

Against Eternal Submission: Changing the Doctrine of the Trinity Endangers the Doctrine of Salvation and Women

D. GLENN BUTNER JR.

Etienne Gilson spoke of medieval theology as an attempt to build great “cathedrals of the mind,” mental constructions meant to bring glory to God and to inspire worship as soaring stone cathedrals across Europe have since the same time period. Like any architectural achievement, these mental cathedrals brought together the many pieces of Christian doctrine into coherent and often beautiful structures of thought, building idea upon idea until great theological and philosophical systems emerged from scriptural foundations. This architectural analogy implies something important—it is rarely possible to shift the ground floor of a building without the entirety of the construct tumbling down. Only with great caution and preparation, whereby new supports are carefully constructed before the old are removed, can such a change go smoothly. Unfortunately, evangelical theology finds itself today in a situation where a great shift in a foundational doctrine of Christian theology has occurred—in the doctrine of the Trinity. This shift threatens several important Christian teachings and compromises the basic orientation of Christian ethics. As complementarian theologians increasingly speak of the eternal functional subordination of the Son (hereafter EFS), they move a central pillar of the cathedral of Christian doctrine, unaware that such a change could bring down the entire edifice of Christian theology.

With this situation in mind, this article will not focus on direct reasons why EFS is a destructive articulation of the doctrine of the Trinity, though I believe it certainly is, nor will it primarily explain why the Trinity is a poor analogy for human or gender relationships, though again I believe that it is. Rather, I will seek to explain how moving the foundational doctrine of the Trinity leaves the doctrine of salvation (atonement) without structural integrity—to continue the cathedral metaphor. But the problem does not stop here. When noted complementarians shift the doctrine of the Trinity by teaching the eternal submission of the Son, they foster a basic ethical orientation that is contrary to the biblical perspective and potentially harmful to Christian women. To put the matter as clearly as I know how, EFS eliminates the theological understanding preserved in traditional understandings of salvation (specifically what I will call transactional atonement theory), and it undermines the moral perspective within which such traditional theories are properly rooted in the goodness of God as revealed in the Bible.

Theories on the Atonement and the Trinity

Several key terms must be explained before the argument can unfold. First, EFS is the name by which we classify the argument that the Son eternally submits to the Father in obedience to the Father’s will as a form of functional subordination. This subordination is called “functional” because those who affirm EFS claim that the Father and Son are still equal in power, glory, and nature, so the Son is only subordinate in role. This formula intentionally parallels the argument by some complementarians that man and woman are equal in worth but called to differing roles—including that women are, through the whole of life,

submissive to men. For some theologians, EFS serves as the eternal basis for distinguishing between the persons of the Trinity in contrast to more traditional accounts of eternal generation (how the Son proceeds from the Father) and spiration (how the Spirit proceeds from the Father).¹ For others, eternal submission supplements such traditional accounts of procession² that emphasize the “distinguishing characteristics related to origin” to explain the “active expression” of the “distinguishing personal characteristics” of the Father, Son, and Spirit.³ However, all advocates of EFS share the belief that the Son’s submission to the Father in the divine economy (the term theologians typically use to speak of God’s work in creation and redemption) points back to the Son’s eternal submission within the immanent Trinity (the term used to describe the relational life of the Trinity that exists apart from any reference to their work in creation or redemption). Nearly uniformly, advocates of EFS use the Trinity as an illustration of the relations between husband and wife, where wives should submit to husbands as the Son submits to the Father.⁴ In Bruce Ware’s words, egalitarianism has “chafed at the very nature of God himself.”⁵ What seems to be an obscure debate over the eternal relations within the Trinity in fact has dramatic consequences for the ways that some complementarians argue against egalitarianism.

Second, I need to distinguish between various theories of atonement, which can be classified as either cosmic, revelatory, or transactional. Cosmic theories of atonement emphasize how Christ’s work brings about some form of change for the entirety of the created order. For example, the “classical type” of atonement presented in Gustaf Aulén’s *Christus Victor* is a cosmic model insofar as it centers the Son’s victory over powers of evil, with the cosmic significance of initiating the eternal dominion of God.⁶ Revelatory models of the atonement emphasize the manner in which Christ’s death reveals something about God or about humanity. Revelatory models include Peter Abelard’s exemplary model, with its emphasis on how Christ’s death reveals the love of God that justifies us,⁷ or Hugo Grotius’s emphasis on how Christ’s death manifests the justice of God in its condemnation of sin.⁸ Transactional models highlight the manner in which Christ’s death was an exchange between the Son and the Father resulting in salvation. This essay will focus on transactional theories of atonement, so I will explain the two predominant models in greater depth before moving to explain how EFS undermines these theories with harmful ethical consequences, especially for Christian women.

