when the Reformed speak of the emanation of the divine essence to the Son in his begetting they do not mean that the *divine essence* itself begets the Son, only that the Father communicates his divine essence to the Son when the *person* of the Father begets the *person* of the Son. That is, the divine essence does not beget divine essence or person, but person begets person.

In accord with the view that the person of the Father (not the divine essence) begets the Son, Calvin taught Christ's aseity, that Christ's divine essence is from itself. That is, Christ is God of himself. His divine essence is not begotten of another. This aseity of the Son was denied by the Remonstrants (17th century Arminians) who taught that the divine essence begot the Son. This became a point of contention between the Remonstrants and the Reformed throughout the 17th century.

Muller claims that Calvin's view follows the Latin (4th Lateran Council) rather than the Greek view. Thus, Muller clarifies the Reformed view.

> This argument does not, of course, contravene the doctrine of the generation of the Son from the "essence and subsistence of the Father," but it does certainly qualify what can be meant by generation: the generation is not material and is not a "dilation of the Father's essence," not a propagation of the essence—but a "communication" of existence or subsistence, such that the Son is begotten, but the divine essence that he has is itself not begotten.[7] These formulations are, to say the least, quite distinct: where Ursinus speaks of a communication of Deity or Godhead by eternal generation, Polanus speaks more restrictively of a communication of Sonship or subsistence.
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> Still, definitions that speak of the communication of essence are not necessarily opposed to the notion of the Son's *aseitas*: Bucanus also speaks of the essence as communicated, but notes that it is not begotten—sonship alone is "begotten."[8]

To put it differently, for the Reformed this communication of the divine essence in begetting is not the dilation of the divine essence. Muller does not expand on the meaning of the term dilation. However, this statement is true whether we take the term dilation to be an expansion of the divine essence or as a reference to birth. The communication of

[7] Muller, *PRRD*, vol. 4, 327, quoting Polanus, *Syntagma theol*., III.v (p. 215); Amyraut et al., *Syntagma thesium theologicarum*, I.xvii.13.
[8] Ibid., quoting Bucanus, *Institutions*, i (p. 11).

essence does not involve an expansion of the divine essence. Also, it is not the birthing of one divine essence from another. In other words, in the Father's eternal communication of the divine essence to the Son, there is absolutely no change in the divine essence. And it is not as though the divine essence of the Father produces a divine essence for the Son, which would be Tritheism. No, there is one divine essence communicated without division or expansion to the Son in the begetting of the Son. This communication is part and parcel of the interpenetration (if we may say so, as Turretin puts it) between the three persons of the Trinity (otherwise known as *perichoresis*). At the same time, the Father has primacy in the Godhead. Thus, following the catholic tradition, the Reformed speak of the Father communicating the divine essence to the Son, but they do not speak in the reverse. That is, they do not say that the Son communicates the divine essence to the Father. The Son does communicate the divine essence but only to the Spirit in spiration. Thus, the Father and the Son communicate the undivided divine essence to the Holy Spirit in spiration, but the Holy Spirit does not communicate the divine essence to the Father or the Son. In this eternal communication of essence, all three persons eternally possess the same one undivided essence. That is, they completely interpenetrate one another in terms of the divine essence (*perichoresis*).

To distinguish this view from Arminius's rejection of *autotheos*, we should add one more clarification. For the Reformed, the divine essence was communicated in generation but *the divine essence was not itself generated*. Some modern Reformed theologians claim that to speak of a communication of the divine essence in begetting is to deny the teaching that Christ is *autotheos*, i.e., God of himself. However, this was not the perspective of Calvin or the Reformed orthodox, who did not believe that communication of essence involved the generation of the essence. Instead, it was Arminius who made this claim. At least this is how I take Muller's comment (in the context of this discussion) that "Arminius insisted that Christ, as God, has both his sonship and his *essence by generation*" (329, emphasis mine). In the context of Muller's discussion, Arminius does not simply appear to claim that the Father communicates his essence in the generation of the Son (for the Reformed believed this; see the quotes below). Arminius must be saying more, namely that the Son's essence is generated in generation. Thus, Arminius believed communication of essence and *autotheos* to be incompatible. As a result, he rejected *autotheos*. On the other hand, some modern Reformed theologians (agreeing with Arminius on their incompatibility) toss out communication of essence in the name of *autotheos*. In fact, some of them toss out eternal generation altogether because it is linked with communication of essence.

On this issue, Muller believes Amyraut clarifies the Reformed position. "Amyraut draws out in detail the argument that, considered according to the divine nature and essence that he has, Christ is *a se*, while considered according to the communication of that essence in the generation of his sonship, Christ is *a Patre*" (329). The Reformed are making a twofold distinction: his divine nature is *a se*, but his generation of sonship is *a Patre*. Turretin puts the matter even more precisely in his *Institutes*.

> Although the Son is from the Father, nevertheless he may be called God-of-himself (*autotheos*), not with respect to his person, but essence; not relatively as

> Son (for thus he is from the Father), but absolutely as God inasmuch as he has the divine essence existing from itself and not divided or produced from another essence (but not as having that essence from himself).[9]

Following the same Reformed line, Leigh shows succinctly how Christ can both have the divine essence communicated to him by the Father and be God of himself. "Christ as God is from himself, but if the *Deity of* Christ be considered as *in* the person of the Son, so it is from the Father. The Son in respect of his essence is from none; in respect of the manner of subsistence he is from the Father"[10] (emphases mine).

In accordance with the view that the essence communicated to the Son is the same one undivided essence of the Father, Calvin and the Reformed orthodox reject subordinationism. That is, the Father and Son possess the same essence. Thus, this essence cannot be subordinated to itself. The Son cannot be subordinated to the Father, being of the same essence with him. Though some people have used John 14:28 ("the Father is greater than I") to support subordinationism, the Reformed refer this to Christ's human nature or to his status as mediator in his whole person. For this perspective, we can also point to Hilary, Augustine, and Athanasius.

This, Muller's fourth volume, also shows how the Reformed defense of both Christ's deity and the Spirit's deity are grounded in the exegetical tradition of the day. Much of this involves the way in which the Reformed recognized similarities between different texts, otherwise known as the conflation of texts. This volume provides many exegetical insights not widely discussed at the present time. Thus, we believe that every Christian would benefit from reading the exegetical insights it contains on the deity of Christ and the Spirit. They would not only enrich their faith, but be provided with new insights into Scripture to share with Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses.

Muller also provides a helpful discussion of the procession of the Spirit. Most of the Reformed believed that John 15 taught the eternal procession of the Spirit, not simply the procession of the Spirit in time. Here, unlike eternal begetting, in which they could point to texts that identified the Son as Son before his incarnation (Rom. 8:3, Gal. 4:4), the Reformed were only able to point to texts that dealt with the Spirit's procession in time. Nonetheless, most of them believed that they texts pointed to the eternal procession of the Spirit *ad intra* as well as his procession *ad extra* in redemptive history. Thus, it would seem (in our judgment) that they consistently followed out the principle the early church had used against the Sabellians. That is, they reasoned that *the relational interactions of the Father, Son and Spirit in time reveal their internal relationships from eternity*. This may help us to see why they saw no conflict between interpreting the texts dealing with the begetting of the Son as simultaneous references to the resurrection of Christ in history. For if the Spirit's eternal procession is proved by giving forth the Spirit at Pentecost, it is no less the case that the Son's eternal begetting should be proved by the resurrection.

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[9] Turretin, *Institutes*, III. xxviii. 40.
[10] Muller, *PRRD*, vol. 4, 330, quoted from Leigh, *Treatise*, II.xvi (p. 133).

It seems to us that the above observation should also lead all who believe in the eternal divinity of Christ and the Spirit to accept their eternal begetting and procession. For if the texts dealing with begetting or procession simply deal with the relations of the Father, Son and Spirit in time, then the persons of the Trinity begin to relate to one another in time in a way that is not grounded in the way they have always related to one another for all eternity. That is, on this view, they appear to relate to one another differently with the creation of time and redemptive history. And if they relate to one another differently, then they change. As a result, the Triune God is not changeless. In this way, the rejection of eternal begetting and procession—the relegation of begetting and procession to time—denies the unchangability of the Triune God. It makes him like a creature.

The Reformed, as part of the Western tradition, also considered the Eastern Orthodox rejection of the procession of the Spirit from the Son to be in error. However, they did not judge them to be heretical on this point because they believed that the Spirit proceeds from the Father through the Son.

