

REFORMED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY – CHARLOTTE

**“Why Have You Forsaken Me?”: The Mutual Indwelling of Dereliction, Orthodox  
Trinitarianism, and Penal Substitution**

SUBMITTED TO DR. D. BLAIR SMITH  
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF  
ST 5150 – SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY 1: SCRIPTURE, THEOLOGY PROPER,  
ANTHROPOLOGY

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DECEMBER 3, 2020

## **“Why Have You Forsaken Me?”: The Mutual Indwelling of Dereliction, Orthodox Trinitarianism, and Penal Substitutionary Atonement**

### Introduction

“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” – these words resound on the lips of Christ in the moments before his death (Matt. 27:46; Mark 15:34). In quoting Psalm 22:1 with some of his last breaths, Christ identifies the experience described in these words with his own. What that experience was must remain a mystery to us who cannot fathom the depths of the crucifixion. Nevertheless, it is worth plumbing the depths of deeply expressive words of Christ in order to discover what meaning we can.

Jürgen Moltman has erroneously taken these words as the foundation for his doctrine of the Trinity. Others have used this text to support the doctrine of Penal Substitutionary Atonement (PSA). Concerns to defend an orthodox doctrine of the Trinity has led still others to lump defenders of PSA in with the likes of Moltman. The affect of this is to tie PSA to unorthodoxy, and thus remove the plausibility of the former due to the clear heterodox nature of the latter. In this essay, we argue that one can read the cry of dereliction in such a way that both maintains orthodox trinitarianism and finds evidence in it for PSA. To this end, we first do some preliminary work untangling Moltman’s thought from Leon Morris and other PSA defenders, showing that while Morris cites Moltman approvingly, he does so to defend PSA and not Moltman’s trinitarian theology. This leaves open the question of whether or not a view of the cry of dereliction that sees in it evidence for PSA can be maintained alongside of a view that maintains the unity of the Trinity. We show that such a combination is possible by studying John Calvin and Francis Turretin’s treatment of the cry of dereliction. We conclude with the consideration that Reformed scholars today would do well to hone their trinitarian theology and

be careful with their words, even as they uphold PSA. The result of this would be that future generations of pastors would preach a triune gospel, within which lies the mystery of Christ's dereliction upon the cross.

Moltman and Morris: Untangling PSA and Divine Abandonment

### Jürgen Moltman

Jürgen Moltman has developed a radical understanding of Trinity which finds its basis in the cry of dereliction. He claims that “the death of Jesus on the cross is the *centre* of all Christian theology... All Christian statements about God, about creation, about sin and death have their focal point in the crucified Christ.”<sup>1</sup> This is more than a statement about the significance of Christ’s death. The cross is the basis for how we must understand God, and specifically Christ as forsaken by God on the cross. For Moltman, rather than explaining the cry of dereliction through the context of Psalm 22:1, Psalm 22:1 must be explained by the context of the cross.<sup>2</sup> “My God” is more than the covenant God of Israel: He is God the Father, intimately related to Jesus. Likewise “me” is not “the righteous one” but Jesus, God the Son.<sup>3</sup> On the cross, Jesus really asks “My God, why hast thou forsaken *thyself*? ”<sup>4</sup> And this is not perceived forsakenness. This is genuine “abandonment on the cross which separates the Son from the Father... [and] takes place within God himself; it is *stasis* within God—‘God against God.’ ”<sup>5</sup> There is true “enmity” between the Father and the Son.<sup>6</sup> The Son must be understood through the lens of this “unique abandonment” and “complete abandonment by God” on the cross.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Jürgen Moltman, *The Crucified God*, trans. R. A. Wilson and John Bowden (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 204.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 150.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 151. Emphasis original.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 151–52. Emphasis original.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 152.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 149, 276.