Anselm of Canterbury and the Satisfaction Theory of Atonement

Anselm of Canterbury’s *Cur Deus Homo* is a theological text with tremendous impact on the development of systematic theology in the West and its emphasis on transactional theories of atonement.⁹ Writing to explain the basis for the incarnation and the need for the crucifixion, Anselm also manages to develop a sophisticated treatment of creation, providence, Christology,

hamartiology (the doctrine of sin), etc. Two dimensions of Anselm's thought are particularly important for understanding his specific treatment of the atonement. First, Anselm draws on Augustinian themes to understand God as the one who directs the universe according to the divine will (that is, as *iustissimus ordinator*) or, so that there is a certain rectitude or, to use Alister McGrath's summary, the "basic God-given order of creation."¹⁰ Simply put, creation is designed to exist in harmony with the divine will. Justice (*iustitia*) in Anselm's words, thus becomes a "rectitude of will served for its own sake,"¹¹ a means by which creature and creation are in harmony with the intent of the Creator. Second, and closely related, is Anselm's notion of sin. Sin is considered unjust "on account of an unjust will" that yields to temptation rather than retaining the rectitude of conformity to the divine will.¹² Indeed, Anselm writes that "justice of will" is the "whole and complete honor which we owe God."¹³ As R. W. Southern summarizes, "Any movement of the disobedient will, however slight, disturbs the perfect order of God's creation in a way that nothing within the system can correct."¹⁴ What God designed in creation, sin undoes in rebellion, and herein lies the dilemma. Should God abandon the divine intention behind creation to allow sin and disordered wills to prevail? Certainly not, for then God would have created in vain.¹⁵ Should God pardon sin without punishment? Again, Anselm answers in the negative, for to do so would be to elevate injustice over justice, chaos over rectitude, thereby either reversing the purpose of creation or undermining the divine character.¹⁶ What, then, was God to do?

Anselm finds his answer in the logic of the God-man. Through the incarnation, the Son assumed a human nature, and with it a human will (which Anselm clearly treats as a property of nature).¹⁷ Having assumed this nature, the Son assumes the obligation to honor God in justice, which is the rectitude of his human will. Anselm connects the doctrine of creation and redemption here: as the perfect human Jesus is able to live with a perfect human will in the manner God intended for all creation.¹⁸ Here, empowered by the divine nature, Christ fulfills the obligation incumbent upon human nature to honor God through obedience. The content of this obedience is quite important to recognize, for Anselm is clear that "God did not compel Christ to die, for in Christ there was no sin. Instead, Christ willingly underwent death—not by obeying a command to give up His life, but by obeying a command to keep justice."¹⁹ Were God the Father to command the Son to die, the Son would be compelled to die. Justice would then require that the Son die to fulfill the obligation to the divine will, and this would undermine the second half of Anselm's atonement theory: supererogatory gift.

The idea of this supererogatory gift recognizes that Jesus Christ was obedient to justice, but in an unjust world this resulted in his death. Because Christ also bore the divine nature, his death in obedience to God's command to live a life of justice resulted in the death of an individual of infinite value, a gift that honored the Father above what was required and that restored humanity to right relationship with God such that punishment of all was no longer required.²⁰ This is Anselm's satisfaction theory, and it is one of two major transactional atonement theories.

Reformed Theology and the Penal Substitution Theory of Atonement

Penal substitution retains the emphasis on satisfaction found in Anselm, but modifies or supplements it with an emphasis on punishment. Thus, John Calvin can write that

Our Lord came forth very man, adopted the person of Adam, and assumed his name, that he might in his stead obey the Father; that he might present our flesh as the price of satisfaction to the judgment of God, and in the same flesh pay the penalty which we had incurred.²¹

Here is evident an emphasis on obedience and debt so central to Anselm, but it is coupled with the idea of penalty, which is much less important for the medieval thinker. For this reason, satisfaction theory and penal substitution theory can be contrasted as a distinction between a pecuniary model (concerned with debt) and a penal model (concerned with penalty as well as debt).²²

The logic of penal substitution varies slightly between the numerous authors who advocate it, particularly within the Reformed tradition, but the basic idea remains constant. Fundamentally, penal substitution sees Christ's incarnation and death as the cause of salvation because they manifest both obedience and suffering,²³ the former resulting in the merit by which Christians are saved, and the latter satisfaction by which divine wrath is expiated and justice fulfilled.²⁴ Though all of Christ's life can rightly be classified as obedience²⁵—and here Reformed thinkers generally distinguish between a passive obedience unto death and an active obedience that fulfills the law—a shift in how theologians view sin requires more than the obedience that led to the supererogatory gift (that is, a gift beyond what is required) so emphasized by Anselm. As sin became identified more closely with guilt that necessitated punishment, it was argued that God's act of atonement must still allow for the justice of punishment.²⁶ Hence, Christ assumed humanity both to fulfill an active obedience that satisfied the law by uniting divine goodness with human obligation, and a passive obedience in order that humanity so strengthened by its union with the divine could withstand the full wrath of God displayed on the cross which justice required.²⁷ God's wrath having been satisfied, and Christ's merit being sufficient to purchase the salvation of the faithful, redemption is accomplished. Indeed, Reformed theology sees the obedience of Christ and the merit thereby obtained as the formal cause of justification.²⁸ Thus, obedience remains central to Reformed views of the atonement, particularly given the Protestant emphasis on justification.

