

The Reception of the Psychological Analogy of the Trinity in Reformed Theology: Augustine, Late Medieval Scholasticism, and Francis Turretin

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INTRODUCTION

While the patristic and medieval roots of the psychological analogy of the Trinity have been widely explored within Roman Catholic theology, its reception in the Reformed tradition has received comparatively little attention. Richard Muller, in *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, offers the most comprehensive treatment currently available in the literature.¹ He concludes that Reformed theologians generally distanced themselves from “all forms of rational argumentation toward the doctrine of the Trinity and allowed only limited use of traditional metaphors and similes in their

expositions.”² This assessment is correct, yet it can be further refined through a closer analysis of what this “limited” appropriation of the analogy actually entails. To that end, my purpose is to examine how Reformed Orthodoxy received the psychological analogy by focusing on the Trinitarian theology of one of its key representatives, Francis Turretin.³

I argue that Turretin receives the psychological analogy in a strictly limited and non-determinative manner. He retains its illustrative value for the generation of the Son, yet rejects its extension to the Spirit’s procession because it exceeds the warrant of Scripture. In doing so, Turretin operates within a broadly Thomistic metaphysical framework, yet he is significantly more restrictive than either Augustine or Aquinas in his use of the psychological analogy. Whereas they employ the analogy to offer a genuine — though analogical — account of the divine processions, Turretin confines it to a limited, illustrative role and resists granting it explanatory force. Thus, his approach constitutes a distinctly Reformed retrieval of the Augustinian–Thomistic tradition: he affirms its metaphysical grammar while deliberately circumscribing the analogy’s doctrinal function within Trinitarian theology.

This study proceeds in three steps. First, I will situate the psychological analogy within its development from Augustine to late medieval scholasticism. Second, I will examine Turretin’s reception of the analogy within this framework, focusing on his doctrine of the *imago Dei* and his account of the divine processions. Finally, I will present the implications of this reading for the Reformed tradition, arguing that it reflects a principled restriction rather than a rejection of the analogy.

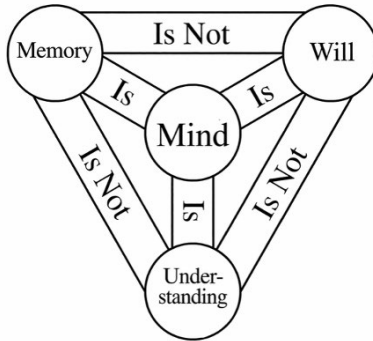
THE PSYCHOLOGICAL ANALOGY IN CHRISTIAN TRADITION

The psychological analogy of the Trinity occupies a central place in the development of Trinitarian doctrine. Far from being a marginal feature, it has often played a significant role in articulating the nature of the divine processions. In what follows, I will first define the analogy, then examine its formulation in Augustine, and finally trace its development in late medieval scholasticism.

The psychological analogy, following Russell Friedman, may be defined as a model according to which “human psychology—the study of the human soul, and particularly the human mind, its architecture and

its activities—can be employed to explain or clarify the Trinity.”⁴ In this sense, the faculties of the mind—intellect, memory, and will—are used to illuminate our understanding of unity and distinction in the Trinity.⁵

Figure 1. Basic Diagram of the Psychological Analogy.⁶



At the risk of simplification (see Figure 1), the human mind may be described as a single, unified reality, considered under three inseparable faculties: intellect, memory, and will. Each of these faculties is truly mind and fully participates in the same mental reality, yet none of them is identical with the others. The intellect is not the will, the will is not the memory, and the memory is not the intellect; nevertheless, none of them exists autonomously, but always as distinct modes of the one mind. Analogously, just as the mind is one reality expressed through distinct yet inseparable faculties, so Trinitarian theology confesses one divine essence subsisting in three really distinct persons. Finally, the faculties of the mind exhibit a certain order: memory corresponds to the first movement of the intellect, understanding proceeds from memory, and the will follows as the perfection of the intellectual act. Each faculty is the whole mind in act, yet each is distinct according to its order and relation to the others. This ordered relation renders the analogy especially fitting, insofar as it provides a conceptual framework for thinking about processions that are internal, non-temporal, and without division—thus offering an analogical point of contact for understanding the generation of the Word and the spiration of love within the unity of the divine essence. In this way, the faculties of the

mind serve to clarify how God can have real internal processions in ordered relations without multiplication, division, composition, or subordination. It is to Augustine, who first articulated this analogical framework, that we now turn.

Augustine of Hippo

Augustine stands as the conceptual origin of the psychological analogy.⁷ He was among the first to clarify the identity and distinction of the divine persons through the use of the analogy, drawing on the language of John's Gospel (John 1:1–3, 14).⁸ While many assume that his analogy begins with an attempt to locate the most suitable analogies in creation for understanding the Trinity, Augustine's analogies are instead deeply rooted in his doctrine of creation.⁹

For Augustine, creation is the unified work of the triune God, in which every creature bears “a trace of the Trinity” through the Father's Word and the Spirit's goodness.¹⁰ Among all creatures, humanity—created in the image and likeness of God (Gen 1:26)¹¹—is the only creature that can reflect the Divine Logos and participate through him in the likeness of God.¹² This participation, as Augustine elaborates, is rooted in the very nature of the human soul,¹³ which in its rational structure mirrors the nature of divine processions.¹⁴

Building on this foundation, the bishop of Hippo expands the idea of humanity's unique role in reflecting God's image in *The Trinity* (*De Trinitate*). He urges the reader “to ascend inwardly” among the “intelligible things that are supreme and everlasting” to find “some trinity if we can.”¹⁵ In this inward ascent, *he proposes several mental analogies that illustrate how the human mind mirrors the intra-Trinitarian life both in its unity and diversity.*¹⁶ He explores *mind*, (*mens*), *its self-knowledge* (*notitia sui*), *and its self-love* (*amor sui*).¹⁷ For Augustine, these faculties of the mind are intimately and necessarily related to one another because they share an equality and consubstantiality that serve to reflect the persons of the Trinity.¹⁸ Augustine states these faculties are “inseparable from each other, and yet each one of them is substance, and all together they are one substance or being, while they are also posited with reference to one another.”¹⁹

He also proposes a second image: memory (*memoria*), understanding (*intelligentia*), and will (*voluntas sui*). This is, according to Augustine, “a

clearer trinity” because these faculties cannot be understood without reference to each other.²⁰ Although distinct, they are not independent but are united in one essence and mutually dependent for their existence. In Augustine’s words, these three “are not three lives but one life, nor three minds but one mind... not three substances but one substance.”²¹ Therefore, Augustine concludes: “When it turns to itself in thought, a trinity is formed, in which a word can also be perceived. This trinity... is formed out of the very act of thought, with the will joining the two together. It is here, then, more than anywhere, that we should recognize the image we are looking for.”²²