This suffering of abandonment reveals the eternal triune God as well as a suffering God. We are shown that “The suffering of love does not only affect the redeeming acts of God outwards; it also affects the trinitarian fellowship in God himself… the extra-trinitarian suffering and the inner-trinitarian suffering correspond.”<sup>8</sup> God is a suffering God. He suffers in Himself and “takes men and women seriously to the point of suffering with them in their struggles and of being wounded in his love because of their sins.”<sup>9</sup> This is “God’s eternal nature:”<sup>10</sup> “his very being is love and love must suffer.”<sup>11</sup> This is not something God chooses to do. God is “powerless to change it, for his power consists in suffering in love.”<sup>12</sup> God’s willingness to suffer abandonment within himself thus reveals to us his love for us: “God allows himself to be forced out. God suffers, God allows himself to be crucified and is crucified, and in this consummates his unconditional love that is so full of hope.”<sup>13</sup> Moltman goes so far as to say “God has made this death part of his life.”<sup>14</sup>

We will return to address Moltman’s trinitarian theology when we discuss an orthodox understanding of the cry of dereliction. Here we simply wish to sum up some of the heterodoxical components of his theology of dereliction. His trinitarian theology reflects “a radical social trinitarian approach which begins with three persons and works from that toward unity.”<sup>15</sup> Moltman claims that with the revelation of biblical history as the starting point of

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<sup>8</sup> Jürgen Moltman, *The Trinity and the Kingdom*, trans. Margaret Kohl (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc., 1981), 24–5.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 25–6.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 132.

<sup>11</sup> Robert Letham, *The Holy Trinity: In Scripture, History, Theology, and Worship* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing Company, 2004), 300.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 303.

<sup>13</sup> Moltman, *Crucified God*, 248.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 254.

<sup>15</sup> Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, “The Trinitarian Doctrines of Jürgen Moltmann and Wolfhart Pannenberg in the Context of Contemporary Discussion,” in *The Cambridge Companion to the Trinity*, ed. Peter C. Phan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 228.

theology, “the unity of the three divine Persons [is] the problem” that we must solve.<sup>16</sup> This approach to the Trinity makes sense of his understanding of the cry of dereliction. If the question of unity must be explained instead of the question of trinity, then we must read the biblical text and give the grant relational space between Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Father and Son on the cross are not so united that forsakenness is a problem. Rather, they are so distinct that non-forsakenness is a problem.

Divine impassibility also comes under fire in Moltman’s doctrine of God. God, for Moltman, not only can suffer, but must. “Classical Christian theism was heavily influenced by Greek notions such as impassibility, and so for over a millennia our “understanding of God developed in abstraction from the gospel,” which at its center presents us with a crucified God.<sup>17</sup> Many have risen to combat Moltman’s argument that a loving God requires a suffering God, and it is not in the purview of this essay to treat this matter fully.<sup>18</sup> We only wish to note the logical conclusion of Moltman’s suffering God is a God who is affected by history. For Moltman, God is God as He appears in history, as he is revealed on the cross. He grounds his doctrine of the Trinity “externally, in the field of historical events.”<sup>19</sup> If Father and Son are ruptured on the cross, the constitution of God has in some way changed as a result of an historical event. The resurrection of Christ then “sheds its light not only forwards, into God’s future... but also

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<sup>16</sup> Moltman, *Trinity*, 149.

<sup>17</sup> Mark D Thompson, “From the Trinity to the Cross,” *The Reformed Theological Review* 63, no. 1 (April 2004): 17. While Thompson is not discussing Moltman’s views here, his words adequately sum up Moltman’s view. For arguments against the Hellenization of Classical Christian Theism from a historical perspective, see Paul L. Gavrilyuk, *The Suffering of the Impassible God: The Dialectics of Patristic Thought*, O ECS (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).

<sup>18</sup> For an excellent defense of God’s impassibility, see Mark Stephen Smith, “Only the Non-Suffering God Can Help’: Recovering the Glory of Divine Impassibility,” *Churchman* 126, no. 2 (2012): 147–162. He shows that God’s love does not require suffering on his part; in fact, “Our love is marked by suffering because our love is not God’s” (155). Moltman’s misunderstanding of God’s love makes God like us, resulting in “sub-biblical idolatry” (161).