Eternal Submission Destroys the Logic Behind Transactional Atonement Theories

Advocates of EFS have frequently been accused of Arianism²⁹ for positing that the Father eternally commands and the Son eternally obeys. Critics of EFS suggest that attributing authority to the Father and obedience to the Son results in two distinct natures (ontology) with different properties such that Father and Son are of a *similar* substance, rather than of the same substance (*homoousios*), as the Nicene Creed affirms.³⁰ Those who seek to defend EFS respond that obedience of the will is a personal property, one that is attributed only to the person

of the Son.³¹ This defense has disastrous results if one wants to affirm the two predominant transactional theories of atonement we have just considered.

Consider Anselm's satisfaction theory. Those who defend EFS want to make obedience a personal property, but as Katherine Sonderegger notes, "Obedience is a matter of the will; and when we have raised the topic of the will, human and divine, we have touched on the nerve center of [Anselm's] whole treatise."³² As noted above, will is clearly a property of nature for Anselm, such that a dyothelite Christology (one that depicts Christ having two wills because he has two natures) lies at the center of his atonement theology.³³ As soon as we claim that humanity ought to obey God, we must affirm a dyothelite Christology, so that Jesus's humanity can fulfill that obligation. Only a human life and human obedience establish the atonement in Anselm's theology.

If will is not a property of nature but of hypostasis (a personal property belonging only to one divine person), as EFS advocates teach, and if there is no human hypostasis in Christ (as the Council of Chalcedon declared orthodoxy, and as Anselm believed)³⁴ then there is no human will in Christ, such that satisfaction is impossible. Perhaps, an EFS proponent might respond, obedience is a mode of willing proper to the Son's hypostasis, but the faculty we call a will remains a property of nature. Here again EFS runs into a problem, insofar as it is not merely a human will that is required for satisfaction, but human obedience. If human obedience cannot be carried out in the human nature, then one wonders whether there is in fact any human obedience at all, or simply the divine obedience of the Son's divine hypostasis. Better to argue along with Anselm that Jesus Christ "owed this obedience to God the Father; as His humanity owed it to His divinity."³⁵ Christ's human obedience was an obedience of the human nature that was obedience to the divine will shared by the Father and Son by virtue of their shared and singular nature.

Throughout *Cur Deus Homo*, Anselm is at great pains to insist that "the Father did not force the Son to die against His will; nor did He permit Him to be put to death against His will. Instead, that man willingly underwent death in order to save men."³⁶ Indeed, "the requirement of obedience did not constrain Him, but His mighty wisdom disposed Him."³⁷ As noted above, this distinction is of grave importance, because if the Father commanded the Son to die, and if the Son must eternally submit to the Father, then the Son must die in order to be just. His death thereby becomes the means by which he is just for himself without which he would not fulfill his own obligation as Son to the Father, instead of the supererogatory gift by which he offers freely what was not required in order to purchase humanity for redemption, becoming just for others. Simply put, if on the cross the Son is merely continuing his role of eternally submitting to the Father, there is in Anselm's system no supererogatory gift and no satisfaction—there is no atonement.

The need for a supererogatory gift is why Anselm categorizes Christ's death as a form of subsequent necessity, something resulting from his voluntary commitment to a promise, not something arising from compulsion.³⁸ Anselm writes that "if you wish to know the true necessity of all the things He did and suffered, know that they all occurred of necessity simply because He willed them."³⁹ Anselm's account relies on a concept similar to

one Protestants later discussed under the name of the covenant of redemption (*pactum salutis*), the eternal agreement by which the Father, the Son, and the Spirit adopt a plan for redemption. Anselm depicts this eternal decision of God toward salvation as a mutual decision of the three persons, the Son committing himself in agreement with the Father and Spirit toward this course of action so that it was at once immutable and necessary, and yet entirely free, gratuitous, and supererogatory. So Anselm can write, "with an unchangeable will (*immutabili voluntate*) He freely willed (*sponte voluit*) to die."⁴⁰ Paul Dafydd Jones interprets well: "As Christ sets his face towards Jerusalem, his 'immutable' will is also 'spontaneous': this striking pairing attests to a deft integration of dyothelite Christology [Christ having two wills because he has two natures] and soteriology [the doctrine of salvation]."⁴¹ Here Christ's human will and divine will meet in perfect harmony. Here dyothelite theology meets a vision of the unitary will of God undivided by eternal submission or obedience but singularly united in the commitment to redeem the world. And here, too, advocates of EFS meet a theology of the atonement that is ultimately incompatible with their doctrine of God.