Dr. Muller ends this book with a final chapter that summarizes the significance of all four volumes of *PRRD* for the state of scholarship on the relationship between the Reformers and their Post-Reformation scholastic successors. He does this by looking at this question in general, then by considering each of the volumes distinctly. Following the overall thrust of his scholarship, Muller notes that there is general continuity between the Reformers and their Reformed scholastic successors. He also points out that this continuity existed within diversity. However, there was not simply diversity between the Reformers and their later counterparts. It included diversity amongst the Reformers themselves and among the Reformed scholastics as well. However, this diversity was built within a unified framework both synchronically (at the same time) and diachronically (through time). Muller points out that the Arminians and the Socinians were excluded from this consensus and even considered heretical, while the federal theologians were within this consensus. Within this discussion, Muller claims that the Saumur theologians and their hypothetical universalism were considered within the bounds of Reformed orthodoxy. Muller has promoted this position throughout his later work, and we believe it remains a blot on his scholarship that needs further correction. For though we recognize that the Saumur theologians were considered within the general pale of Reformed theology (and sometimes called by writers like Turretin “our men”), they were also excluded from the pulpit in the Swiss Reformed churches under the Helvetic Consensus (1675).

This volume is certainly a crowning achievement of this set. It is clearly worth the time invested. (We could only wish Muller would continue to add to this series.) Every pastor, theologian, historian or serious student of Scripture should be encouraged to read it. Is not the Triune God the center of our Christian faith? Then how can we neglect so glorious a subject? The wealth of material this volume contains on doctrinal precision and exegesis is immense. The exegetical insights alone are worth the price of this volume. Take a dip. Taste and see. For of him—the Triune God—and through him and to him are all things. Our resurrected life as sons in the Son, as possessors of the Spirit, beloved of the Father is but the semi-eschatological foretaste of life eternal—forever

before our Triune God. May that future life be enriched in us more and more as we contemplate the riches of his glory even now in Christ Jesus.

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Calvin on Canaan and Merit

Now Moses comes to the second matter which we have touched, which ought to be well marked: namely, that when God has helped and succored us and done more for us than we looked for, or than our wit could conceive, we must yield him his deserved glory; so as we are not besotted with pride and overweening to challenge that to ourselves which belongs only unto God—let us beware of such unthankfulness. Again, let us not imagine that God serves his turn by us in respect of any worthiness of ours, but let us understand that his choosing of us is only in respect of his own good will. We shall not find any deserving at all in ourselves in this behalf, but it is of his free mercy only which he will have us to magnify above all things.

True it is, that Moses speaks here of the land of Canaan. But if men cannot deserve [*meriter*, "merit" French text] anything [*ne . . . rien*, "nothing" French text] in this world in respect of transitory things, how shall they deserve [*meriteront-ils*, "they merit" French text] everlasting life? If I cannot win a little piece of ground, how shall I win a whole realm? So then, let us mark that of the things that are said here, we must gather a general doctrine which is, that if the children of Israel were put in possession of the land that had been promised them, not for their own righteousness sake, but through God's free goodness, it is much more reason that when we speak of the heavenly life and of the inheritance of the heavenly glory, we should not dream upon any power of our own, but acknowledge that God has uttered his righteousness and showed his goodness in his vouchsafing to choose us (John Calvin, "The Lxii Sermon of Iohn Calvin" [on Dt. 9:1-6], in *The Sermons of M. Iohn Calvin vpon the Fifth Booke of Moses called Deuteronomie* (1583/1987) 375-76; slight modernizing changes in spelling and punctuation have been made by the editor).

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THE END IN THE BEGINNING:

A BIBLICAL-THEOLOGICAL CATECHISM FOR YOUNG AND OLD

James T. Dennison, Jr.

[For several years, I have been working on a catechism which provides a survey of the inspired Scriptures from a redemptive-historical or biblical-theological point of view. The goal was to provide a succinct summary of each book of the Bible maintaining the focus on the central figure of redemptive history—our Lord Jesus Christ, eternally begotten Son of God the Father—as well as the central reality of redemptive history, namely, the grace of God communicated by God the Holy Spirit. I have decided to serialize this in *Kerux*, thus making it available to a wider audience in the hope that it may serve the church of our Savior to the edification of his saints. This is the first installment. SDG!]

Introduction

How does the Bible begin?

"In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth" (Gen. 1:1)

How does the Bible end?

"And I saw a new heavens and a new earth" (Rev. 21:1)

What is the word for the study of beginnings?

Protology

What is the word for the study of ends?

Eschatology

What is the inclusio of the Bible?

(NB: an "inclusio" is a bracket device marking the beginning and end of a work. An inclusion suggests symmetry, parallelism—rounded/completed balance.)

The protological beginning anticipates the eschatological end; the eschatological end consummates the protological beginning.

What other parallels or symmetries are there between the beginning and the end of the Bible?

A garden (Gen. 2:8; Rev. 22:1–2)

The tree of life (Gen. 2:9; Rev. 22:2)

Life with no curse or deathless life (Gen. 1:31; Rev. 21:4; 22:5)

A dwelling-with-God place (Gen. 2:15–17; Rev. 21:22; 22:3)

What is this pattern or paradigm called?

a. *Ursgeschichte* and *Endgeschichte*
b. Protology and Eschatology

These are fancy words. What do they mean?

a. The beginning of history (German: *Urgeschichte*) is like the end of history (German: *Endgeschichte*).
b. The first things (Protology) are like the last things (Eschatology)

Why does eschatology recapitulate protology?

Because the fundamental symmetry in the history of redemption displays the reflection of the end in the beginning (and vice versa: the beginning in the end). "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end" (Rev. 21:13).

Define "protology" more completely.

The study of the "first things"; the "beginning things" in the history of redemption

Define "eschatology" more completely.

The study of the "last things"; the "final things" in the history of redemption.

Is eschatology only the "last things" in order of time, i.e., the end of the world, the final judgment, heaven and hell?

No

What else does eschatology embrace?

The whole history of redemption.

Why do you say that the whole history of redemption is eschatological or under the umbrella or canopy of eschatology?

Because eschatology deals with God's own eternal Being and dimension; and God's eternal Being and dimension is over and above the whole history of redemption.

Say this another way.

Eschatology is prior to creation as God himself is prior to the creature.

Why is it important to believe that eschatology is prior to creation and not just a topic for the end of the world?

Because all that God made is oriented to the dimension he inhabits. It reflects or mirrors his glory and is intended to display his splendor and majesty.

Please illustrate this for me

The creation of the earth is like the replication of the place of God's presence. God created a place for his presence to be displayed; he places a canopy over it; he adorns it with lush and fruitful vegetation; he provides it with an abundant variety of life. In other words, the heavens and the earth (especially the garden of Eden) are a representation of the glory-presence of God in eternity.

Was this created arena the best dwelling place of God?

It was "very good" as a created order, but the eternal order of God's everlasting dwelling place is better than it is.

Was this creation then intended to be the ultimate and final expression of God's dwelling-presence?

No. This creation was to direct our eyes to the un-creation, eternal in the heavens which eye has not seen, neither has its glories entered into man's heart (nor can they ever be exhaustively described, cf. 2 Cor. 12:2–4).

Therefore, there is something prior to and greater than this world.

Yes; it is the eschatological dwelling of God—eternal in the heavens.

But we are sinners since Adam's fall. How do we attain the eschatological dwelling place of God?

By grace through faith in the Savior, Jesus Christ

What is the study of "salvation" called?

Soteriology

So, is eschatology prior to soteriology?

Yes, eternity is prior to the fall.

Is eschatology prior to protology?

Yes, eternity is prior to the creation.

Is all of Scripture from Genesis (creation) to Revelation (new creation) oriented to and related to eschatology?

Yes, eschatology is prior to and above every text from Gen. 1:1 to Rev. 22:21.

Is it important to consider the eschatological dimension or aspect of a Biblical passage?

Yes, since every verse of Scripture is underneath the eschatological umbrella/canopy, eschatology casts its shadow over the entire history of redemption.

Please give some examples of this pattern.

Prior to the creation is the eschatological new creation

Prior to the lamb of Abel is the eschatological Lamb of God

Prior to the flood of water (Noah) is the eschatological flood of fire

Prior to the covenant (Abraham) is the eschatological new covenant

Prior to the exodus (Moses) is the eschatological exodus (Jesus Christ)

Prior to the tabernacle/temple is the eschatological tabernacle/temple (Jesus Christ)

Prior to David is the eschatological David

Thus, you are suggesting that when I read my Bible, I should pay attention to the linear history (i.e., the line from Adam to Christ, from Moses to Christ, from David to Jesus, etc.).