Finally, a third image is memory (*memoria*), knowledge (*intelligentia*), and love of God (*voluntas*). Unlike the two previous analogies, which had the self as their primary object, this analogy seeks an image whose true end is God.²³ Augustine asserts that, through God’s grace, the human mind overcomes the limitations imposed by the Fall and “truly recalls its Lord.”²⁴ Though humanity has lost the fullness of its original happiness, the mind—as created in God’s image—retains the capacity to “remember and understand and love him by whom it was made.” This process of inward renewal enables the mind to attain true wisdom—not through its own power but by participating in God’s supreme light.²⁵ In this inward process toward God, “the mind... is being renewed in the recognition of God according to the image of him who created (Col 3:10) man to his own image, and... thus achieves wisdom in the contemplation of things eternal.”²⁶

As Maarten Wisse observes, Augustine’s project in *De Trinitate* does not culminate in a psychological theory of the Trinity but in a Trinitarian anthropology. Through the contemplation of the *imago Dei*, the human mind is drawn back toward the triune God whom it has rejected through sin.²⁷

Augustine’s account of the *imago Dei* as a Trinitarian image within the human soul provides the foundational framework for all subsequent developments of the psychological analogy. Medieval theologians, despite their differences, begin from Augustinian assumptions, extending and refining his insights. Yet, as we will see, what changes in the medieval period is not the basic structure he establishes, but the degree of explanatory weight assigned to the analogy. To understand this development more fully, we now turn to its treatment in late medieval scholasticism.

Late-Medieval Reception²⁸

As Russell Friedman explains, Trinitarian debates in the late medieval period can be broadly characterized by a sustained refinement of the psychological analogy as a means of clarifying the distinction of divine persons.²⁹ Medieval theologians began from Augustine's insight that creation bears the marks of its triune Creator; yet, unlike Augustine, they developed a far more complex and systematic account of how these vestiges are present in rational creatures created in the image of God.

This complexity is due, in part, to the "notable rise in the use of philosophical and linguistic insights," and also the increasing debate "over the proper explanation of traditional trinitarian language."³⁰ In this context, the psychological analogy was employed as one of the fundamental theological tools to articulate a rationally coherent account of unity and distinction among the divine persons against a range of ancient heresies that challenged Trinitarian orthodoxy.³¹

However, its development and use were far from uniform. Medieval theologians differed significantly regarding the nature of divine processions.³² Consequently, they disagreed over the applicability and scope of the psychological analogy for explaining the divine processions without compromising divine simplicity.³³ Accordingly, we examine below this diversity of approaches by tracing two principal trajectories in the medieval use of the psychological model: the strong and the soft use of the analogy.

Strong Use of the Analogy

The strong use of the psychological analogy emerges within the Franciscan tradition, "relying on an emanation account of personal distinction."³⁴ As Friedman explains, it is characterized, first, by construing the divine processions in direct correspondence with the operations of intellect and will, such that "the Son quite literally is a Concept produced by the Father's intellect, and the Holy Spirit is Love produced by the will shared by the Father and the Son"³⁵; and, second, by the integration of medieval cognitive theory in order to articulate, with greater metaphysical precision, the origin of the divine persons.³⁶ In this sense, as White concludes, it presupposes "a more restricted or modest doctrine of divine simplicity" and thus offers a more kataphatic, quasi-univocal account of the processions and the persons.

³⁷

Scotus, one of the most significant representatives of this view, employs the psychological analogy to argue for real distinctions within the divine being.³⁸ He contends that if God knows himself, there must be a distinction between the knower and the act of knowing — that is, the concept that proceeds from this act. On this basis, Scotus maintains that “a person is truly produced by the act of the intellect as a productive source, and another person by the act of the will as a productive source, and not just metaphorically on account of some type of extraneous likeness.”³⁹ As Friedman observes, this distinction constitutes “the foundation of Scotus’ strong use of the psychological model of the Trinity,” since they allow him to explain “the nature of the sources of the divine emanations: both why these sources produce, and why they produce in two irreducibly distinct ways.”⁴⁰

Soft Use of the Analogy

The soft use of the psychological analogy emerges within the Dominican tradition, finding its most influential expression in Aquinas’s relational account of the divine processions. For him, the analogy neither grounds nor generates the doctrine of the divine processions; rather, it serves to demonstrate their logical soundness, affirming that reason does not contradict revelation.⁴¹ Only through divine illumination can the intellect speak analogically of this mystery.⁴² Accordingly, as White explains, the analogy in Aquinas functions in a modest apophatic sense — truly analogical, never univocal — while still offering genuine insight into God’s inner life.⁴³

Aquinas develops his doctrine of the two immanent processions in God by appealing to the faculties of the mind — understanding and will — in order to clarify the mystery of the divine life.⁴⁴ In the act of understanding, the intellect generates an interior word (*verbum mentis*) that proceeds from it without departing, remaining fully internal and sharing the same intellectual nature as its source.⁴⁵ In the act of willing, by contrast, “the imprint of love emerges within the lover’s own affectivity,” such that through love, the good itself becomes interior to the will of the lover, in a manner parallel to the way an object of knowledge is interior to the intellect of the knower.⁴⁶ From this, Aquinas concludes that “the Son proceeds as intellect” and the Holy Spirit “proceeds as love of the will,” just as in creatures “possessing intellect and will, there is found the representation of the Trinity by way of image, since there is found in them the word conceived, and the love proceeding.”⁴⁷

These divergent uses of the psychological analogy reveal that it is not a self-interpreting device, but a theological instrument whose proper scope is determined by prior theological and metaphysical commitments. The contrast between strong and soft uses thus reframes the central issue: not whether the analogy may be employed, but how far its explanatory force may be extended without collapsing the distinction between divine and human modes of knowing and loving. Recognizing this point is crucial, for, we will see below, the Reformed tradition does not merely replicate patristic and medieval models, but offers a theological appropriation of this doctrine, shaped by distinct doctrinal commitments that deliberately restrict the scope of the psychological analogy—a move that comes into particular focus in the Trinitarian theology of Francis Turretin.

THE RECEPTION OF THE PSYCHOLOGICAL ANALOGY IN THE REFORMED TRADITION

The theological significance of the psychological analogy is inseparable from two closely related questions: the nature of the *imago Dei* in the human soul and the extent to which this image can bear genuine explanatory weight with respect to the divine processions. These issues, first developed in Augustine and variously extended in the medieval tradition, receive a more deliberately qualified treatment in the theology of Francis Turretin. Therefore, to clarify his limited and non-determinative use of the psychological analogy, I will examine both elements as they are articulated in the *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*.

Image of God and the Metaphysical Caution

Like many of the Reformers and their successors, Turretin adopts a markedly cautious posture toward the notion of vestiges of the Trinity in the human soul.⁴⁸ Although he engages extensively with Augustine and Aquinas in his discussion of creation (Topic V, QQ I–XIV), his treatment of the Trinitarian structure in the human soul remains notably absent.