At this point, I must digress briefly to address a key scriptural passage that can illuminate the accuracy of Anselm's position: John 10:17–18. The passage reads as follows:

For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again. I have received this command from my Father. (NRSV)

It should be clear from the context of the gospel of John that the Father's love for the Son is eternal (see especially John 17:23–26), so the passage does not mean that the Father's eternal love of the Son derives from his obedience, but rather that this must be interpreted in terms of the salvific effects of the obedience as linked to the eternal relationship of Father and Son.⁴² John here treats the very question that so concerned Anselm—how the Son's obedience relates to the Father and to the Son's salvific work of the cross, and how it results in the love shared with believers through the cross. On the one hand, the passage reveals the Son being obedient to the command of the Father (and thus to the divine will). On the other, it depicts the Son laying down his own life of his own accord and volition. This passage particularly manifests a tension between subordination and equality that runs throughout the gospel of John,⁴³ and it must be resolved.

Advocates of EFS resolve the tension through appeal to the immanent Trinity—the Son eternally submits to the Father and this is the basis for a full distinction between Father and Son. If this solution is pursued, then a different answer must be provided for why the Son's death in John is a laying down of the Good Shepherd's life for the sheep (John 10:15) if not by the merit of Christ's supererogatory gift. When John says that the Father loves the Son because he lays it down, John would mean that obedience is the condition under which the Son is eternally the beloved Son. Likewise, if Christ's death is a byproduct of his eternal obedience, it is unclear in what sense it is also voluntarily given "of his own accord," as John teaches. The alternative is the classical patristic position which is rooted in the economic Trinity (that is, in

the functions and actions of the Trinity) and which appeals to dyothelite Christology—Christ having two wills because he has two natures. This interpretation suggests that the Father loves the Son in his humanity because of his perfect human obedience unto death, by which he fulfilled the covenant. Herein lies obedience to the command of the Father. However, the Father eternally loved the pre-incarnate Son regardless of this act of self-sacrifice, and the Son was under no covenantal law. In voluntarily fulfilling the law to the point of death, that is in laying down his own life for the sheep (10:11) of his own accord (10:18), the Son in his divinity is simply following the united will of God (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) such that supererogatory gift is possible. The Father loves the Son in his humanity for this gift, and by its imputation the faithful share in the love of God. Here, there is no obedience in the eternal life of the immanent Trinity but only that subsequent necessity (that is, necessity due to God's decision) arising from the covenant of redemption (the *pactum salutis*). Following this classical interpretation, modern commentators are correct to see in John 10:17–18 evidence of how, for example, “the will of the Son as Mediator harmonizes completely with that of the Father.”⁴⁴ A twofold harmony preserves both the doctrine of atonement and the doctrine of God.

What then of penal substitution? The theological method deployed by Anselm proceeded along a philosophical trajectory to convince skeptics. Though Anselm's arguments assume and even cite numerous scriptural principles, Reformed theological method generally spends far more time on exegesis, and far less on philosophical argumentation. Nevertheless, while the dyothelite Christology (Christ's two natures, two wills) central to Anselm's satisfaction theory is less explicitly integrated into Reformed accounts of soteriology, it is assumed throughout.⁴⁵ As Jonathan Edwards puts the matter,

Christ merely as God was not capable either of that obedience or suffering that was needful. The divine nature is not capable of suffering, for it is impassable and infinitely above all suffering; neither is it capable of obedience to that law that was given to man.⁴⁶

A human will and a human obedience are required, both as a foundation for active obedience, and as the source of the merit whereby the faithful are justified and receive the imputed righteousness of Christ. Here again, accounts of will as a personal property or of obedience as a mode of a person appear to undermine the role of active obedience in Christ's merit insofar as there is no human person in the hypostatic union (the claim originating from the Council of Chalcedon that Christ is two natures, divine and human, united in the person of the Son). The atonement is far more central to Christian theology than gender roles, so the problem EFS raises for transactional atonement must be taken seriously as a grave challenge to Christian theology, even if many complementarians are pleased with the gender implications coupled with EFS.

Anselm's philosophical emphasis on subsequent necessity (necessity due to God's decision) is also not a central feature of Reformed accounts of penal substitution. However, it lies behind Calvin's teaching that “the first step in obedience was his voluntary subjection; for the sacrifice would have been unavailing to justification if not offered spontaneously.”⁴⁷ The

Swiss Protestant theologian Johannes Wollebius (1589–1629) likely has something similar in mind when he warns that, “Unless he submitted to the curse willingly, his sacrifice was forced,”⁴⁸ which is why Wollebius treats the cause of the office of mediator as the Trinity in its entirety.⁴⁹ The Son voluntarily wills along with Father and Spirit to assume the flesh and fulfill humanity's obligation to the law and to the divine justice which requires punishment. So while subsequent necessity and the resulting supererogatory gift are not prominent in Reformed theology, the elimination of these ideas through a theology that treats the Son as eternally obedient risks not only the atonement, but the theology of justification as well.