Yes, I must read the Bible looking in two directions: forward (→) and backward (←) (on the horizon of history).

Why should I be concerned with the historical (linear/horizontal) aspect of each portion of the Bible?

Because God has created me and all mankind a being in history. In his revelation of himself, he accommodates himself to my being in time and space—drawing my story into his story. He reveals himself in history—objectively, concretely, supernaturally and transformatively.

And you are suggesting that when I read my Bible, I should pay attention to the vertical aspect (i.e., the line from God to creation, from heaven to earth, from eternity to time, etc.)

Yes, I must read the Bible in two additional directions: upward (heaven-ward ↑) and downward (earth-ward ↓).

Why should I be concerned with the eschatological (heaven-ward) aspect of each portion of the Bible?

Because God has made me for himself, even as he made all things. And where he reveals himself to his rational creatures, he invites them to come up to him—to the eschatological arena—to his very glory-presence.

Does that mean that Adam in the garden of Eden was invited to the eschatological arena?

Yes; Adam was being shown a garden replica of the garden-glory of heaven. Hence, even before his fall into sin, Adam was invited to enter a heavenly/eternal arena.

It seems then that the eschatological arena penetrates or intrudes into the temporal or historical arena?

Yes, as God reveals himself and his plan of salvation in history, so at every point the eschatological arena casts its shadow and sheds its light in history.

Would you trace this pattern of eschatological intrusion and anticipation in the books of the Bible?

Calvin on Job 41:2 [41:11]/Romans 11:35

. . . let us mark also that by these words,[1] all the righteousness of men is beaten down and it is shown us that all we can ever imagine concerning merit or deserving of works is but a drunkenness of Satan . . . ("Sermon CLVI on Job [40:20-41:25]," in *Sermons of Maister Iohn Caluin, upon the Booke of Job* [1574/1993] 735).

. . . no one has God under obligation to himself by his merits. . . Who can boast of any work of his own by which he has merited God's favour? . . . Not only do we deserve no favour from Him, but we are more than worthy of eternal death. Paul concludes that God owes us nothing on account of our corrupt and depraved nature, and also asserts that, even if man were perfect, he could bring nothing to God by which to procure His favour . . . (*Calvin's New Testament Commentaries: Epistles of Paul to the Romans and Thessalonians* [on Rom. 11:35] [1961] 8:260, 261).

[1] "Who will prevent me, and I will satisfy him?"—which is Job 41:2 in Calvin's version (p. 731) and to be identified with Job 41:11 in our modern versions which read: "Who has given to me that I should repay him?" Calvin notes (p. 734) that Paul uses this passage in Romans 11:35 which reads, in our modern versions: "Or who has first given to him [God] that it might be paid back to him [sinful man] again?"

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The Logic of Monergism and Synergism in Francis Turretin's Soteriology

Philip Tachin

Abstract

The debate about divine monergism and human synergism in soteriology needs careful logical analysis of the nature and power of sin over human nature; the power, function and relevance of divine grace in regeneration and the human response to God's purposes. In this light, the need to hear Turretin on this subject is critical in our time. For Turretin, sin destroyed the power of the human will to do any good. As such, the human will can do good (whether civil or spiritual) exclusively by God's enabling grace, apart from which it would be impossible. Therefore, it is divine monergism that causes human synergy enabling a person to perform certain functions and also to freely respond to God's offer of salvation. Monergism encompasses the entire Christian life. Apart from relying on Scriptural testimony, Turretin also considers the logical consistency of each case both in abstract and practical terms.

A. The Background to the problem of Monergism and Synergism

One of the most divisive theological issues in the Christian church today is in the area of soteriology and is concerned with whether it is more biblical and logical to subscribe to monergism or to synergism.[1] Monergism is the view that God sovereignly acts to save the sinner by his grace alone, independent of the willful cooperation of the sinner. On the other hand, synergism recognizes some native residual ability in the sinner by which one is, without the aid of God, able to cooperate with God's saving grace in the act of conversion or regeneration. These two, divine monergism and human synergism, far from being mutually exclusive are actually in harmony in the sense that the former causes the latter. The basic question upon which this paper intends to expand is whether the unregenerate person is able to apprehend the spiritual things of God and meritoriously please God so as to warrant the combination of his own efforts and God's for his salvation; or whether one depends entirely on God to effect salvation. I find Turretin's view very cogent and helpful in addressing this question for contemporary readers.

[1] This debate, predating even the Reformation, has been spreading recently in an explosive manner. Lots of views are being thrown out on the internet and in the print media. Interestingly, the lines of division are not strictly the old historical ones between Arminianism and Calvinism, but they are new ones that have emerged within Calvinism itself, drawn by some who tilt in the Arminian direction. See Dennis Bratcher, "Divine-Human Synergism in Ministry." A paper presented to the Breckenridge Conference on Clergy Preparation at http://www.crivoice.org/divhumsy.html, cited on March 23, 2012; Eric Landstrom, "The False Antithesis Between Monergism and Synergism: A Lesson from Historical Theology." http://evangelicalarminians.org, cited on March 23, 2012. Landstrom argues that labeling Arminians and Wesleyans semi-Pelagians is an insult because while Pelagianism is heresy, their own positions are not heretical (see "Semi-Pelagian or Semi-Augustinian?" Society of Evangelical Christians, posted on June 18, 2008 at http://evangelicalarminians.org/semi-pelagian-or-semi-augustinian/ and cited on July 9, 2013).

In the later part of the early church era, Pelagius was the first to believe that despite the power of sin one still retains the ability to choose whether to sin or not to sin. When one sins, it is not because of being in bondage to sin but because one has freely chosen to follow Adam's behavior when one could have done otherwise. Sin and its consequences affect Adam's posterity not because they have inherited depravity from Adam, but basically because they follow his example.[2] Pelagianism and divine monergism are antithetical.

Augustine refuted this Pelagian view by arguing for the bondage of the will after the fall. Humanity has lost its will to do any other than sin; sin has won total victory over the will. "For it was by the evil use of his free-will that man destroyed both it and himself. For, as a man who kills himself must, of course, be alive when he kills himself, but after he has killed himself ceases to live, and cannot restore himself to life; so, when man by his own free-will sinned, then sin being victorious over him, the freedom of his will was lost."[3] The church found Augustine's view to be more consistent with Scripture.

The Reformation, following Augustine, grounded its view of salvation in *sola gratia* by *sola fide*. Both Luther and Calvin condemned all teaching that the human will is able to please God.[4] The human will is free only to sin and not to respond in godliness to the gospel on its own merit. The question turns on whether divine sovereignty and human responsibility work separately or independently; whether they overlap and inform one another on equal terms of operation or whether one depends on the other. To this, Turretin's argument, which asserts the primacy of monergism over synergism, was concerned not only about being consistent with Scripture, but also about being logically consistent. For Turretin, sin in all its force presents a logical problem and its solution must similarly be logically coherent. These combined aspects of consistency with Scripture and inherent logic provide a very cogent manner of reconciling monergism and synergism, rather than setting them in tension. Turretin regards the debate as hinging on the nature of grace and spiritual death.

B. Turretin on Monergism and Synergism

I. *The problem of spiritual death*

Francis Turretin (1623-1687) was a Reformed scholastic concerned with the nature of the human free will in the context of sin. Before asking whether or not human beings are able to earn their own salvation, Turretin first asks whether the unregenerate human will is

[2] Pelagius, *Expositions of Thirteen Epistles of St. Paul: Text and Studies*, 2, ed. J. Armitage Robinson (Cambridge University Press, 1926) 45. Perhaps Aristotelian influence may have formed the background for the Pelagian view. See Aristotle, *Basic Works of Aristotle*, trans. R. McKeon, 972.

[3] Augustine, *The Enchiridion*, trans. J. H. Shaw Londonderry (Albany: Ages Digital Library, 1997) 30, 476; Letters cxlv, 2 (MPL 33:593).

[4] See Luther, *The Book of Concord*, ed. Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert, trans. Charles Arand and others (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000), Smalcald Articles 4.3.1; and Calvin on Rom. 7:14, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (Albany: Ages Digital Library, 1998) 202; *Institutes* (Albany: Ages Digital Library, 1998) 2:68-69.