While Turretin does not directly critique the Augustinian account of the Trinitarian image in the soul, other figures within the Reformed tradition, like John Calvin, adopt a more critical posture.⁴⁹ In his commentary on Genesis, Calvin explicitly says:

Augustine, beyond all others, speculates with excessive refinement for the purpose of fabricating a Trinity in man. For in laying hold of the three faculties of the soul enumerated by Aristotle, the intellect, the memory, and the will, he afterward out of one Trinity derives many... I acknowledge, indeed, that there is something in man which refers to the Father, and the Son, and the Spirit: and I have no difficulty in admitting the above distinction of the faculties of the soul: although the simpler division into two parts, which is more used in Scripture, is better adapted to the sound doctrine of piety; but a definition of the image of God ought to rest on a firmer basis than such subtleties.⁵⁰

Turretin's own approach reflects a comparable reserve, though expressed less polemically.

His definition of the *imago Dei* begins by articulating both what the image is not and what it is. Negatively, he insists that the divine image must be understood in an ectypical manner: "which is made after a copy of another thing, or similitude itself."⁵¹ This means specifically that the image does not consist of:

A participation of the divine essence (*as if the nature of man were a shadow of the divine* and a certain particle of the divine breath, as the Gentiles hold). For in this way the Son of God only is 'the image of the invisible God' (Col. 1:15)—the essential and natural, and no mortal can attain to it because the finite cannot be a partaker of the infinite.⁵²

In positing this, he not only repudiates pagan pantheistic conceptions of the soul as a divine emanation but also implicitly corrects certain medieval tendencies, particularly within the Franciscan tradition, that appeal to the Trinitarian image in the human soul as a means of explaining the divine processions as emanations in a quasi-univocal manner.⁵³

Conversely, Turretin rejects any notion of the univocity of being.⁵⁴ He maintains that participation in the divine life is never "essential, formal, and intrinsic," but rather "analogical, accidental, and extrinsic." This means that participation for Turretin is grounded in effects "analogous to the divine perfections produced in us by the Spirit according to the image of God."⁵⁵ In other words, believers truly partake of the divine life (cf. 2 Pet 1:4), yet

this participation takes place through an “imperfect similitude” with respect to nature, gifts, and state, rather than by essence.⁵⁶

Positively, Turretin locates the image in the “gifts bestowed upon man by creation.”⁵⁷ These created gifts include both internal faculties and external prerogatives, including features rooted in the very constitution of human nature (such as intellect and will) and qualities superadded to it (such as original righteousness and dominion).⁵⁸ These gifts, as a whole, situate humanity in a unique position within the created order as the visible creature “more closely allied to God.”⁵⁹

Turretin adds that these gifts are mainly made up of three elements: 1) The ontological element in the very nature of the human soul. Turretin describes the soul as spiritual and incorruptible, “immortal intrinsically and as to its faculties, viz., the intellect and will and the liberty arising from both.”⁶⁰ These faculties, which “belong eminently and most perfectly to God,” are impressed upon the soul by way of created similitude.⁶¹ Even after the Fall, “the essence of the soul and the gifts” remain, indicating that this ontological aspect of the image is not entirely effaced.⁶²

2) The moral element consisting in original righteousness. This refers to the gifts bestowed upon humanity at creation, by which there existed perfect harmony among the human faculties and full conformity to the will of God.⁶³ Turretin maintains that Adam was created upright (Eccl. 7:29), possessing a disposition ordered toward perfect obedience.⁶⁴ Although this righteousness is supernatural in origin, it is nonetheless connatural to human nature, insofar as it is “necessary to the perfection of innocent man.”⁶⁵ For this reason, he rejects the notion that Adam was created in a state of *pura naturalia*, affirming instead that righteousness belonged to humanity from the beginning.⁶⁶ This position enables him to distance himself both from the Thomistic doctrine of pure nature and from Pelagian moralism, while affirming that the loss of this righteousness entails total depravity and the absolute necessity of grace — central commitments of Reformed theology.⁶⁷

3) The functional element of the image expressed in humanity’s dominion over creation, which is the authority to govern and order the created world reflects, in a finite and analogical manner, the justice and sovereignty of God.⁶⁸

In sum, Turretin generally aligns with a Thomistic metaphysics that rejects any idea of univocity of being. The *imago Dei*, in this sense, does not function as an explanatory bridge to the divine processions. However, unlike the Augustinian and medieval tradition, Turretin does not develop a robust account of the *vestigia Trinitatis*, nor does he employ the structure of the human soul as a contemplative pathway into the divine life. Instead, the image is situated within a covenantal and redemptive framework, leaving no room for a purely natural state.⁶⁹

Divine Processions and the Psychological Analogy

Turretin's treatment of the immanent life of God begins with a careful acknowledgment of the limitations of human language and conceptual categories in articulating divine mysteries. At the outset of his discussion of the divine processions, he recognizes that while distinctions within the Trinity may be classified—whether as real, formal, virtual, or personal—such categories “very imperfectly adumbrate” the mystery of God's inner life, precisely because they are derived “from human and finite things.”⁷⁰ Consequently, he cautions that it is better to rest in the general affirmation that a distinction exists, while acknowledging that “what and how great it is cannot be comprehended and expressed by us.”⁷¹

Conversely, Turretin maintains that the one that most nearly approximates a proper clarification of this mystery is the modal distinction (*distinctio modalis*).⁷² As he put it, persons are distinguished by “certain modes by which they may be characterized.”⁷³ These modes do not introduce a real or formal distinction (*realiter*), but they are distinguished eminently and analogically, “as mode from the thing” (*modus a re*).⁷⁴

This distinction, as Turretin clarifies, cannot introduce any composition in God, precisely because of the fundamental axiom of divine simplicity.⁷⁵ As he explains, “we do not have a thing and a thing, but a thing and the modes of the thing.”⁷⁶ To put it another way, the modal distinction within the divine essence does not posit something really distinct from that essence, since modes are not parts but manners of subsistence. Accordingly, the essence “is not compounded but *distinguished*.”⁷⁷

In this sense, for Turretin, the personal properties of the divine persons (relative and modal) are not understood as accidents nor additions to the divine being, nor do they constitute a second essence alongside it. They are,

as Turretin explain, not formally identical with the divine essence considered in the abstract: “It is God in the concrete, but not in the abstract.”⁷⁸ Thus, *divinity* denotes the divine essence in the abstract, whereas “God the Father,” “God the Son,” and “God the Spirit” signify that same divine essence subsisting according to the mode of paternity, filiation, and spiration. Thus, the Father, the Son, and the Spirit are truly and fully God, yet not reducible to the essence considered abstractly, thereby preserving a real distinction among the persons without compromising divine simplicity.⁷⁹

In sum, each person of the Trinity “is indeed God in concrete,” yet cannot be identified with the essence taken absolutely, since that essence subsists inseparably in the three persons and is defined by its triune modes of subsistence.⁸⁰

This metaphysical framework is decisive for our purposes. By grounding personal distinction in modes of subsistence rather than in any composition or division within the divine essence, Turretin establishes from the outset that the mystery of the Trinity cannot be explained through created categories in any univocal or determinative manner. Consequently, as we will see below, his appropriation of the psychological analogy remains strictly analogical, subordinate, and non-explanatory with respect to the divine processions (i.e., a “soft use of the analogy”).