<sup>19</sup> Scott R. Swain, “Divine Trinity,” in *Christian Dogmatics: Reformed Theology for the Church Catholic*, ed. Michael Allen and Scott R. Swain (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2016), 79.

*backwards*, into the mystery of the suffering and death of the exalted Lord.”<sup>20</sup> While God’s impassibility and imutability will not be analyzed further in this essay, it is mentioned here to establish the radical and heterodox nature of Moltman’s doctrine of God.

### **Leon Morris**

While Moltman’s trinitarian theology is radical, he seems to have found an unlikely supporter in biblical scholar Leon Morris,<sup>21</sup> who cites him favorably in his commentary on Matthew as he discusses Matt. 27:46.<sup>22</sup> This has lead Thomas H. McCall to lump Morris in with those whose understanding of the cry of dereliction is that

Jesus cries out in despair because God has forsaken him completely. God has turned away from Jesus because Jesus has “become sin” and now bears the wrath of the Father. Jesus has been cursed by his Father. The eternal communion between the Father and the Son has now been broken. We now see ‘God against God.’ And amazingly, it is this event that *defines* God, that gives the triune God his own being and life.<sup>23</sup>

Morris is a premier defender of PSA. His citation of Moltman immediately follows these words: “it is better to face the words [of the cry of dereliction] honestly and to accept the fact that this was part of the putting away of sin.”<sup>24</sup> While Morris cites Moltman in support of this statement, the quote from Moltman in context does not argue for Christ’s sin-bearing. Always in view is the sheer abandonment of the Son by the Father. Even when Moltman discusses texts one commonly used in favor of PSA (2 Cor. 5:21; Gal. 3:13), he notes the “stronger terms” of Paul’s language,

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<sup>20</sup> Moltman, *Crucified God*, 180.

<sup>21</sup> Thomas H. McCall, *Forsaken: The Trinity and the Cross, and Why It Matters* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2012), 18–22, mentions several biblical commentators who in his view are influenced by Moltman’s theology. We focus our attention on Morris because of the work he has done defending PSA. See Leon Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdman Publishing Co., 1965), 301.

<sup>22</sup> Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1992), 721, footnote 90. The citation is from Moltman, *Crucified God*, 149: “Not until we understand his abandonment by the God and Father whose imminence and closeness he had proclaimed in a unique, gracious and festive way, can we understand what was distinctive about his death. Just as there was a unique fellowship with God in his life and preaching, so in his death there was a unique abandonment by God.”

<sup>23</sup> McCall, *Forsaken*, 22.

<sup>24</sup> Morris, *Matthew*, 721.

but returns to discuss atonement only in terms of “the total, inextricable abandonment of Jesus by his God and Father.”<sup>25</sup> It is “godforsakenness,” not Christ’s sin bearing, that justifies the godless; it is in “the infinite grief of love” where “The Son suffers dying, [and] the Father suffers the death of the Son” that we find life.<sup>26</sup>

Morris’ citation of Moltman to defend the Son’s sin-bearing is a misguided step. But does Morris adhere to Moltman’s trinitarian theology? McCall assumes that Morris does. When we read Morris, we find him saying “it seems that... the hitherto unbroken communion between the Father and the Son was mysteriously broken.”<sup>27</sup> Morris wishes to leave godforsakenness on the table because he finds that the text itself necessitates such a reading, even if “we do not understand it fully.”<sup>28</sup> But to what extent does Morris hold to godforsakenness? Elsewhere, Morris indicates his caution in approaching this cry:

The words raise difficult problems not only with regard to the atonement but also concerning our Lord’s Person and the doctrine of the Trinity. I find this ‘an hard saying.’ Frankly, from some points of view, I would find the situation much more tolerable if these words did not stand in the record. But they are there, and I see no merit in attempting to empty them of their force.<sup>29</sup>

With Moltman, Morris desires to adequately convey the force of the text, which he believes necessitates some level of godforsakenness. For Morris, this does not lie in the necessary suffering nature of God, but because it is “So terrible... to bear the sin of the world... Sin separates from God (Is. 59:2), and so it would seem does sin-bearing.”<sup>30</sup> Morris makes clear, however, that the separation of Christ from the Father “must be held in such a way as not to obscure that other truth that the unity of the Trinity is unbroken and unbreakable. No one wants

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<sup>25</sup> Moltman, *Crucified God*, 242.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 242–43.