What is assumed as a precondition for penal substitution theory does, admittedly, remain hidden behind more central themes in Reformed theology. It is quite possible that an account of penal substitution that cites scripture without trying to make sense of the logic behind the scripture may retain the pastoral and exegetical elements central to penal substitution while unraveling the philosophical basis for this theory through EFS without many in the church noticing the ontological chasm at the heart of its theology.⁵⁰ It seems that many in the complementarian camp face precisely the same problem. For this reason, we must also consider the pastoral and ethical consequences of EFS on penal substitutionary theory, that those less familiar with the philosophical concerns discussed.

Eternal Submission and the Elimination of the Moral Horizon of Punishment

Perhaps the most common theological objection raised against penal substitution atonement theories is that they promote a culture of violence against the powerless.⁵¹ Feminist theologians often criticize transactional atonement theories as morally problematic because they legitimize the suffering faced by women, “since by sweetly accepting unjust suffering they become Christlike,” to quote Rosemary Radford Ruether. Here penal substitution is treated as a “tool for justifying domestic violence.”⁵² Another common argument claims that penal substitution is a form of divine child abuse, where the Father commands the Son to suffer for others. “Jesus,” Darby Kathleen Ray writes, “like a typical child victim for whom love is identified with obedience to the adult's authority, obliges.”⁵³ Leanne Van Dyk notes that the motivations of abusers are complicated and not easily explained in terms of their religious dimensions, but the testimonies of abused women do often suggest a religious component that may be linked to certain theological views such as penal substitution.⁵⁴ Arguments could be multiplied, but the present sampling illustrates a widespread concern that where theology depicts the Father's authority requiring the Son's obedience unto death, then the power structure resulting in suffering of the subordinate may echo in the created order in ways that harm the weak and powerless.

Those who want to defend penal substitutionary accounts—and I certainly want to make such a defense—have two main arguments in their arsenal. First, penal substitution is scriptural, so where biblical inerrancy is affirmed, penal substitution cannot be avoided. The basic logic of transactional atonement is found throughout the NT, and a penal dimension is central to numerous scriptural tropes, ranging from Paul's claims that the “wages of sin is death” (Rom 6:23) and that Jesus became a curse for us (Gal 3:13),

to the argument in Hebrews that without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness (Heb 9:22), to scriptural use of the term propitiation (1 John 2:2, to cite a single example). As helpful as Anselm's notion of satisfaction may be, it needs to be supplemented with an account of how Christ's satisfaction included our sins being imputed to him to do full justice to the biblical testimony.

The second defense builds upon the first by arguing that penal substitution is not in fact a situation where an authority figure requires the suffering of an obedient (functional) subordinate. Instead, penal substitution depicts God assuming suffering voluntarily for our behalf. Stephen Holmes summarizes this line of defense well:

The criticisms that begin with the feminist theologians assume an improper separation between Father and Son (and no account of the Spirit, usually). If we do not realize that God is on the cross, that God is taking the suffering on himself, then we have not begun to understand what is going on. . . . The story is not of a vengeful Father punishing an innocent Son, but of a loving and holy God, Father, Son and Spirit, bearing himself the pain of our failures.⁵⁵

The philosophical commitments underlying such a defense are twofold. First, the divine will is the undivided property of the single divine nature such that there is no eternal relation of authority and obedience that could even potentially be construed as an abusive power dynamic.⁵⁶ Second, and closely related, the idea that the Trinity works inseparably in the works of God in the economy of redemption (*opera dei ad extra indivisa sunt*) entails that the atonement is not something done to the Son by the Father, but something that the Son voluntarily undergoes without compulsion in accordance with the united work of the Trinity (see John 10:17–18).⁵⁷ Note well that these are the very two philosophical premises that EFS undermines. In the theology of EFS, the divine will is divided either because will is a personal property alone, or because the singular will is possessed in three divisible modes attributable to each of the three divine persons respectively. In the logic of EFS, all divine actions are divided insofar as the Father commands and the Son subsequently obeys.⁵⁸ However, if all divine acts are accompanied by distinct actions of commanding and obeying such that, if one affirms EFS, it becomes extremely difficult to deny that the penal dimension of Christ's death was something the person of the Father did to the person of the Son, and not merely something that the Godhead does in and to the humanity of Christ, as theologians like Anselm and Wollebius would argue.