However, rather than functioning as an explanatory principle, the psychological analogy is carefully circumscribed and employed in a secondary, pedagogical manner—a pattern that becomes evident in his treatment of the generation of the Son.

The Generation of the Son

Turretin affirms that the Son proceeds from the Father by way of “eternal generation.”⁸¹ In continuity with Nicene Trinitarianism, he upholds the Son’s eternal and consubstantial nature (*homoousios*) while insisting that the manner of this generation transcends human comprehension and cannot be “conceived or explained by us” (cf. Isa. 53:8).⁸² For Turretin, the mystery of the generation of the Son stands at the very center of orthodox Christian confession—a conviction consistently upheld by the Church Fathers, including Ambrose, Gregory of Nazianzus, Athanasius, and Hilary, all of whom urged reverent silence before what is ineffable. Accordingly, he maintains that we must simply confess that

the Son “was begotten,” without presuming to explain this truth through human reasoning.⁸³

In this context, Turretin identifies two principal errors within medieval scholasticism—likely directed against stronger deployments of the psychological analogy and certain emanationist tendencies.⁸⁴ First, such approaches transgress the limits established by Scripture. Second, they attempt to investigate and explain “the mode of this generation,” which is “not only ineffable but also incomprehensible even to the angels themselves.”⁸⁵ In contrast to such approaches, Turretin refuses to treat the psychological analogy as an explanatory model capable of disclosing the inner logic of the divine processions. Given the infinite distance between Creator and creature, Turretin regards any univocal use of human faculties (e.g., memory, intellect, and will) to describe the divine life as prone to anthropomorphic distortion because the divine processions “greatly differ (whether we consider the principle, the mode, or the end).”⁸⁶ In short, he stands in continuity with Aquinas in rejecting any univocal application of the psychological analogy, since “the finite is incapable of the infinite.”⁸⁷

This caution was particularly significant in Turretin’s theological context, where Socinian and Arian critiques frequently targeted the doctrine of the Trinity. A univocal deployment of the psychological analogy could easily be construed as an attempt to comprehend fully the divine mystery, thereby providing opponents with grounds to dismiss the doctrine as speculative, unnecessary, or overly complex.⁸⁸

Nevertheless, Turretin does make qualified use of the analogy in relation to the mental procession of the Son.⁸⁹ He notes that analogies drawn “either from the mind, which by understanding itself forms the idea and image of itself within itself ... or from the sun, from which rays simultaneously emanate,” may, to some extent, “illustrate this mystery.” This reflects a distinctly “soft” use of the psychological analogy: it serves to illuminate what has been revealed without functioning as a causal or explanatory account of the divine processions, since it cannot provide “a full and accurate determination of the mode of this generation.”⁹⁰ The warrant for such usage lies in Scripture itself, which speaks of Christ as the Son of God, the Logos, “Wisdom,” “the image of God,” and “the brightness of the Father’s glory.”⁹¹

Accordingly, the mystery of generation must be approached with theological sobriety: we affirm “the fact (τῷ ὄντι)” — clearly revealed in Scripture — while refraining from any attempt to define or investigate “the mode,” which remains wholly incomprehensible, and is therefore to be left to “God, who alone most perfectly knows Himself.”⁹² In this way, Turretin preserves the analogy as a legitimate theological aid while decisively denying it any explanatory or determinative role in accounting for the generation of the Son. However, as will become evident, this limited use cannot be extended to the procession of the Spirit.

The Procession of the Spirit

Turretin begins his treatment of the Spirit’s procession, affirming both the eternality and consubstantiality of the Spirit’s procession. The Spirit shares “the same numerical essence” with the other divine persons.⁹³ For Turretin, what distinguishes this procession from the generation of the Son lies in the distinct relations of origin by which the persons are constituted: they are “different persons who stand related to each other in origin.”⁹⁴ Beyond this, however, “the nature of that distinction cannot be explained and may more safely be unknown than inquired into.”⁹⁵

Turretin regards this approach to the procession of the Spirit as fully consistent with the orthodox confession of the Christian faith, as attested by many of the Church Fathers.⁹⁶ In order to prove this, he appeals to authorities such as John of Damascus and Augustine, that affirm the ineffability of this mystery.⁹⁷ Thus, as in the case of the generation of the Son, the precise nature of this distinction remains incomprehensible to all created intellects.

Turretin turns to the psychological analogy as developed within scholastic theology, saying: “I know that the Scholastics wish to derive this difference from the operation of the intellect (*modum intellectus*) — hence he is called the Wisdom of God; but procession by way of the will (*modum voluntatis*) — hence he is called Love and Charity.” Yet he contends that, lacking firm scriptural grounding, such an analogy, “entangles rather than explains.”⁹⁸ In this sense, whereas a limited, analogical use may be cautiously admitted with respect to generation of the Son, Turretin refuses to extend even this qualified use to the procession of the Spirit.

For Turretin, the psychological analogy is not a sufficient foundation for establishing what differentiates divine processions. Instead, he articulates this distinction in three ways:

1) in the principle, because the Son emanates from the Father alone, but the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son together. 2) In the mode, because the Son emanates by way of generation, which terminates not only on the personality, but also on the similarity (on account of which the Son is called the image of the Father and according to which the Son receives the property of communicating to another person the same essence; but the Spirit by way of spiration, which terminates only on the personality and by which the proceeding person does not receive the property of communicating that essence to another person). 3) In the order, because as the Son is the second person and the Spirit the third, generation in our mode of conceiving precedes spiration (although they are really coeternal).⁹⁹

Turretin grounds the distinction of the processions not in speculative analogies drawn from the human mind, but in relational, modal, and ordered distinctions that remain faithful to the limits of revelation. This threefold account is decisive, for it preserves real differentiation among the persons, avoiding any univocal or explanatory use of the psychological analogy.

In sum, Turretin's concern is not that the psychological analogy is inherently false, but that, lacking clear scriptural warrant, it risks assuming more explanatory weight than revelation permits. While he appears more at ease employing intellectual language in reference to the Son, he is notably hesitant to ground the Spirit's personal distinction in categories such as will or love. In his judgment, such an approach risks speculative excess and ultimately obscures rather than clarifies the true basis of distinction, which lies not in psychological operations but in relations of origin.