<sup>27</sup> Morris, *Matthew*, 721–22.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 722.

<sup>29</sup> Leon Morris, *The Cross in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1965), 44.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 48.

to speak of a rupture within the depths of the divine Being.”<sup>31</sup> Morris draws the line between Christ being separated from the Father in some real, mysterious sense, and an intra-trinitarian division, such as we see in Moltman. McCall is right to call out Morris’ unfortunate and clumsy citation of Moltman, as well as his doubt “that Jesus intended *any* reference to Psalm 22”.<sup>32</sup> The language of “broken” communion between Father and Son in Morris should also be used cautiously.<sup>33</sup> However, the claim that Morris is one of those who “pits God against God” is unfair, and does not acknowledge Morris’ cautious approach.<sup>34</sup>

McCall, in the fuller quote above, conflates two different groups of people: those who create a division within the Trinity and those who argue that Christ was made sin for us. For McCall and others,<sup>35</sup> this conflation is necessary. Orthodox trinitarian theology cannot be upheld if Christ bears the wrath of God. On the side of PSA defenders there is a desire to uphold the text of scripture and allow for greater tensions within our doctrine of the Trinity. On the side of McCall and others there is the desire to uphold the classical doctrine of the Trinity and allow for greater breadth in our interpretation of scripture. In what follows, we will show that one may hold to a doctrine of dereliction that both maintains the unity of God and PSA.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 49.

<sup>32</sup> McCall, *Forsaken*, 21. Morris, *Matthew*, 721, argues that if Jesus quoted all of Psalm 22 in order to bring comfort to those around him and to himself, “any other verse in the whole psalm would convey the meaning better than those Jesus actually quotes... indeed, he may not have been quoting at all. Many religious people express their thoughts in the language of Scripture.” This last part is Morris’ weakest point. Even if it is just the language of scripture, one might still consider this a quotation of scripture that comes to Jesus.

<sup>33</sup> Morris, *Matthew*, 722.

<sup>34</sup> McCall, *Forsaken*, 22.

<sup>35</sup> Fleming Rutledge, *The Crucifixion: Understanding the Death of Jesus Christ* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2015), 488, finds that PSA leads to the errors of “separating the Father from the Son and suggesting a change in the Father.”

<sup>36</sup> It should be noted here that even if we do not find warrant in relating PSA to the cry of dereliction, the doctrine still has scriptural warrant. Steve Jeffery, Michael Ovey, and Andrew Sach, *Pierced for Our Transgressions: Rediscovering the Glory of Penal Substitution* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2007), in their section “the biblical foundations for penal substitution” list eight other passages besides Mark’s cry of dereliction. Crucial to this list is Isaiah 53, which perhaps holds the strongest argument for PSA.

## PSA, the Cry of Dereliction, and the Unity of God

Defenders of PSA have not always been up to the task of defending PSA from a robustly theological standpoint, opting instead to argue from the ground of biblical interpretation. When answering objections to PSA, Steve Jeffery, Michael Ovey, and Andrew Sach respond to the objection concerning the validity of the Father punishing the Son by saying more or less, “the Father can punish the Son because the Bible says so.”<sup>37</sup> While the biblical evidence must be a significant part of the answer to this objection, the authors punt on the theological task of making sense how the Father can punish the Son without an intra-trinitarian rift developing. Work should be done at this point in order to show theologians that PSA defenders are not mere bibliacists.<sup>38</sup> In fact, looking to the reformation, we find both John Calvin and Francis Turretin reading the cry of dereliction in a way that maintains unity within the trinity while arguing for a blossoming doctrine of PSA.