"only evil or also good."[5] The distinction here is between the spiritual good, which pertains to meeting God's standards for salvation, and the non-spiritual good, which has to do simply with meeting human approval. Turretin affirms with qualifications the ability of the natural will to do things that people consider "civil" and "external moral good"; he acknowledges the "natural power or faculty of the will" that constitutes the "first power and the material principle of moral actions," which unbelievers also exhibit in works of mercy, charity, and abstinence from unethical things.[6] Yet the matter really turns on whether the human will, having been found in sin, is still capable of meritorious "spiritual and supernatural good, pleasing and acceptable to God" which is the "second power or formal principle of those actions."[7]

Though Turretin acknowledges the virtues of the unregenerate, he does not think that their works prove their free wills have any strength; for that reason, they cannot be truly good or do "properly and univocally good works as to the truth of the thing and mode of operation."[8] Such works of unbelievers may be considered relatively good from the human point of view, but they remain "splendid sins."[9] What good there is in the works of unbelievers exists only because God has first moved them to act thus and also that God attributes goodness to them; such works are not inherently good, but they are good because they begin with God and are accomplished through God's enabling.[10]

The works of the unregenerate fail the qualification of proper goodness on three grounds. First, they do not come from a pure heart of faith, and what is not of faith and without God's approval is sin, no matter its glory (Acts 15:9; Rom. 14:23; Heb. 11:6). Second, the "form or mode" of their works does not meet the requirements of God's law as per the internal obedience of the heart, which God requires of all, including unbelievers (Rom. 7:14). Third, the goal of the good works of unbelievers is not God's glory but their own glory.[11] But even as they do such works, it is only insofar as God gives them special help to do them; without such help it is impossible for them to do these works.[12] So essentially, the civil good of unbelievers is as a result of God's grace at the times that he grants such to them, as they too are under his control so as to achieve his purposes in the

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[5] Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, trans. George Musgrave Giger, ed. James T. Dennison, Jr. (Phillipsburg: P&R, 1992) 1:669.
[6] Ibid.
[7] Ibid.
[8] Ibid., 683.
[9]Turretin is borrowing Augustine's terminology here. He appeals to Augustine to strengthen his argument, *Against Julian* 4.3 [17], Fathers of the Church (=FC) 35:181; PL 44:745; *On the Proceedings of Pelagius* 34 (NPNF1 5:198-99; PL 44:341).
[10] For instance, we see in 2 Kings 5:1 that Naaman was not of Jewish background and without any known personal relationship with the God of Israel, but all his accomplished military expeditions, which required intelligence, strong will-power, skills and determination, were attributed to God's enablement rather than his own. In the entire Scripture, God's presence with his people was the enabling power for them to respond, act in situations and be faithful to him.
[11] Turretin, ibid.
[12] Ibid., 684. The fact that human beings cannot possess extraordinary gifts such as wisdom, powers and actions without the help of the gods is universal in all religions. Turretin appeals to the Greek worldview where great men like Socrates, Plato, Aristides, Scipio and Alexander were all said to have received their strengths from the gods. This fact is also true in African Traditional Religion where it is believed that people of great deeds had divine impact.

world. Turretin has consistently argued against the ability of the human will to cooperate with God without the "special help" of God: ". . . man by his own fault has contracted an inability to obey God, not in vain nor unjustly does God demand from him the obedience which he owes."[13] Such commands are "not the measure of strength, but a rule of duty. They do not teach what we are now able, but what we are bound to do; what we could formerly do and from how great a height of righteousness we have been precipitated by Adam's fall."[14] Therefore, the good deeds of unbelievers are energized by the "special help" of God rather than their natural ability. The nature of the synergism that is involved between humanity and God is not in the context of the natural ability of humanity, but of renewal and empowerment by the Holy Spirit. It is in the context of this transformed life that Paul refers to believers as "co-workers" (συνεργοί) with God (1 Cor. 3:9). But when unbelievers are able to restrain themselves from certain excess evils, it is because God's grace or the "operation of common providence by which God does not indeed cleanse and renew the nature, but restrains and represses its wickedness and corruption in some more and others less."[15]

The context of Turretin's polemics were the positions of Catholicism, Socinianism and Remonstrant Arminianism, which never distinguished between the external morality and the spiritual discernment of the things of God. They believed that if one could do the external, it is also possible to do the spiritual without the special help of God. In their postulations, they accused Calvinism of diminishing synergism. The simple question is: "Whether the unregenerate man still has such strength of free will as to be indifferent to good and evil and is able not to sin without the grace of regeneration."[16] The real accusation of Turretin against his opponents in this debate is their equal placement of "man and God in the business of salvation as partial causes."[17] Of particular note, Socinus avers: "For if in the first man, before the fall there was free will, there is no reason why he should be deprived of it on account of the fall, since neither the nature of the thing itself demands, nor the justice of God suffers it."[18] From the Socinian point of view, human free will is an essential aspect of human nature that was not meant to disappear from a person on account of the fall. More so, God being just could not have

[13] Ibid., 677.

[14] Ibid.; cf. 680. Charles Hodge follows the same argument when he says, "Notwithstanding therefore the repeated commands given in the Bible to sinners to love God with all the heart, to repent and believe the gospel, and live without sin, it remains true that the Scriptures nowhere assert or recognize the ability of fallen man to fulfill these requisitions of duty" (*Systematic Theology* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975] 2:267).

[15]Ibid., 681. Cornelius Van Til—*Introduction to Systematic Theology* (Phillipsburg: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1978) 27; *Defense of the Faith* (Phillipsburg: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1978) 194f.; *Common Grace* (Phillipsburg: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1978) 159, 174—developed this idea of common grace extensively in his works explaining the distinction between special grace that is redemptive in character as it changes and sustains unbelievers in their life-time and common grace which applies to unbelievers by God's sovereign rule of the affairs in the world. See also Greg L. Bahnsen, *Van Til's Apologetic* (Phillipsburg: P&R, 1998) 424-42 and John Frame, *Cornelius Van Til: An Analysis of His Thought* (Phillipsburg: P&R, 1995) 215-30.

[16] Ibid., 1:669.

[17] Ibid.

[18]Ibid. Turretin cites Socinus in *Praelectionis theologicae* 5 (1627) 14. See also Laelius Socinus, "Confession of Faith, 1555," in Jaroslav Pelikan and Valerie Hotchkiss, *Creeds and Confessions of Faith in the Christian Traditions* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003) 2:706-708.

removed it from humanity because that would amount to injustice on the part of God. Though Socinus acknowledges the power of sin in humanity, he nevertheless holds that humanity still retains the ability to obey the divine law.[19] This view completely ignores or takes for granted the reason for God's repeated promises to replace his people's stony hearts with a heart of flesh at the appointed time (Ezek. 11:19; 36:26). The captivity of the human will and its freedom through regeneration by the Spirit of God is clearly underscored in this metaphor. Calvin argues that when a person "has turned aside from the right way, unless God extends his hand, he will plunge himself even into the deep abyss. Hence after a man has once left God, he cannot return to him by himself."[20] While the faculty of making a choice between alternatives remains strong in a person, the will-power is extremely deficient. The Augustinian and indeed the Reformation point is not that the free will was lost or removed, as the Socinians wrongly put it, but that *it was taken captive by sin inasmuch as sin controls the whole human nature*. Turretin holds that the whole person is held in bondage rather than just one aspect. The Socinian view misses this unity of the person as affected by sin.

It is difficult for a view that affirms both monergism and absolute synergism at the same time to escape inconsistency. Such a view betrays the sincerity, integrity and power of God for our salvation, if indeed it takes seriously the position of Scripture on the devastating power of sin over human nature. The Council of Trent (6th Session, chapter 3) on the question of those who are justified through Christ states: "But though *He died for all*, yet all do not receive the benefit of His death, but those only to whom the merit of His passion is communicated."[21] On the one hand, this affirms the discrimination that is involved in the soteric work of Christ, since only those to whom the grace is "communicated" receive it; this also underscores the deliberate intention of the one communicating such grace. On the other hand, Trent also affirms a predisposing grace of God in order to help in quickening one to cooperate, but the same person can also reject the offer of grace. The inevitable question here is: who really begins the discrimination?