CONCLUSION

Turretin's treatment of the psychological analogy fits well within Richard Muller's general thesis: Reformed theologians tended to avoid both "Augustine's more speculative psychological analogies," preferring instead the patristic restraint exemplified by Gregory of Nazianzus.¹⁰⁰

In this context, Turretin's use of the psychological analogy serves to illuminate and enrich this thesis in several ways. Particularly, it may be articulated in two key respects. First, Turretin's position may be understood as a moderated or qualified retrieval of the Thomistic account of the psychological analogy—that is, a soft use of the analogy. This is confirmed by the fact that 1) Turretin operates within a metaphysical and theological framework that, in many respects, aligns with the Thomistic tradition, and 2) he permits a limited, illustrative use of the psychological analogy in relation to the Son. Turretin, in this sense, does not follow the nominalist and minimalist tendencies associated with William of Ockham, in which the analogy is excluded altogether, and the knowledge of God is construed in radically apophatic terms.¹⁰¹

Consequently, the stronger criticisms in the *Institutes* are primarily directed against emanationist tendencies and against more robust deployments of the analogy that imply the possibility of a quasi-univocal knowledge of the divine processions.¹⁰² His rejection does not stem from an aversion to metaphysics or philosophical theology *per se*.¹⁰³ Rather, it reflects his deep conviction that theological speculation must remain subordinated to special revelation.¹⁰⁴ The problem, in his judgment, is not merely methodological but doctrinal: speculative reasoning that exceeds the bounds of Scripture obscures rather than clarifies the doctrine of the Trinity—particularly in contexts where precision is required to respond to heresy.¹⁰⁵

Second, Turretin's use of the psychological analogy is not a mere repetition of the Thomistic account, but a deliberately qualified appropriation of it. Two features define his more moderate deployment of the analogy. First, in contrast to Aquinas—who develops the psychological analogy more fully and assigns it a more prominent role in his Trinitarian theology, arguably even beyond Augustine—Turretin deliberately refrains from granting it such doctrinal weight in his theology.¹⁰⁶

As Muller rightly observes, for the Reformed Orthodox “the doctrine of the Trinity is not a proper place for extensive rational demonstration and argumentation.”¹⁰⁷ In contrast, their call was to ground the traditional language and formulation of Trinitarian doctrine more fully and explicitly in Scripture than had been done for centuries.¹⁰⁸ As a result, Turretin's

approach is primarily deeply exegetical and secondarily firmly rooted in the classical tradition.¹⁰⁹

Second, Turretin exhibits a marked reservation regarding the description of the Spirit's procession as Love.¹¹⁰ Unlike Augustine and the medieval tradition more broadly, he does not find sufficient scriptural warrant for construing this procession in explicitly volitional terms. While certain biblical texts (e.g., John 1:1–3; Heb 1:3; Prov 8:22–31) may suggest analogical patterns supporting the Son's generation as Word or Wisdom, Turretin judges that such evidence is not sufficiently explicit to sustain a systematic account grounded in human psychological faculties—particularly when applied to the Spirit.

¹ Richard A. Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics: The Rise and Development of Reformed Orthodoxy, ca. 1520 to ca. 1725*, 2nd edition, 4 vols (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003), 4:20–21, 68–69, 73, 85–86, 114–115, 138, 157–165, 167, 287–288, 371–372, 376–378, 409–410.

² Muller, *PRRD*, 4:157.

³ Turretin belongs to the period of High Orthodoxy (ca. 1640–1725), which, according to Muller's explanation, is characterized by a greater theological synthesis and a more codified approach to defending Reformed doctrine. This period intensifies polemics against doctrinal adversaries, addresses internal controversies like Amyraldianism, and expands debates on the Trinity with the Socinians. It also features a more explicit understanding of theological tradition, including contributions from the Middle Ages. Muller, *PRRD*, 1:31–32. In *Ad fontes argumentorum*, Mullers asserts that "Reformed orthodoxy was, after all, a living movement reflective of its own contexts and not merely a carbon copy of the thought of the Reformers: but what we can declare, with some confidence, is that the developing tradition of Reformed theology in the seventeenth century paid close attention to its roots in the Reformation and was concerned as it encountered new adversaries and new problems." Richard A. Muller, *After Calvin: Studies in the Development of a Theological Tradition*, Oxford Studies in Historical Theology (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 53.

⁴ Russell L. Friedman, *Medieval Trinitarian Thought from Aquinas to Ockham* (Cambridge University Press, 2010), 50.

⁵ As will be shown below, there is not a single psychological analogy of the Trinity; rather, both Augustine and later medieval theologians develop multiple such analogies. In this instance, I focus on the most well-known formulation in order to illustrate its theological function.

⁶ The diagram presented here is based on the classical "Trinity shield" (*scutum fidei*), a well-known visual summary of the non-negotiable boundaries of Trinitarian orthodoxy—namely, that each divine person is fully God, yet not identical to the others, while God remains one. In this study, I adapt the logical structure of this traditional schema as a pedagogical tool to elucidate the psychological analogy, applying its "is/is not" relations to the faculties of the human mind (intellect, memory, and will) in order to clarify unity and distinction without confusion or division. I first encountered this way of explaining the psychological analogy through the teaching of my mentor, Dr. Kyle Claunch, in his course on the doctrine of the Trinity during my doctoral studies.

⁷ Edmund J. Fortman, *The Triune God: A Historical Study of the Doctrine of the Trinity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1982), 148; For a more extensive explanation of the psychological analogy in Augustine, see Lewis Ayres, "Augustine on the Trinity," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Trinity*, ed. Matthew Levering and Giles Emery, Oxford Handbooks (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 133–134; Likewise, Ayres in chapter eleven and twelve of his book *Augustine and the Trinity* explains in detail the best way to understand what Augustine is doing in chapter 8–15 in *The Trinity (De Trin)*. Lewis Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity*, Cambridge Books Online (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511780301>.