Where theologians who reject EFS can argue that penal substitution is scriptural and clearly not an example of a problematic authority/submission dynamic, something that has been convincing to some feminist thinkers,⁵⁹ those who affirm EFS must argue that penal substitution is scriptural and then grant that someone in authority inflicting suffering on a subordinate is central not only to the logic of the gospel, but to the very Trinitarian nature of the Godhead. I find this a deeply troubling distortion of the God revealed in Jesus Christ as attested to in the scriptures. Philippians 2 teaches us to follow the example of Christ who forsook power to humble himself for the salvation of the powerless, yet EFS teaches the powerless to submit themselves to the powerful even to the point of death. Ephesians 5 teaches husbands to imitate Christ in sacrificing themselves for the wives who are called to

submit to them, yet EFS calls wives to sacrifice themselves to the husbands to whom they must submit.⁶⁰ In the theology of EFS, gone is an ethic rooted in the divine goodness where the first are last (Matt 20:16), for the Father who is first never assumes the role of last,⁶¹ the least of these are no longer served for Jesus's sake (Matt 25:34–40) but sacrificed in his imitation, and the power of God is no longer made evident in the weakness of self-humbling (2 Cor 12:9) but in the authority of one who can subdue the weak. We are left with a pastoral theology centering the authority of the Father over the Son, whose obedience does not clearly establish redemption under traditional transactional models, and whose death in weakness at the command of the authority of the Father alone erases the moral horizon within which penal substitution fits the biblical picture of the divine goodness against all critics. In the place of classical soteriology, I fear that we are left with an atonement theology without ontological moorings and an ethical universe with harmful ethical not to mention pastoral outcomes, particularly for women. This is a significantly different form of complementarianism from those versions rooted in texts like Eph 5, and in my opinion a form much more likely to lead to the harm and abuse of Christian women.

It took centuries to construct a theological system that fit theories of Christology, soteriology, and the Trinity into a beautiful cathedral of the mind, one faithful to the scriptures, inspiring worship, and compelling the church to ethical behavior. In a half-century, evangelical Trinitarianism has threatened to undo that work in full. If a shift in Trinitarian theology toward EFS has such drastic ramifications for the doctrine of salvation, there are no doubt further problematic consequences for this change in other areas of theology. How many must be uncovered before EFS is abandoned remains to be seen, but it is certain that EFS should be left behind.

Notes

1. See Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 250–1; Bruce A. Ware, *Father, Son & Holy Spirit: Relationships, Roles, & Relevance* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2005), 69–71, 82; Philip R. Gons and Andrew David Naselli, “An Examination of Three Recent Philosophical Arguments against Hierarchy in the Immanent Trinity,” in *One God in Three Persons: Unity of Essence, Distinction of Persons, Implications for Life*, ed. Bruce A. Ware and John Starke (Wheaton: Crossway, 2015), 204–5.

2. In accounts of the Trinity held as orthodox at least since the council of Nicea, each of the three persons in the Trinity are distinguished by their origins, where the Son proceeds from the Father by eternal generation and the Spirit proceeds from the Father (in the West, also from the Son) by eternal spiration. Thus, eternal generation and spiration are known as processions.

3. J. Scott Horrell, “Complementarian Trinitarianism: Divine Revelation is Finally True to the Eternal Personal Relations,” in *The New Evangelical Subordinationism? Perspectives on the Equality of God the Father and God the Son*, ed. Dennis W. Jowers and H. Wayne House (Eugene: Pickwick, 2012), 352–3.

4. Craig Keener stands as a notable exception, when he defends EFS but rejects complementarianism. Craig S. Keener, “Subordination within the Trinity: John 5:18 and 1 Cor 15:28,” in *The New Evangelical Subordinationism?*, 52–4.

5. Ware, *Father, Son, & Holy Spirit*, 73.

6. Gustaf Aulén, *Christus Victor: An Historical Study of the Three Main Types of the Idea of Atonement*, trans. A. G. Hebert (New York: MacMillan, 1967).

7. Peter Abailard, "Exposition of the Epistle to the Romans (Excerpt from the Second Book)," in *A Scholastic Miscellany: Anselm to Ockham*, ed. and trans. Eugene R. Fairweather (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1956), 276–87.

8. Hugo Grotius, *A Defense of the Catholic Faith Concerning the Satisfaction of Christ*, trans. W. H. (London: Thomas Parkhurst, 1692).

9. Paul Dafydd Jones objects to the use of "transactional" to summarize Anselm's model on the grounds that Anselm's theory is rooted in the supererogatory gift of obedience. I do not think this objection carries weight, given that even a gratuitous exchange is in some sense a transaction between two parties. See Paul Dafydd Jones, "Barth and Anselm: God, Christ, and the Atonement," *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 12, no. 3 (July 2010): 258.

10. Alister E. McGrath, "Rectitude: The Moral Foundation of Anselm of Canterbury's Soteriology," *DRev* 99, no. 336 (July 1981): 205–6.

11. Anselm of Canterbury, *On Truth*, in *Anselm of Canterbury*, 5 vols., ed. and trans. Jasper Hopkins and Herbert Richardson (Toronto: Edwin Mellen, 1976), 2:\$12.