Subsequent Catholicism also manifests clear signs of inconsistency. While Bellarmine maintains on the one hand that "man in things pertaining to piety can do or will nothing without the special grace of God," he also avers at the same time that "man can without special help do some moral good, if no temptation presses."[22] Yet not all Catholic theologians of the time consented to this latter position of Bellarmine; many Thomists, Dominicans and Jansenists acknowledged a contrary opinion that held "the total inability of man and earnestly contending against the idol of free will."[23] Bellarmine argues that where there is no temptation, human will is able to do good. However, it makes no sense to isolate temptation in order to make room for the human will to perform any goodness, since any true goodness would be proved when confronted by temptation. Therefore,

[19] Ibid. Here Turretin mentions the Socinian, Volkelius, *De vera Religione*, 5.18 (1630) 544-49.
[20] Calvin, *Commentary on the Prophet Ezekiel* (Albany: Ages Digital Library, 1998) 361.
[21] John H. Leith, ed., *Creeds of the Churches* (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1973) 409 (emphasis Trent).
[22] Turretin, ibid., 670, citing Bellarmine, "De Gratia et Libero Arbitrio," 6.4 from *Opera* (1858) 4:438; ibid., 5.9, p. 391.
[23] Ibid.

where there is temptation, there human inability is exposed, just as where there is the law, human sinfulness is exposed.

The Remonstrants understood free will to be of indifference or *adiaphora*, not in bondage as to tilt only in one direction, but that it is able to either receive God's grace or reject it. Human free will, though affected to some extent by sin, still is able to work out its salvation in conjunction with grace.[24] They affirmed both the grace of God and human responsibility in such a way that their position involved a serious inconsistency. The entry points for monergism and synergism and the nature of their progress in the Christian life are problematic in their view. They emphasized that human beings have a native, residual ability after the fall to believe the gospel and repent unto salvation; human ability is prior to the grace of God. Therefore, it is those who use their free will to cooperate with God's prevenient grace that can receive salvation. The following articles show their inconsistency:

> 2. That the human has not saving grace of himself, nor of the working of his free will, inasmuch as in his state of apostasy and sin he can for himself and by himself think nothing that is good—nothing, that is truly good, such as saving faith is, above all else. But that it is necessary that by God, in Christ, and through his Holy Spirit he be born again and renewed in understanding, affections and will, and in all his faculties, that he may be able to understand, think, will, and perform what is truly good, according to the word of Christ, John 15:5: 'Apart from me you can do nothing.'
>
> 4. That this grace is the beginning, the progress, and the end of all good; so that even the regenerate human can neither think, will, nor effect any good, nor withstand any temptation to evil, without grace precedent (or prevenient), awakening, following, and cooperating. So that all good deeds and all movements towards good that can be conceived in thought must be ascribed to the grace of God in Christ. But with respect to the mode of operation, grace is not irresistible; for it is written of many 'that they resisted the Holy Spirit,' Acts 7 and elsewhere in many places. [25]

From the above articles the inconsistency is glaring. If on the one hand, all good deeds "must be ascribed to the grace of God in Christ" and on the other "grace is not irresistible," then grace flatly loses its power. However, the question that probably needs more clarification is the understanding of what grace means—whether it has potency for achieving its intended results or not and how we should understand what happens in Acts 7. The Arminians use this passage to argue that grace can be resisted. Turretin does not deny that the sinner can resist God or his calling, for indeed man "is not able not to resist." Rather the question turns on whether such resistance on the part of man is able to "conquer and overcome grace"; this he refutes.[26] Henry has helpfully explained the

[24] See Jacobus Arminius, *Opera Theologica* (1631) 604.
[25] Pelikan and Hotchkiss, "The Remonstrance, or The Arminian Articles, 1610," *Creeds and Confessions of Faith in the Christian Traditions*, 2:549.
[26] Turretin, 2:547.

nature of God overcoming the resistance of sinners in respect to the passage in Acts 7:51, which Arminians use to establish their case.

> They resisted the Holy Ghost striving with them by their own consciences, and would not comply with the convictions and dictates of them. God's Spirit strove with them as with the old world, but in vain; they resisted him, took part with their corruptions against their convictions, and rebelled against the light. There is that in our sinful hearts that always resists the Holy Ghost, a flesh that lusts against the Spirit, and wars against his motions; but in the hearts of God's elect, when the fullness of time comes, this resistance is overcome and overpowered, and after a struggle the throne of Christ is set up in the soul, and every thought that had exalted itself against it is brought into captivity to it, 2 Cor. x. 4, 5. That grace therefore which effects this change might more fitly be called *victorious* grace than *irresistible*.[27]

Henry's position galvanizes Turretin's view by using "victorious," a more positive concept than "irresistible." To be sure, since the resistibility of the Holy Spirit is clearly stated in Scripture, the alternative expression that Henry gives is more appropriate. This leaves room for human responsibility as well as divine monergism.

It is against these positions of the Socinians, Catholics and Remonstrants that Turretin marshals his arguments. Though these are his direct target, his elenchus also hits at Pelagianism, which is the root of Arminianism. He argues the impotency of free will on six bases: humans are slaves of sin; humans are spiritually dead; the human heart is blind and hard; man is unable to do good; everything good in human life comes from God (1 Cor. 4:7); and finally that the work of grace is God's creation activity.[28] First, he adduces the Scriptural description of humanity as being in servitude to sin: people are "under the dominion of sin" or bondage to Satan (Rom. 6:12, 14; 2 Pet. 2:19) such that no one can be "brought into liberty except by Christ, the deliverer" (Jn. 8:44). For this reason, he considers fallen humanity "by nature children of wrath" (Eph. 2:3). Against the argument that humanity serves sin not by necessity but by choice, Turretin counters that man is "held so bound by conquering and enslaving desires that although he sins most freely, still he sins necessarily and cannot help sinning."[29] The argument that human free will moves people to cooperate with God's grace is superfluous because if the human will were not dead in sin, why would there be a need for divine grace to come to its aid? The question that Jesus raised concerning the logical connection between the sick and the physician would apply here too (Matt. 8:12). The fundamental issue here is that which is clearly beyond the power of the sick to solve, yet is within the power of the physician. The presumed argument that anyone who is sick usually takes the first step by coming to the physician is dismissed by Christ, as he uses only the problem in view, rather than the details of the analogy to square up point by point the sick and the physician on the one

[27] Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible* (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1970) 6:89 (emphasis his).
[28] Turretin, 1:671-76.
[29] Ibid., 671.

hand and the sinner and God on the other. He concludes that he was the one who came to seek and save what was lost (Matt. 8:13).

Turretin's understanding is that Scripture attributes to human nature spiritual death (Eph. 2:1), which means essentially "the dissolution of union with God and the privation of holiness … and they are dead who live in the pleasures of the world (1 Tim. 5:6)."[30] The nature of this spiritual death is understood thus: "As the dead man is deprived of the life of nature and so of all sense and motion, so the sinner is destitute of the life of grace and loses all spiritual sense and motion; so that he can neither know anything true nor do anything good, any more than a dead man can bring himself to life."[31] The nature of the spiritual death of the sinner properly understood is a "total extinction of life and privation of strength" to do otherwise.[32] By the laws of nature, there is no common ground between being dead and simultaneously being alive and moving toward a particular goal; rather, a thing can be both dead and alive at the same time only in opposite directions. For instance, dead flowers can be valuable to the soil, but not to one who loves live ones. Similarly, one who is spiritually dead to the things of God (whom to know is eternal life) can only be (sinfully) alive and valuable to Satan (whom to serve is to be spiritually dead to God). Hence, while Paul acknowledges our past as being dead in sin and irresponsive to the will of God, we nevertheless actively "once walked . . . following the prince of the power of the air;" "we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and mind" (Eph. 2:2-3). The free action of the unregenerate tends only in the direction of sin, but not in the direction of righteousness. This is freedom within bondage and it is this bondage that compels the sinner to seek a Savior other than himself.[33] It is thus necessary for God himself to make us alive, raise us up, and seat us with Christ in accordance with his eternal plan (Eph. 2:5-6).