- 8 Friedman, *Medieval Trinitarian Thought from Aquinas to Ockham*, 3.
- 9 For a more extensive treatment of the image of God in Augustine and its relation to the Trinity, see chapters 1 through 4 in John Sullivan, *The Image of God: The Doctrine of St. Augustine and Its Influence* (Dubuque, Iowa: Priory Press, 1963).
- 10 Augustine, *City of God*. XI. 24, 225. This view expresses, as Lewis Ayres observes, more than the principle of inseparable operations. He affirms that created being carries the *impressio Trinitatis* — a mark of the triune causality *ad extra* that ultimately directs the mind toward the eternal relations *ad intra*. Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity*, 278.
- 11 Augustine, *On the Literal Interpretation of Genesis (On Gen)*. XVI, 55, p. 183.
- 12 Augustine, *On Gen*. XVI, 58, 61, p. 184–186; see also Augustine, 83 *Different Questions*. 23, p. 50.
- 13 Augustine, *City of God*. VIII–XVI. 233; Friedman, *Medieval Trinitarian Thought from Aquinas to Ockham*, 3.
- 14 Friedman, *Medieval Trinitarian Thought from Aquinas to Ockham*, 54–55.
- 15 Augustine, *De Trin*. XII, 4, 25.
- 16 These include: (1) mind, self-knowledge, and self-love; (2) memory, understanding, and will; and (3) memory, understanding, and love of God. Augustine, *De Trin*. XV, 1, 4; VIII, 5, 14, 25; XV, 1, 4; IX, 1, 8.
- 17 This analogy begins with the triad that Augustine established in Book VIII, consisting of love, the lover, and the beloved: “love means someone loving and something loved with love. There you are with three, the lover, what is being loved, and love” Augustine, *De Trin*. VIII, 5, 14, 25. When this distinction is applied to the concept of self-love, it suggests a unity and diversity appropriate for reflecting the internal mode of Trinitarian life.
- 18 Augustine affirms that: “Just as you have two somethings, mind and its love, when it loves itself, so you have two somethings, mind and its knowledge, when it knows itself. The mind therefore and its love and knowledge are three somethings, and these three are one thing, and when they are complete they are equal.” Augustine, *De Trin*. IX, 1, 4. For detail analysis see Sullivan, *The Image of God*, 118–119.
- 19 Augustine, *De Trin*. IX, 1, 8.
- 20 Augustine, *De Trin*. XV, 1, 4.
- 21 Augustine, *De Trin*. X, 4, 18.
- 22 Augustine, *De Trin*. XIV, 3, 13.
- 23 Despite this, the self in Augustine’s theology should not be understood as entirely independent of God, who is the true object of the image. Sullivan, *Image of God*, 136; Augustine states that the last trinity discovered in man is a trinity that “belongs to the outer man, because it has been brought in from bodily things which have been sensed outside” Augustine, *De Trin*. XV, 1, 5.
- 24 Augustine, *De Trin*. XIV, 4, 21.
- 25 Augustine, *De Trin*. XIV, 4, 15.
- 26 Augustine, *De Trin*. XV, 1, 5.
- 27 Maarten Wisse, *Trinitarian Theology Beyond Participation: Augustine’s De Trinitate and Contemporary Theology*, T&T Clark Studies in Systematic Theology, v. 11 (T&T Clark, 2011), 149.
- 28 Trinitarian theology, metaphysics, and medieval theories of the mind are highly complex and very specialized fields. For this reason, my treatment is by no means exhaustive. Therefore, I have a very more modest aim: I seek simply to offer a general synthesis of two main metaphysical approaches to the use of the psychological analogy in medieval Trinitarian theology. For exhaustive treatment on the topic, see Friedman, *Medieval Trinitarian Thought from Aquinas to Ockham*.
- 29 Friedman, *Medieval Trinitarian Thought from Aquinas to Ockham*, 3; see also Muller, *PRRD*, 4:37.
- 30 Muller, *PRRD*, 4:20. Aquinas, for example, combines Augustinian and Aristotelian insights into human cognition. From Aristotle, he appropriates the view that intellectual knowledge culminates in the formation of an intelligible concept, while from Augustine he retains the emphasis on the interior act by which understanding is completed. The resulting notion of an interior or “mental word” functions as a conceptual synthesis of these traditions and supplies the philosophical basis for Aquinas’s use of the psychological analogy. Friedman, *Medieval Trinitarian Thought from Aquinas to Ockham*, 52, 55, 79.
- 31 As Thomas Joseph White notes, the analogy proved particularly effective against Arianism, which located the divine processions outside of God, and Sabellianism, which denied real distinctions within the divine essence. White, *The Trinity*, 392.
- 32 White, *The Trinity*, 374–375.
- 33 Friedman argues that “A number of theologians from the early to the mid-fourteenth century take defending God’s absolute simplicity to be the most important goal in trinitarian theology.” *Medieval Trinitarian Thought from Aquinas to Ockham*, 98

- 34 Friedman, *Medieval Trinitarian Thought from Aquinas to Ockham*, 51.
- 35 Friedman, *Medieval Trinitarian Thought from Aquinas to Ockham*, 51; emphasis mine. As Friedman comments, "For the Franciscans in general, psychological theory, for example theories of concepts and their formation, could and should be used to answer trinitarian questions, and there is an incredibly close interaction in their writings between trinitarian theology and what we would today call the philosophy of mind." *Medieval Trinitarian Thought from Aquinas to Ockham*, 51.
- 36 Friedman in *Medieval Trinitarian Thought from Aquinas to Ockham*, 59–60. For a detailed account on the philosophical psychology and the background of later-medieval theory of cognition, see 76–93.
- 37 White, *The Trinity*, 375.
- 38 Richard Cross explains that Scotus distinguishes this notional act of love from God's essential love common to the three persons: the notional act presupposes knowledge and has the divine essence itself as its proper object. Richard Cross, *Duns Scotus*, Great Medieval Thinkers (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 63. Other important representatives of this view are Henry of Ghent and Peter Auriol. Friedman elaborates in these authors' use of the psychological model extensively in *Medieval Trinitarian Thought from Aquinas to Ockham*.
- 39 Scotus, I *Ordinatio* (Ord). D13, no. 21, 23 translated and quoted in Friedman, *Medieval Trinitarian Thought from Aquinas to Ockham*, 75. Similarly, Auriol, arguing contra the more Thomistic account elaborated by Durandus of St. Pourçain says: "The Holy Spirit does not pertain to love metaphorically or transumptively, rather most properly. For an exemplar is not called such because of its likeness to the image — quite the opposite: the image is called such because of its likeness to the exemplar. The trinity, however, that pertains to the image in us consists in a word pertaining to the intellect and a spirit that pertains to love. Therefore, it is not because of their likeness to [the word and spirit] as they exist in us, that the Word and Spirit in the divine, whose image is in our soul, will pertain to the nature (ratio) of intellect and of love, but rather vice versa." Auriol, *Scriptum*, D10, art. 3 translated and quoted in Friedman, *Medieval Trinitarian Thought from Aquinas to Ockham*, 113–114. Auriol's claim marks a decisive intensification of the psychological analogy. By reversing the direction of likeness, he refuses to treat the mental word and love in the human soul as merely accommodated images of the divine processions. Instead, he insists that the divine Word and Spirit are the primary realities, while human cognition and love are images precisely because they participate in and derive from these divine exemplars. Then, the divine persons are understood as subsisting acts of intellect and will, and human mental operations are intelligible only as secondary participations in these divine processions.
- 40 Friedman, *Medieval Trinitarian Thought from Aquinas to Ockham*, 109.
- 41 Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* (Summa). Q32, art. 1. The mystery of the Trinity, he insists, is knowable only through revelation and thus lies beyond the natural comprehension of human reason. As White clarifies: "Aquinas is not pretending to discover this analogy, since it has clear roots in the New Testament and has already been subject to developed consideration in the Fathers before him, as well as in the reflection of other medieval thinkers. He does, however, develop his own interpretation of the tradition, which depends in part on his unique understanding of cognition and volition in human beings, and how these processes may be thought of by similitude to the processions in God." *The Trinity*, 413.
- 42 Aquinas's doctrine of analogy secures real theological knowledge without compromising divine incomprehensibility. Gilles Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas* (Oxford University Press, 2007), 108; cf. Aquinas, *Summa*. I, Q15, art 3, 5; I *Commentary on the Sentences* (Sent). D25, Q1, art 1.
- 43 White, *The Trinity*, 375, 385. The foundation of Aquinas's psychological analogy lies in God as the ultimate exemplar, not in humanity. This means that faculties such as memory, understanding, and will are present in God as their original source. Humans possess these faculties analogically, mirroring God's ability to understand, love, and will. This distinction is vital, as Aquinas does not attempt to resolve the mystery of the Trinity through anthropology. Aquinas says in the *Summa* that in humanity it is possible to find asserts Aquinas, it is possible to find "some likeness to God, copied from God as from an exemplar. Yet this likeness is not one of equality, for such an exemplar infinitely excels its copy." Aquinas, *Summa*. Q95, art 1.
- 44 Aquinas explicitly rejects any transitive conception of procession such as those implied by Arianism and Sabellianism. For this purpose, the psychological analogy is crucial, since the faculties of the mind illustrate immanent acts that remain within the subject. Gilles Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas* (Oxford University Press, 2007), 55.
- 45 Gilles Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas* (Oxford University Press, 2007), 55–57.
- 46 Emery, *Trinitarian Theology of St. Thomas Aquinas*, 228; cf. Aquinas, *Summa* I, Q37, art. 1.
- 47 Aquinas, *Summa*. Q45, art. 7.