### John Calvin

Calvin addresses the cry of dereliction in his discussion of the descent clause in the Apostles’ Creed.<sup>39</sup> Calvin asserts that “He descended into hell” refers to Christ undergoing “the severity of God’s vengeance, to appease his wrath and satisfy his just judgment.”<sup>40</sup> Quoting Isaiah 53:5, he argues the words mean “that Christ was put in place of evildoers as surety and pledge—submitting himself even as the accused—to bear and suffer all the punishments that

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 281.

<sup>38</sup> In defense of them, when discussing the cry of dereliction in Mark, they acknowledge in a footnote that “care is needed... and a theologically nuanced exposition would need to avoid suggesting that God the Father was no longer ‘there’ at Calvary... Rather, the language of ‘abandonment’ or ‘forsakenness’ is a metaphorical way of referring to divine judgment.” We only suggest that this content would not be left only in a footnote. Ibid., 72, footnote 93.

<sup>39</sup> John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles, vol. 1, LCC 20 (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1967), 512–520.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 1:515.

they ought to have sustained.”<sup>41</sup> Here already we see that Calvin asserts a doctrine of PSA, even setting PSA at the heart of the most ancient Christian creed.<sup>42</sup> What’s interesting is that Calvin combines PSA and a *Christus Victor*-like view. He seamlessly moves from saying that Christ “experienced all the signs of a wrathful and avenging God” to saying that by this “death has been overcome” and with it Christ has conquered “that fear which by nature continually torments and oppresses all mortals.” Christ defeated this fear of death “only by fighting it.”<sup>43</sup> We find harmony between the two views which is not commonly seen today.

Calvin cites Matt. 27:46 as evidence of his view, saying that “no more terrible abyss can be conceived than to feel yourself forsaken and estranged from God; and when you call upon him, not to be heard.”<sup>44</sup> This language looks similar to that of Morris. Yet Calvin maintains a degree of separation between what Christ feels and reality. Christ *feels* forsaken and estranged, but Calvin never says that he is forsaken or estranged. For Christ, “It is *as if* God himself had plotted [his] ruin,” though this is not reflective of reality.<sup>45</sup> Calvin disagrees with those who argue that Christ is only expressing the godforsakenness of others,<sup>46</sup> because it does not do justice to the biblical text: “This [view] is not at all probable, for his words clearly were drawn forth from anguish deep within his heart.”<sup>47</sup> Yet at this point, he clarifies that he is not suggesting that God “was ever inimical or angry toward” Christ, because it is inconceivable that God could

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 1:515–16.

<sup>42</sup> We see Calvin’s impact upon this reading of the creed when we look at later reformed confessions. The Heidelberg Catechism, for instance, claims that the descent clause refers to the “inexpressible anguish, pains, terrors, and hellish agonies, in which [Jesus] was plunged during all His sufferings, but especially on the cross” (Q&A 44). The scriptures cited for this are Matt. 27:46 and Isaiah 53:10.

<sup>43</sup> Calvin, *Institutes*, 1:517.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 1:516.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid. Emphasis added.

<sup>46</sup> This is the view of Aquinas, among others. See Bruce D. Marshall, “The Dereliction of Christ and the Impassibility of God,” in *Divine Impassibility and the Mystery of Human Suffering*, ed. James F. Keating and Thomas Joseph White O.P. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2009), 264–65.

<sup>47</sup> Calvin, *Institutes*, 1:517.

be angry with his beloved Son.<sup>48</sup> The “divine power of his Spirit remained hidden for a moment to give place to weakness of flesh,” but both natures remain united,<sup>49</sup> and Christ remained united to God, such that he could still call him *my God*.<sup>50</sup> Calvin describes the dereliction in terms of Christ really bearing God’s wrath, but regarding the trinitarian relations, he says little except that the Father is not truly at odds with the Son. The apparent paradox of Christ’s sinlessness on the one side and his suffering for sinners is best answered by looking to “the divine perfection of his person.”<sup>51</sup>