12. Anselm of Canterbury, *The Virgin Conception and Original Sin*, in *Anselm of Canterbury*, 5:\$4.

13. Anselm of Canterbury, *Why God Became a Man*, in *Anselm of Canterbury*, 5:I.11.

14. R. W. Southern, *Saint Anselm: A Portrait in a Landscape* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 218.

15. Anselm, *Why God Became a Man*, II.4.

16. Anselm, *Why God Became a Man* I.12.

17. We can deduce this both from his explicit affirmation that justice, a rectitude of will, is found in rational natures in *On Truth*, and from his arguments in *The Procession of the Holy Spirit* where he claims that personal properties are just those that arise from relational opposition, i.e., from titles that cannot logically be predicated of the same nature, such as begotten and unbegotten, but which are in some sense ordered toward another. Anselm, *On Truth*, I.12; Anselm of Canterbury, *The Procession of the Holy Spirit*, in *Anselm of Canterbury*, vol. 3.

18. Katherine Sonderegger, "Anselm, *Defensor fidei*," *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 9, no. 3 (July 2007): 350–1.

19. Anselm, *Why God Became a Man*, I.8.

20. Anselm, *Why God Became a Man*, II.18.

21. John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. Henry Beveridge (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2008), II.12.3.

22. Archibald Alexander Hodge, *The Atonement* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1867), 35–6.

23. Hodge, *The Atonement*, 249; Zacharias Ursinus, *The Commentary of Zacharias Ursinus on the Heidelberg Catechism*, trans. G. W. Williard (Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing, 1852), 86; Robert A. Peterson, *Calvin's Doctrine of the Atonement* (Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing, 1983), 72–6.

24. Jonathan Edwards, *A History of the Work of Redemption*, trans. and ed. John F. Wilson (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 304.

25. "When it is asked then how Christ, by abolishing sin, removed the enmity between God and us, and purchased a righteousness which made him favorable and kind to us, it may be answered generally, that he accomplished this by the whole course of his obedience." Calvin, *Institutes*, II.16.5; "Christ's obedience comprises not simply a part of his life, but the totality of his Messianic work. . . . That was the sole purpose, we may say here, because it concerned the will of God which was oriented to the sacrifice." G. C. Berkouwer, *The Work of Christ*, trans. Cornelius Lambregtse (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965), 316.

26. Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics Vol. 3: Sin and Salvation in Christ*, ed. John Bolt, trans. John Vriend (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 345.

27. E.g., Zacharias Ursinus, *Commentary on the Heidelberg Catechism*, 87; cf. Johannes Wollebius, *Compendium Theologiae Christianae*, in

Reformed Dogmatics, ed. and trans. John W. Beardslee III (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965), XVII.i.4.

28. Ursinus, *Commentary on the Heidelberg Catechism*, 330–1. In a similar vein, Wollebius writes that the merit of Christ is the "external active cause" of justification. Johannes Wollebius, *Compendium Theologiae Christianae*, XXX.i.5. With even less clarity, A. A. Hodge speaks of obedience as the "ground of our justification." Hodge, *The Atonement*, 250.

29. Arianism is the heresy deriving its name from Arius of Alexandria, who was condemned at the council of Nicea for teaching that the Son was merely the greatest of the Father's creatures, but a creature who did not possess the divine nature.

30. Examples abound, but two important examples are: Millard Erickson, *Who's Tampering with the Trinity? An Assessment of the Subordination Debate* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2009), 172; Gilbert Bilezikian, "Hermeneutical Bungee-Jumping: Subordination in the Godhead," *JETS* 40, no. 1 (March 1997): 64.

31. Bruce A. Ware, "Does Affirming an Eternal Authority-Submission Relationship in the Trinity Entail a Denial of *Homoousios*?" in *One God in Three Persons: Unity of Essence, Distinction of Persons, Implications for Life*, ed. Bruce A. Ware and John Starke (Wheaton: Crossway, 2015), 244; Gons and Naselli, "Recent Philosophical Arguments," 204–5.

32. Sonderegger, "Anselm, *Defensor fidei*," 353.

33. "Dyothelitism is a necessary corollary of his belief that humanity ought to render obedience to God. Were God to impose obedience upon Christ—say, by coercively superintending the humanity that the Son assumes—the soteriological fabric of *Cur Deus Homo* would unravel. Only because Christ lives and dies humanly, offering a human 'compensation' to God, are God and humanity set in right relationship." Jones, "Barth and Anselm," 267.

34. Anselm, *Why God Became a Man*, II.6. Indeed, the question of the two natures and particularly of the two wills was a widely discussed topic during Anselm's day and among the following generation of theologians. See G. R. Evans, *Anselm and a New Generation* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1980), 155–61.