- 48 Muller, *PRRD*, 4:157–159.
- 49 Calvin formulated a more holistic concept of the image of humanity, avoiding its exclusive localization in the intellect: "And although the primary seat of the divine image was in the mind and heart, or the soul and its powers, yet there was no part of man, not even the body itself, in which some sparks did not glow." Calvin, *Inst.* I, XV. 3.
- 50 Calvin, *Commentaries on the First Book of Moses (Comm.)*, 93. However, his view was not necessarily uniform. Other figures like Pierre Viret, Moise Amyraut, and Richard Baxter offered a more positive interpretation of the Trinitarian image, aligning more closely with Augustine. Muller, *PRRD*, 4:157, 114–115; Dennis R. Klinck, in his detailed *the trinitatis* in man during the English Renaissance, notes that this concept "was a serious concern of many Christian writers of the English Renaissance and was frequently invoked to explain aspects of their experience." He identifies four distinct areas where the notion of the Trinitarian image was applied: "(1) to psychology, the structure of the mind or soul of man; (2) to the analysis of sin; (3) to the creations or compositions of the human mind, indeed, to 'knowledge'; and (4) as a reconciliatory principle, to the problem of opposites or division, as in Bostocke's analysis." Dennis R. Klinck, "Vestigia Trinitatis in Man and His Works in the English Renaissance," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 42, no. 1 (1981): 27
- 51 Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology (Inst.)* 5. 10. II.
- 52 Turretin, *Inst.* 5. 9. II; emphasis mine.
- 53 Friedman, *Medieval Trinitarian Thought from Aquinas to Ockham*, 59–60. In this view, the Son's generation was not merely symbolic but an actual outflow of divine knowledge, while the Spirit's procession was a real outflow of divine love. This view, as Steven Duby notes, blurs the Creator–creature distinction by implying a conceptual and ontological continuity between God and creation, as if divine perfections could be understood under a shared notion of being (univocity of being). Steven J. Duby, *God in Himself: Scripture, Metaphysics, and the Task of Christian Theology*, *Studies in Christian Doctrine and Scripture* (IVP Academic, 2019), 197–200.
- 54 Duby, *God in Himself*, 202; Richard Muller, "Not Scotist: Understandings of Being, Univocity, and Analogy in Early-Modern Reformed Thought," *Reformation & Renaissance Review* 14 [2012]: 127–50.
- 55 Turretin, *Inst.* 5. 10. II.
- 56 Turretin, *Inst.* 5. 10. II. For Turretin, this participation occurs *per modum effectuum*—through the effects of the Spirit who conforms the believer to the image of God in an ectypal manner. The divine archetype, though incommunicable in its infinite plenitude, serves as the exemplar of the ectypal image: a finite, created, analogical gift through which humanity reflects God's wisdom, righteousness, and love. In this sense, Turretin rather than negating a real participation in God, proposes that the gracious economy of divine condescension is the means by which this participation is secured. Turretin, *Inst.* 1:1. 2. VI; Duby, *God in Himself*, 39.
- 57 Turretin, *Inst.* 5. 10. VI.
- 58 Turretin, *Inst.* 5. 10. VI-VII.
- 59 Turretin, *Inst.* 5. 10. VI.
- 60 Turretin, *Inst.* 5. 10. VII.
- 61 Turretin, *Inst.* 5. 10. VII.
- 62 Turretin, *Inst.* 5. 10. VII.
- 63 Turretin, *Inst.* 5. 10. VIII-X.
- 64 Turretin, *Inst.* 1:5. 1. VI.
- 65 Turretin, *Inst.* 1:5. 1. VI. Mark J. Beach has noted that this conception was central to Turretin's doctrine of the covenant of creation (or covenant works). Human beings, created in God's image, are made dependent upon and for fellowship with God. They were capable of obeying the law and, as rational creatures, of being governed by legal prescriptions (promises and threats). Mark Beach J., *Christ and the Covenant: Francis Turretin's Federal Theology as a Defense of the Doctrine of Grace*, *Reformed Historical Theology*, v. 1 (Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007), 95–96.
- 66 Turretin, *Inst.* 1:5. 9. V.
- 67 Muller, *PRRD*, 4:164. For a more extended elaboration of Turretin's rejection of the idea of pure nature, see Roberto A. Martinez, "Grace, Infused Habits, and Christ's Humanity: A Comparison Between Thomas Aquinas and Francis Turretin," *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 29, no. 2 (2025): 32–33.
- 68 Turretin, *Inst.* 5. 10. XXII.
- 69 Martinez, "Grace, Infused Habits, and Christ's Humanity," 33.
- 70 Turretin, *Inst.* 3. 27. I-II.
- 71 Turretin, *Inst.* 3. 27. XV.