### Francis Turretin

In *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, Turretin addresses the dereliction under the topic of “The Person and State of Christ.”<sup>52</sup> After arguing that Christ suffered both in body and soul, he turns his attention to discussing “The punishment of desertion, suffered by Christ (of which he complained, Mt. 27:46).”<sup>53</sup> We find at the very beginning Turretin likewise describing the dereliction with penal language. The dereliction was not suffered in his body, but on his soul “from a most oppressive sense of God’s wrath resting upon him on account of our sins.”<sup>54</sup>

After making clear its penal nature, Turretin “makes a precise distinction of his own, between the aspects of Jesus’ relationship with the Father which are involved with the dereliction and those that are not.”<sup>55</sup> Christ’s desertion is not “absolute, total and eternal... not in respect of

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Lucas W Sharley, “Calvin and Turretin’s Views of the Trinity in the Dereliction,” *The Reformed Theological Review* 75, no. 1 (April 2016): 25: “This conveys a sense of Christ’s human nature becoming temporarily ascendant over his divine nature. Calvin cannot mean a change in the essential union of the two natures...Calvin must therefore be discussing a change in the human nature’s experience of union with the divine nature; a concealment of the divine nature’s resources from the human nature’s experience.”

<sup>50</sup> Calvin, *Institutes*, 1:519–20.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 1:520; Sharley, “Calvin and Turretin,” 22: “Christ can feel deserted without disobeying God, due to his incorruptibility as the son of God.”

<sup>52</sup> Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, ed. James T. Dennison Jr., trans. George Musgrave Giger, vol. 2 (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing Company, 1994), 271.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 2:354.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Sharley, “Calvin and Turretin,” 23.

the union of nature<sup>56</sup>... or of the union of grace and holiness... or of communion and protection ... nor was he ever left alone.”<sup>57</sup> Turretin parenthetically explains each negation: only demons and the reprobate experience “absolute, total and eternal” separation; Christ’s divine and human natures were never separated; Christ continued blameless and pure even as he suffered for sin; God “was always at his right hand (Ps. 110:5).” Turretin further claims that the dereliction was “not as to a dissolution of union.”<sup>58</sup> This long list protects an orthodox understanding of the Trinity. The separation was not total, so the Son was never separated from the other members of the Trinity. Christ remained both human and divine in this separation, perfect in his godhood, in unbroken fellowship with Father and Holy Spirit.

When explaining what the dereliction does mean, Turretin says it was “temporal and relative” in comparison to Christ’s usual experience of God’s presence. God suspended “for a little while the favorable presence of grace and the influx of consolation and happiness that he might be able to suffer all the punishment due to us.”<sup>59</sup> Christ lacked a “sense of the divine love, intercepted by the sense of the divine wrath and vengeance resting upon him.” Even here, this lost sense of God’s love does not amount to “a real privation or extinction of it.”<sup>60</sup> Turretin emphasizes what the dereliction does not mean throughout this section. He does so to maintain his ties with the Christian tradition of the past.

### Conclusion

An orthodox expression of trinitarianism is possible alongside a penal understanding of the cry of dereliction. Turretin especially is careful to maintain proper trinitarian distinctions,

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<sup>56</sup> This in keeping with scholastic theologians such as Peter Lombard, *Peter Lombard, The Sentences, Book 3: On the Incarnation of the Word*, trans. Giulio Silano, vol. 3, MST 45 (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2008), 89.

<sup>57</sup> Turretin, *Institutes*, 2:354.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

even more so than Calvin. Calvin was urged by the text to assert the truth of Christ's dereliction; for Turretin the text remains the guiding light, but his style is more composed, as he addresses potential trinitarian concerns. Doing this brings him more clearly in line with classical formulations of the doctrine of the trinity, while still asserting the penal force of the text. This is the approach so often missing in modern proponents of PSA that we wish would be developed. The doctrine might flourish, if more time and attention were taken to ensure that one's expression of the doctrine does not rub up against millennia of theologizing in the Christian Church. The Biblical nature of Penal Substitutionary Atonement must be maintained, but so must the doctrine of the Trinity. Moltman held to neither. Morris held both, but held the latter sloppily. The Reformed tradition has admirable examples to follow both in Calvin and in Turretin, and we might say that among the two of them, Turretin is to be especially preferred.