35. Anselm, *Why God Became a Man*, I.8.

36. Anselm, *Why God Became a Man*, I.8.

37. Anselm of Canterbury, *A Meditation on Human Redemption*, in *Anselm of Canterbury*, 3:140.

38. See Sonderegger, "Anselm, *Defensor fidei*," 354.

39. Anselm, *Why God Became a Man*, II.17.

40. Anselm, *Why God Became a Man*, II.16.

41. Jones, "Barth and Anselm," 269.

42. Rodney A. Whitacre, *John* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1999), 266.

43. See John 1:1–18, 5:1–47, 14:28, and ch. 17. C. K. Barrett surveys some views on this tension in C. K. Barret, "'The Father is Greater than I' John 14:28: Subordinationist Christology in the New Testament," in *Essays on John* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1982), 19–36. In the end I affirm the patristic position that Barrett rejects as failing to present a real person. Here Barrett's attempt to conform the person of Christ to his experience of real personhood falsely assumes too great a continuity between mere humanity and perfect humanity united with perfect divinity.

44. William Hendrickson, *Exposition of the Gospel According to John* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1953), 115.

45. Robert Letham notes how Luther, Calvin, and key Reformed statements of faith all continue to utilize versions of Anselm's satisfaction theory. Robert Letham, *The Work of Christ* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1993), 165–6.

46. Edwards, *A History of the Work of Redemption*, 295.

47. Calvin, *Institutes*, II.16.5.

48. Wollebius, *Compendium Theologiae Christianae*, XVIII.i.18.

49. Wollebius, *Compendium Theologiae Christianae*, XVII.i.3. In the passage, Wollebius is speaking of the "efficient cause" of the office of mediator, but I have simplified for the sake of the reader.

50. For example, Grudem's account of the righteousness of Christ deriving from his active obedience and imputed to the faithful treats Christ's fulfillment of the law alone as sufficient for justification. However, as a human being Christ owed this obedience himself, so it is difficult to see why fulfilling his own obligation can in some fashion produce merit for all of humanity, which is the basis for justification. Due to his nearly exclusive emphasis on scriptural concerns, Grudem does not raise the question of supererogatory gift, nor connect the dignity of the divinity of Christ who voluntarily offers such a gift to the Father to the humanity of Christ that owes such a gift. Thus, Grudem retains the exegetical and pastoral elements of penal substitution, but he does not clearly present the underlying philosophy. See Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 571.

51. When the objection is raised against Anselm, it is easily refuted for several reasons: (1) Anselm does not treat punishment as the formal cause of redemption, but gift; (2) The Father did not require the Son to receive punishment, but jointly with the Son willed justice as rectitude of will; (3) for Anselm the death of Christ was not the death of a representative of guilty humanity as much as it was a death of an innocent one slain by a fallen world. Therefore, Anselm could perhaps join feminists in critiquing the death, though to a far smaller extent.

52. Rosemary R. Reuther, *Introducing Redemption in Christian Feminism* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1998), 99.

53. Darby Kathleen Ray, *Deceiving the Devil: Atonement, Abuse, and Ransom* (Cleveland: Pilgrim, 1988), 62.

54. Leanne Van Dyk, "How Does Jesus Make a Difference?" in *Essentials of Christian Theology*, ed. William C. Placher (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2003), 211n17.

55. Stephen R. Holmes, *The Wondrous Cross: Atonement and Penal Substitution in the Bible and History* (London: Paternoster, 2007), 109.

56. Keith E. Johnson, "Penal Substitution as an Undivided Work of the Triune God," *TJ* 36, no. 1 (Spring 2015): 53.

57. Steve Jeffery, Mike Ovey, and Andrew Sach, *Pierced for Our Transgressions: Rediscovering the Glory of Penal Substitution* (Nottingham: InterVarsity, 2007), 230. It is interesting that Ovey, who here appeals to the undivided divine operations and the shared willing of the Trinity in the atonement, remains an outspoken defender of EFS elsewhere. See Michael J. Ovey, *Your Will be Done* (London: Latimer Trust, 2016).

58. The use of "subsequently" should be treated in reference to logical and not temporal sequence. After all, its defenders ensure us EFS is eternal.

59. For example, a "hesitant" endorsement of this argument is found in Sally Alford, "Sin and Atonement in Feminist Perspective," in *Atonement Today*, ed. John Goldingay (London: SPCK, 1995), 162-4.

60. I set aside for the moment the egalitarian interpretation of Eph 5, partly to illustrate that there are different kinds of complementarianism.

61. If the Son is eternally equal in authority with the Father, he is the first who in the incarnation and crucifixion becomes last.

GLENN BUTNER teaches theology and ministry at Sterling College in Sterling, Kansas. He holds a PhD in systematic theology from Marquette University and an MDiv from Duke Divinity School. This article was distributed to members of the Evangelical Theological Society as part of a CBE special edition journal focused on the Trinity and available for free at www.cbeinternational.org. Glenn and his wife Lydia have one son, Elias, and are joyfully anticipating another in April 2017.



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