Again, Turretin argues on the nature of intellectual blindness that the mind is beclouded by sin and deprived of its original strength to properly and rightly access the things of God. Also Scripture describes the human mind using various metaphors such as *stony*. This means: "As a stone neither is a subject receptive (*dektikon*) of life nor can feel or be moved or turned or softened, but is inflexible, insensible and impenetrable; so the heart of the unregenerate hardened in sin neither possesses spiritual life nor can dispose itself to it, but is inflexible to the Spirit, insensible to the word and the judgments of God, impenetrable to grace."[34] The spiritual death involved in the unregenerate is not relative but "absolute and total," until God who promises a new heart effects the regeneration. It therefore follows that divine monergism precedes the synergy of God and man. The whole redemptive history shows that even God's people in the Old Testament, who were under the power of sin, lost their will power to turn to God but freely obeyed the stirrings of sin that caused them to be obstinate. God consistently called them to repentance and back to himself, but to no avail. The call surely presupposes their responsibility, though

[30] Ibid., 672.
[31] Ibid.
[32] Ibid.
[33] This is the point that Luther stressed during his debate with Erasmus which Calvin also followed. See Martin Luther, *The Bondage of the Will*, trans. J. I. Packer and O. R. Johnston (Westwood: Fleming H. Revell, 1957) 1-322; John Calvin, *The Bondage and Liberation of the Will* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996).
[34] Turretin, ibid., 673.

not necessarily their ability, even as the practical reality proved their slavish and willing obedience to their only master—sin. God expressed his frustration with his people a number of times (cf. Isa. 1, 5; Jer. 3-5; Hos. 4, 6; Zech. 7:12). His response to the problem of human heart is to effectually replace their stony heart with a heart of flesh (Jer. 31:33; 32:39; Ezek. 11:19; 36:26-27). This prerogative of heart transformation does not belong to humanity, but to God, who alone is the creator of the whole person and has the solution to its predicament.

In his usual style of argumentation, Turretin appeals to the following passages (Gen. 6:5, Jn. 15:5, 1 Cor. 2:14, 2 Cor. 3:5, Rom. 8:7, Matt. 7:8, Matt. 12:34 and Jn. 6:44) which speak clearly on this subject, concurring that the sinner is unable to do spiritual good. Scripture is absolute and emphatic on this issue, especially as it says the natural man "does not" and "cannot" accept the things of God or please him. The sinner "does not submit to the law of God." The reason, as stated by the use of the conjunction "for," is that "he cannot" (Rom. 8:7). The statement: "those who are in the flesh cannot please God" (Rom. 8:8) does not warrant its relative qualification because it expresses the nature of the state of affairs involved. The state of affairs in the "flesh" is weakness in contrast to the state of affairs in the "Spirit" which is power. Paul enlarges the contrast between the two categories in 1 Cor. 15:42-49 in his resurrection message.

Turretin draws attention to the fact that the whole work of grace or salvation is a work of divine creation, indeed a new creation by God. Just as the original creation of the universe was the sole work of God, so also is the new creation, which includes our conversion, resurrection, regeneration and new heart. God does not simply persuade, as the Arminians grant, but he "powerfully effects in us to will and to do."[35] But even on this account Scripture testifies that the drag of sin remains powerful, as Paul testifies in Rom. 7:15: "I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate." Turretin's understanding of this passage is that it reflects the life of Paul himself as a believer and any other believer that is in Christ. The struggle is not within an unbeliever, who could not have willed to discriminate between sin and righteousness. The Arminians, however, argue that what Paul says reflects the life of a middle state between old and new nature. However, this state cannot be substantiated in Scripture. The issue of the middle state is logically untenable, since there is no such "middle state between the regenerate and unregenerate" or between "the child of God and the child of the Devil."[36] Turretin provides further evidence that Paul is talking in terms of the present life in Christ, not his past life: "But I am carnal" (Rom. 7:14). The contrasting word δὲ ("but") is an explanation. It indicates the disparity that stands antithetically between the spiritual life that answers effectively to God in accordance with the law and the one that is incapable of doing so. The reason for such inability is Paul's being "sold into bondage to sin" (NAS). Hence, "I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate" (Rom. 7:15). All the verbs are in the present tense, active voice. Therefore, the confession of Paul is that as a believer, to will is present in him, but the power to do what he wills is not in him in the absolute sense: "For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out" (Rom.

[35] Ibid., 676.
[36] Ibid., 2:698.

7:18). If this is the case, then the power to do what God requires comes not from within man but from God. It means that the beginning of the salvation process and its continuation to the end is entirely outside the hands of the sinner, but is thoroughly superintended by God. This is the core thrust of monergism.

The logic follows: as man contributes nothing to his creation, resurrection, or regeneration, so also he contributes nothing to his conversion.[37] Creation and resurrection are activities that arise out of the attributes of deity—namely divine omnipotence and infinity. Therefore, to view the human being as able to self-create by new birth or resurrection from spiritual death is to insult the Creator-creature distinction. Monergism and synergism do not relate in redemptive work as co-equals in terms of *modus operandi*, for synergism is possible only because God's monergism causes and sustains it. For Turretin, the unregenerate mind cannot attain salvation primarily because being under the state of absolute corruption, it cannot rise to the realm of faith, since the mysteries of faith are beyond the realm of human reason alone. In addition, there is an absolute contradiction between the things of faith or God and the sinful mind.[38] This follows the contrast that Paul establishes between the "natural man" and the "spiritual man" (1 Cor. 2:14, 15).

Turretin does not believe that an unregenerate sinner is able to do anything to effect personal salvation. But he does believe that having been regenerated by the Spirit of God, the believer receives sufficient grace for progressive sanctification in all stages of spiritual glory. The nature of the power of God's grace is the ever-abiding presence of the Holy Spirit in the believer's life, so that his will is exerted in the will of the believer as one matures in faith. On this note, good works become necessary for possessing salvation. He argues: "For since the will of God is the supreme and indispensable rule of our duty, the practice of good works cannot but be considered as highly necessary (which the Lord so often and so expressly recommends and enjoins in his word)."[39] The whole plan of salvation and its actualization is the monergism of divine grace and this "grace is glory begun, as glory is grace consummated."[40] This means outside of grace nothing works, just as outside of Christ there are no salvation benefits. It is only in the context of regeneration and continuing grace that believers are charged to work out their salvation with fear and trembling, even as the apostle affirms that such work is ultimately of God (Phil. 2:12-13). The harmony of monergism and synergism is that God is the "sole cause

[37] Ibid.
[38] Ibid., 1:25, 31 (see Rom. 8:7).
[39] Ibid., 2:703.
[40] Ibid., 705. Even Wesley who came after Turretin, but followed the Arminian position with some modifications concurs: "Grace is both the beginning and end." See John Wesley, *John Wesley's Notes on the New Testament* (Albany: Ages Digital Library, 1997) 635. The problem with Wesley however, is that God only initiates human response through prevenient grace, but humans on their own always either cooperate or do not cooperate with God. This contradicts Paul's clear teaching that it is "he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil. 1:6). Paul knows that left alone, we are inclined to fall back into atheism. Similarly, when Jesus says that his duty is to lose none of those that are given to him (Jn. 6:39), he automatically removes the security of believers from their custody to his own.

of habitual conversion," while man is the "proximate and immediate" cause of his conversion.[41] This means that:

> man holds himself here, both *passively* to receive the motion of prevenient and exciting grace (for the will does not act unless acted upon) and *actively* and efficiently because he actually believes and works under God. Still thus he is said to be the cause of his own conversion that he is not such from himself, but from grace, both because *the power of believing is only from God* and because the very act of believing depends upon God himself exciting the faculty to its operation. Hence nothing can be concluded from this for the power of free will.[42]

There is a concurrence of the New Testament with the Old Testament on this—a concurrence in which the former fulfills the latter. This is the diachronic exegetical consequence of Phil. 2:13; 2 Thess. 1:11; Heb. 13:21; Jer. 31:33 and Ezek. 36:26, 27. The preeminence of divine monergism over human synergism is a recurring argument in Turretin's *Institutes*.[43]

The problem with the overall Arminian position is that God's original purpose to save for which he gives the grace could be thwarted by the human will. It means the grace of God only neutralizes the human will to act in any direction it so wishes, so that even if God wishes to save one his purpose may be defeated. One question then is why would God give grace to awaken a sinner to the defeating of his purpose? Another question is whether it is grace that regulates a person or is it a person that regulates the potency of grace in order to actualize his spiritual potentials? Another way of stating the implication of the Arminian view may be in a set of the following propositions.

1. The sinner is dead in sin and is unable to save himself.
2. God wants to save the sinner.
3. The purpose of divine grace is to save the sinner.
4. God gives the sinner grace to respond to his call.
5. The sinner rejects God's call to salvation.
6. God's purpose is defeated.