### **Strengthening the Bond between PSA and Trinitarian Theology**

In Reformed circles there is a tendency to assert the dereliction of the Son in ways that approximate Calvin more than Turretin.<sup>61</sup> For example, John M. Frame says, "At the moment of death, indeed, [the Son] was, in some mysterious way, even estranged from his Father (Mark 15:34)."<sup>62</sup> Such a statement conveys the force of the prooftext, but often leads to distrust in others, because the trinitarian implications have not been developed. In Frame's case, it seems that the tension can simply be relieved by shouting "*Circumincessio!*" (or "*Perichoresis!*") and letting the mystery of God solve things.<sup>63</sup> While it is important to leave healthy room for mystery

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<sup>61</sup> We do not claim that Calvin is wanting in his treatment of the dereliction. His purposes and style are different. Neither do we claim that there is no place for exhaustive treatments of the biblical case for PSA. This is simply a call for more scholars to integrate their discussion of PSA more holistically into their trinitarian theology.

<sup>62</sup> John M. Frame, *The Doctrine of God* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing Company, 2002), 694.

<sup>63</sup> For an analysis of Frame which discusses his use of *circumincessio* and touches on the cry of dereliction see Timothy E. Miller, *The Triune God of Unity in Diversity: An Analysis of Perspectivalism, the Trinitarian Theological Method of John Frame and Vern Poythress*, RAD (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing Company, 2017), 145–87, especially 160–61.

in our discussions of the Trinity, as well as our discussion of the crucifixion, these statements would be better received by doing some careful theologizing.

Gerald Bray bridges the gap between PSA and orthodox trinitarianism in his discussion of the cry of dereliction with the requisite nuance:

In dying for us, Jesus took on himself the curse of sin, which separated him from the Father, who cannot tolerate the presence of evil in his sight. Yet, abandoned as he apparently was, the Son was still able to call out to his Father because the relationship between them was deeper than anything sin could do to destroy it. At no point did the Father renounce the personal link that he had to his Son; on the contrary, it was the existence of that link and its underlying immutability that made it possible for him to punish the Son's human body, which he freely offered as a sacrifice for our sin.<sup>64</sup>

Here we have all the components found in Turretin. The penal nature of the dereliction is asserted; Christ's abandonment is apparent on one level, yet his union with the Father remains ultimately unbroken. This requires a certain level of thoroughness and carefulness. The Reformed tradition is not without such defenders.<sup>65</sup> In a day when academic specialization has increased, it is reasonable to expect that finding masters both of the biblical languages and of the history of theology would be difficult. It is, however, a worthwhile pursuit, especially as it will affect preachers. If they read and learn from careful teachers, “preachers who (rightly) seek to emphasise the penal forsakenness of the Cross should take care not to lapse into serious doctrinal error by construing this forsakenness as an intra-Trinitarian rupture.”<sup>66</sup> The cry of dereliction should not lead to us over-emphasizing or distorting the fury of Father’s wrath against the Son. Instead this trinitarian mystery of a penal substitutionary cry of dereliction should lead us to worship, and with Calvin to earnestly consider “what it is or means that we have been redeemed

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<sup>64</sup> Gerald Bray, *God Is Love: A Biblical and Systematic Theology* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 188. We cannot help but observe that Bray is an Anglican. From our personal experience, it is our Anglo-Catholic friend with greater awareness of patristic and medieval theology who finds PSA a potential threat to trinitarian orthodoxy.

<sup>65</sup> See Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics, Volume 3: Sin and Salvation in Christ*, ed. John Bolt, trans. John Vriend, vol. 3 (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 388–391.

<sup>66</sup> Smith, “Only the Non-Suffering God,” 157.

from God's judgment... this is our wisdom: duly to feel how much our salvation cost the Son of God.”<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Calvin, *Institutes*, 1:519.

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