The problem with the above proposition is that it is inherently weak and inconsistent. On the other hand, it may be the case that such a position has a very weak view of sin. Probably the statement that the sinner is dead is not strictly the case; and the sinner is able to will its own way, which leads to the defeat of God's purpose. The conclusion, drawn from the foregoing premises, sharply contradicts the confession in Job 42:2: "no purpose of yours can be thwarted" (see also Ps. 138:8; 57:2; Prov. 19:21; Isa. 46:10; 55:11). But if the sinner is truly dead, then, it depends upon the integrity and power of God, who may either not have truly wanted to save or his sincerity to save is betrayed by an ultimately impotent grace. And to think of God's grace merely as functioning to neutralize the sinner's will to act in any way one pleases (especially in resisting his will

[41] Ibid., 2:523.
[42] Ibid. Emphasis mine.
[43] Ibid., 1:420, 503, 514, 548; 2:503, 523, 535, 552, 708, 712; 3:324.

to save), rather than a definite goal of saving his people is to "reduce to nothing God's almighty action."[44] To resist God's will is to sin, and if the sinner's will is regenerated but still ably resists God, it means the sinner is still under the controlling power of sin. Thus, even God's saving power cannot effectively check the power of sin. The nature of the almighty power of God would then be called into question.

II. *The meaning and logical function of grace*

The preceding argument also hinges on the concept that grace is essential for salvation because humans are totally unable to save themselves. Even Wesley, a modest Arminian who nonetheless opposed Calvinism, explains that "Grace is both the beginning and end."[45] And Luther says, "If grace depends on our cooperation then it is no longer grace."[46] This means grace is the definitive and final principle of redemption. The concept of grace must be seen in terms of both God's *mercy* and God's *special power* for the redemption of sinners. The grace of God towards the sinner, on the one hand, is his undeserving free mercy; on the other, it is his energizing and sustaining power through the Holy Spirit for the believer to continue to the end.

The instrument of this saving grace is the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the one who "creates both an awareness of sin and our need for a savior. He opens blind eyes so that unbelievers may see the truth and respond positively to it. When a person hears the gospel, the Spirit works in her heart, convincing her of the reality of Christ, and draws her to him."[47] Scripture represents the unbeliever as dead in sin so that one cannot apprehend the saving benefits of the work of Christ. Thus, it is the prerogative of the Holy Spirit to apply this redemption in an effectual manner so that the believer is empowered to live as God's adopted child. Turretin outlines the various descriptions of operative grace in the believer as established in Scripture, namely, "creation," "resurrection," "new birth," "taking away of the heart of stone," "giving of a heart of flesh," "drawing," and "giving of the Spirit;" all of which point to the "invincible and supreme power of God."[48] This view is in line with Calvin.

> Our mind has such an inclination to vanity that it can never cleave fast to the truth of God; and it has such a dullness that it is always blind to the light of God's truth. Accordingly, without the illumination of the Holy Spirit, the Word can do nothing. From this, also, it is clear that faith is much higher than human understanding. And it will not be enough for the mind to be illumined by the Spirit of God unless the heart is also strengthened and supported by his power.... In both ways, therefore, faith is a singular gift of God, both in that the mind of man is purged so as to be able to taste the truth of God and in that his heart is

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[44] Turretin, 2:532.
[45] Wesley, *John Wesley's Notes on the New Testament* (Albany: Ages Digital Library, 1997) 635. I must state here that Wesley's soteriological view is very inconsistent, but it is not the subject of our discussion here.
[46] Martin Luther, *The Bondage of the Will*, 268.
[47] Ivan Satyavrata, *The Holy Spirit: Lord and Life-Giver*, eds. David Smith and John Stott (Nottingham: Inter-Varsity, 2009) 114.
[48] Turretin, ibid.

established therein. For the Spirit is not only the initiator of faith, but increases it by degrees, until by it he leads us to the Kingdom of Heaven.[49]

Calvin's view of the dullness of the human mind is with respect to its inability to rise up to the things of God as properly required. In this respect, the Spirit becomes the only fountain of life for the believer, so that as long as he indwells a person, he empowers that person to grow unto sanctification. Sanctification cannot be progressive without the on-going work of the Holy Spirit. This is the essence of Paul's statement that believers have been "sealed" and the Holy Spirit's abiding presence is to "guarantee our inheritance" (Eph. 1:13, 14; 4:30). Again he says, "he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being" (Eph. 3:16). Here the believer is passively acted upon, as shown by the aorist infinitive passive verb "to be strengthened," which suggests the continuing and ever-abiding controlling influence of the Holy Spirit upon the believer so that the believer will continue in faith and be sanctified unto glory. The initiative is that of God. It runs the course of the believer's life in the context of the eternal plan that Paul describes in chapter 1 of Ephesians and it returns again and again throughout the book. What Paul presents here is beyond the prevenient grace that was postulated in Arminianism. In his understanding of grace, Turretin appeals to Augustine, who stood against Pelagius' view of grace, and to Calvin, who stood against Pighius.[50]

Therefore, the proper understanding of saving grace is that it is the effect of the spiritual regeneration of the sinner who was dead in sin and so incapable of responding in the direction of life; because he has been given grace, however, he is able to respond in faith to God and so be saved. Grace is properly defined within the context of sin so that in the same way that sin has "corrupted the organism of the creation, the very nature of creation," so also "grace, accordingly, is the power of God that also frees humankind inwardly, in the core of its being, from sin and presents it before God without spot or wrinkle."[51] If this definition of grace is correct, then God's purpose in saving the sinner cannot be defeated unless God is not sincere in the application of his grace to the sinner. Grace delivers the fallen nature and opposes sin.

In response to the Arminian perspective of the resistibility of the Holy Spirit, Turretin distinguishes between the call of the gospel by the word alone (which may be resisted) and the call of the gospel through the word and Spirit (which may not be resisted as the Spirit superintends both by suasion and persuasion).[52] The phrase "the word alone, which may be resisted" draws a distinction between the word alone, which is actually resisted, and the application of the word to the heart by the Holy Spirit, which is efficacious in the sinner's life. The Spirit uses the means of the word to effect the Trinity's purpose in redemption.

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[49] Calvin, *Institutes* (Albany: Ages Digital Library, 1998) 3.2.33.
[50] Turretin, 2:527-29.
[51] Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics: Sin and Salvation in Christ* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006) 3:578. See also his extensive biblical explanation of it in terms of regeneration in *Reformed Dogmatics*, 4:46-53.
[52] Turretin, 2:558.

According to the testimony of Scripture, the grace of God transforms the sinner's life from sin to righteousness and transforms one from an object of wrath to an object of grace and love (Eph. 2:3-8). Grace necessarily turns the sinner from a previous way of life that is contrary to the things of God to the very life of God. The grace of God, which is mediated through his word, accomplishes God's purposes. "The outcome of an encounter with the word of God, then, whether it is in mercy or in judgment and hardening, rests in God alone."[53] On a practical note, grace accounts for Paul's breach with his past life of antagonism to the gospel and his obedience to the gospel. He says that when grace appeared to him, he was "not disobedient to the heavenly vision" (Acts 26:19). Indeed, he could not have been otherwise because of the compelling power of the grace that appeared to him. It is also for this fact that he says "by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain" (1 Cor. 15:10). God's grace necessarily changes one to be what God wants him to be—indeed to be "illustrious and distinguished."[54]

Whatever Paul excels in doing, it does not go to his potential or actual credit, but to the grace of God that is in him (1 Cor. 15:10). So while the will is restored to do good works, "Nothing prevents us from saying that we ourselves are fitly doing what God's Spirit is doing in us, even if our will contributes nothing of itself distinct from his grace."[55] Therefore, a logically consistent soteriology would be as follows.

1. The sinner is dead in sin and is incapable of saving himself.
2. The invincible purpose of divine grace is to save the sinner.
3. God wants to save the sinner.
4. God gives the sinner grace to respond to his call.
5. The sinner accepts God's call to salvation.
6. God's purpose is realized.

The total sum of the soteriology given by Paul in Phil. 2:13 is that monergism and synergism are in harmony; the former forms the basis for the latter to be effectual. God works in us to will and to do. This means the grace of God, rather than merely neutralizing our will, produces in us only one result—namely, "to will and to work," which is the force of all the infinitives here. This working of God does not leave us in a neutral state of affairs, nor does it place us in a situation of "not to will" or "not to do," which Paul would have clearly stated as an alternative within our freedom. Rather God's grace frees us in such a way that we voluntarily and necessarily love God and choose him after he has actually chosen us (Jn. 15:16; 1 Jn. 4:10). Also, Paul is speaking to believers and not unbelievers; he tells them why they have always done so well and why they should even seek to excel—God is the fountain of their spiritual excellence.

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[53] Mark A. Seifrid, "Romans," *Commentary on the New Testament use of the Old Testament*, ed. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007) 644. The comments here are analyses of Romans 9:14, but they have relevance to our discussion.

[54] Calvin, *Commentary Upon the Epistle to Corinthians* (Albany: Ages Digital Library, 1998) 403 (1 Cor. 15:10).

[55] Ibid., *Institutes*, 2.5.15.

Conclusion

Turretin says that humanity was incapacitated at the fall in such a way that the human will cannot do anything good on its own power, whether civil or spiritual, except as God works his sovereign grace in us to act according to his will. This grace operates both in restraining and empowering unbelievers at given occasions to fulfill God's purpose and also in effectually regenerating the sinner's heart to be able to accept the gospel. And when grace is in action, it cannot be overcome by the sinner's resistance. This is not a case of arbitrary compulsion, but of good and necessary consequence to enable us to respond to his gracious offer of salvation. This being the case, our salvation is entirely God's plan, in execution and consummation. This is monergism at its core. Our response to God's salvation is all God's excellent influence, apart from which our will remains mute. This is what synergism entails. In this sense, human synergism is the result of divine monergism.

Turretin Against Merit in Sinners

. . . where sin is, there merit cannot be (. . . *nam ubi est peccatum, ibi non potest esse meritum*, 17.5.6). (Literally: " . . . for where sin is, there merit is not able to be.")

Thus men would give something to God first (contrary to Paul, Rom. 11:35) and have something which he had not received (against the same, 1 Cor. 4:7) (Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 17.5.8 [1994] 2:712-13).

Reviews

K:JNWTS 28/2 (September 2013): 49-50

D. A. Carson, *The Intolerance of Tolerance*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2012. 186 pages. Paper. ISBN: 978-0-8028-6940-1. $16.00.

I was ordained to the gospel ministry on June 27, 1956. Within that first year, I was invited by the principal of the public school to conduct a baccalaureate service for the graduating seniors. It was to be held in the school auditorium. All were required to attend. I preached from Joshua on "Choose you this day whom you will serve" (Josh. 24:15) with full implications about serving Jesus Christ, just as I would have done if I were preaching to the church. I received no criticism.

Can you imagine that happening today? Not at all. Today, you cannot preach in the school or pray there in the name of Jesus. A student is criticized if he speaks of his experience of the Christian faith or makes mention of it in a term paper. The Koran is in the library, but not the Bible. Why the change? According to D. A. Carson, it is because of a new view of tolerance that has developed in our country. And that is why he wrote this book.

In chapter 1, he tells us what he means by this new view. "The new tolerance suggests that actually accepting another's position means believing that position to be true, or at least as true as your own. We move from allowing the free expression of contrary opinions to the acceptance of all opinions; we leap from permitting the articulation of beliefs and claims with which we do not agree to asserting that all beliefs and claims are equally valid" (pp. 3-4). Chapter 1 goes on to elaborate on this definition with the brief history behind it.

Chapter 2 gives examples of this new view of tolerance in today's world. Chapter 3 expands on the history of tolerance.

Chapter 4 deals with the inconsistency of the new tolerance in claiming toleration, but at the same time condemning those who claim that their view is the only truth. "We flip back and forth between the two uses of tolerance and fail to perceive that we have done so. What is worse, these two meanings of tolerance are not absolutely disjunctive: there is a nasty area of overlap that magnificently muddies the discussion" (p. 79).

Chapter 5 relates the discussion to the church and the claims of Christian truth. Included in this discussion is the way some Christians have dumbed down the faith to accommodate others.

The purpose of chapter 6 is "to show how reflecting on a variety of moral issues shines a little more light on the issues of tolerance and intolerance" (p. 127). The main thesis is: "The new tolerance has been largely cut free from a well-articulated vision of truth and

from binding culture-wide moral standards, and thus pretends to be the ultimate arbiter in both these realms" (pp. 127-28).

Chapter 7 relates this new view of tolerance to the state. It particularly deals with democracy and human rights.

Chapter 8 concludes with giving suggestions of what we as Christians can do to counteract this new view of tolerance.

Sad to say this is not an easy book to read. The line of argument does not flow. It is interrupted by many illustrations, among other things. However, it is an important book. Might I say, it is a must read because it is dealing with a very contemporary issue facing the church. And Carson has very important things to say.

—J. Peter Vosteen

K:JNWTS 28/2 (September 2013): 50

Raymond F. Collins, *Second Corinthians*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2013. 320 pages. Paper. ISBN: 978-0-8010-3186-1. $27.99.

This is a pedestrian commentary on Paul's epistle and stands in rather stark contrast to the stimulating work Collins has done on the Thessalonian correspondence (*The Birth of the New Testament*). While the introductory and historical background matter here is adequate, it is dull and plodding. The narrative of Paul's life in the Corinthian drama is not penetrated, especially as that life mirror's the life of the crucified and risen Son of God (to whom Paul is intimately united by grace alone through faith alone such that the apostle finds himself eschatologically identified with the "Lord [who] is the Spirit"—2 Cor. 3:17). Such remarkable pneumatology should at least cause our commentator to grapple with the profundity involved, as Neil Hamilton (*The Holy Spirit and Eschatology in Paul*) and Geerhardus Vos ("The Eschatological Aspect of the Pauline Conception of the Spirit," in R. B. Gaffin, ed., *Redemptive History and Biblical Interpretation*, 91-125) have done. But no, Collins gives us a mere nine-line paragraph (pp. 88-89) with no plumbing of the depths of the matter. This alone should alert us to "nothing new here". In fact, nothing not already available in more hefty commentaries. Save your money for Furnish in the Anchor Bible set.

— James T. Dennison, Jr.

K:JNWTS 28/2 (September 2013): 51

Victor P. Hamilton, *Exodus*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2011. 752 pages. Cloth. ISBN: 978-0-8010-3180-0. $54.99.

Hamilton begins in promising and auspicious moment: he is aware of the exodus-eisodus paradigm. This, he alleges, establishes a "narrative" drama, as the title of his "Introduction" suggests (xxi). But the drama, in the commentary proper, ends up being flat and horizontal. There is no accounting for the self-disclosure of the supernatural God in Egypt, at the Reed Sea, in the Wilderness, at Sinai—no self-disclosure that is vertical or eschatological in nature. We are left with vapid abstractions about exegetical points (each chapter has exegetical notes before synthesis of the material) and very little possession of the glory-arena of the God who redeems. On the one hand, this is the horizon of most of Israel itself (hence, Hamilton cannot be totally at fault), but not all Israel is of Israel (even in Exodus). There is the eschatological drama of the supernatural plagues; the eschatological drama of the Passover night; the eschatological drama of the parting of the Sea; the eschatological drama of Moses suffused with the glory-cloud on the Mount; the eschatological drama of that same glory-cloud suffusing the tent of God dwelling with man.

Narrative theological advance (such as the "Introduction" [xxi-xxix] suggests) would have drawn us as readers into the inner sanctum of God's heavenly sanctuary which Moses enters provisionally and the greater than Moses enters eschatologically (and consummately!). It is to this arena that the Lord God of the exodus-eisodus invites his elect sons and daughters. It is an invitation to a sojourn from bondage, to water-transition between the old and the new, to a wilderness itinerary in the land in between (where there is bread out of heaven, water out of the rock and cloud and fire for direction), to a mountain where God's voice thunders his pure, holy, moral-ethical nature, to a tabernacle refuge where that same God of glory in-dwells the camp of his pilgrim people. Now *that* is a story which belongs to us as to the people of God of old. And it belongs to us because Christ lived it; Christ has made it his story; Christ has fulfilled it; Christ stands Son of his Father (Ex. 4:22; Hos. 11:1; Mt. 2:15) at the beginning and end of it *pro nobis*!

This will become the standard evangelical commentary on Exodus. It will not stimulate as B. S. Childs does. But it will not advance 768 pages of untheological, higher critical drivel as Dozeman does. But neither will it satisfy biblical theologians hungry for redemptive-historical, eschatological, horizontal and vertical narrative identification. For that, we must still wait.

— James T. Dennison, Jr.

Augustine on Grace and Debt

Did [Paul] not define grace so that he showed that it is called grace, because it is given gratuitously? After all, he said, *If it is by grace, it is not on the basis of works; otherwise, grace is no longer grace* (Rom 11:6). Hence, he also says, *For one who works recompense is not counted as a grace, but as something owed* (Rom 4:4). It is owed, then, to whoever is worthy of it. But if it is owed, it is not grace; a grace is given, but a debt is paid ("The Deeds of Pelagius," 14.33 in *The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century. Answer to the Pelagians I* [New City Press, 1997] 348)