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- 72 Turretin, *Inst.* 3. 27. II.
- 73 Turretin, *Inst.* 3. 27. II.
- 74 Turretin, *Inst.* 3. 27. III.
- 75 Turretin, *Inst.* 3. 27. IV.
- 76 Turretin, *Inst.* 3. 27. IV. Turretin employs the Aristotelian categories of potency and act to argue that composition cannot exist in God.
- 77 Turretin, *Inst.* 3. 27. IV; emphasis mine.
- 78 Turretin, *Inst.* 3. 27. V.
- 79 Turretin, *Inst.* 3. 27. V-VIII.
- 80 Regarding God's power and wisdom, these attributes are attributed to the divine essence. However, their manifestation is unique to each person of the Trinity, expressed according to their specific mode of subsistence: paternal, filial, or aspirational. Turretin, *Inst.* 3. 27. V-VII.
- 81 Turretin, *Inst.* 3. 27. XVII.
- 82 Turretin, *Inst.* 3. 29. III.
- 83 Ambrose states, "For here the voice is silent, the mind fails; not only mine, but even that of angels," and Gregory Nazianzus affirmed that "The begetting of God is to be honored by silence." Turretin, *Inst.* 3. 29. III; cf. Ambrose, *On Christian Faith* 1.10.64; Nazianzus, *Theological Orations*. On the Son 8. Additionally, he references Athanasius, who, in his defense against Arius, stated: "how the Word is from God, or how he is the brightness of God, or how God begets and what is the mode of his generation. For he is crazy who would attempt such things, since he would essay to interpret in words a thing ineffable and proper to the divine nature and known only to himself and his Son." Similarly, Hilary remarked: "As the Father is inexpressible in that he is unbegotten; so the Son in that he is the only begotten cannot be expressed because he who is begotten is the image of the unbegotten." Turretin, *Inst.* 3. 29. XXX; cf. Athanasius, *Four Discourses Against the Arians* 2.36; Hilary, *The Trinity* 3.18.
- 84 White, *The Trinity*, 375–382.
- 85 Turretin, *Inst.* 3. 29. XXX.
- 86 Turretin, *Inst.* 3. 29. III.
- 87 Turretin, *Inst.* 3. 8. X.
- 88 For a more detailed discussion of 17th-century heresies, see Muller, *PRRD*, 4:89–94, 99–102.
- 89 This is significant because it shows that Turretin is not developing his theology of the divine processions—or his use of the psychological analogy—along nominalist lines, which tended toward a more radical apophaticism regarding knowledge of the inner life of God. See White, *The Trinity*, 375–395.
- 90 Turretin, *Inst.* 3. 29. XXXI.
- 91 Turretin, *Inst.* 3. 29. XXXI.
- 92 Turretin, *Inst.* 3. 29. XXXI.
- 93 Turretin, *Inst.* 3. 31. I.
- 94 Turretin, *Inst.* 3. 31. I.
- 95 Turretin, *Inst.* 3. 31. III.
- 96 Muller observes, "The Reformed orthodox, however, typically take the path of the later fathers as opposed to that of the medieval scholastics: they recognize that there is a difference but refrain from speculation concerning the nature of the difference between the procession of the Spirit and the generation of the Son." Muller, *PRRD*, 4:372.
- 97 John Damascus declares, "that there is a difference between generation and procession, we have learned, but what the nature of the distinction is we by no means understand," and Augustine, similarly states, "there is a difference between generation and procession, but I know not how to distinguish them because they are both inexpressible." Turretin, *Inst.* 3.31.III; cf. John of Damascus, *Exposition of the Orthodox Faith* 1.8; Augustine, *Contra Maximinum* 2.14.
- 98 Turretin, *Inst.* 3. 31. III.
- 99 Turretin, *Inst.* 3. 31. III. See the analysis of Muller, *PRRD*, 4:377. See also Meijering, *Reformierte Scholastik und patristische Theologie*, 148–149.
- 100 Muller, *PRRD*, 4:164, 376, 410. This broader tendency is reflected in figures such as Gisbertus Voetius and Benedict Pictet, who regarded such analogies as speculative and unnecessary. At the same time, other theologians—including Philipp Melancthon, Pierre Viret, Amandus Polanus, and Richard Baxter—made use of mental analogies to varying degrees in their attempts to articulate the inner life of God. Muller, *PRRD*, 4:162, 376, 85–86, 115, 158–159, 162–164.

¹⁰¹ White, *The Trinity*, 386–391.

¹⁰² White, *The Trinity*, 375–382.

¹⁰³ Sebastian Rehnman has proved that Turretin integrated metaphysical categories along with his exegesis in his elaboration of the doctrine of God, see “Theistic Metaphysics and Biblical Exegesis: Francis Turretin on the Concept of God,” *Religious Studies* 38, no. 2 (June 2002): 167–186.

¹⁰⁴ For Turretin, philosophical sound reasoning is always ministerial—“organic, and subordinate to divine revelation.” Turretin, *Inst.*, 1.8. VI. Consequently, he sharply criticizes speculative theology that draws from what he describes as “stagnant pools” rather than the “limpid fountains of Scripture,” warning that such approaches produce “air-walkers” who venture into mysteries beyond their comprehension Turretin, *Inst.*, 3.25.VI.

¹⁰⁵ Turretin, *Inst.*, 3.24.XVI.

¹⁰⁶ Keith A. Johnson, “Augustine of Hippo: Will the Real Augustine Please Stand Up?” in *On Classical Trinitarianism: Retrieving the Nicene Doctrine of the Triune God*, ed. Matthew Barrett (Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP Academic, 2024), 111.

¹⁰⁷ Muller further elaborates that, in general, the Reformed Orthodox: “Feel that dogmatic discussion of the Trinity is mandated by revelation even though the doctrine be an impenetrable mystery—and that, further, the revelation, insofar as it can be understood, must be illustrated or explicated with the tools of reason. The illustrations, however, cannot be considered any more than very limited aids to understanding: here the epistemological side of the Reformed *non capax* comes to the fore [...] These analogies do not serve as proofs, given the inability of the finite creature to rise by analogy from the finite to the infinite.” Muller, *PRRD*, 4:146.

¹⁰⁸ Turretin and the Reformers “could [not] simply reiterate the tradition—rather, they saw the need to explain the doctrine of the Trinity in biblical and exegetical terms and to rely on the terms and *formulae* of the fathers and the councils only as secondary supports of the doctrine.” Muller, *PRRD*, 4:19, 21.

¹⁰⁹ Turretin extensively interacts with Augustine, Hilary, Gregory of Nazianzus, Basil, and Athanasius, among others, and shows that his objective in using the traditional theological language is simply to defend the purity of the doctrine of the Trinity, as it has been revealed in Scripture. Muller, *PRRD*, 4:392.

¹¹⁰ *PRRD*, 4:153, 158, 376. Muller affirms that we do not have to read this criticism as any angry polemic—easily recognized in Turretin’s description of his opponents. In contrast, perhaps we see a gentle critic from the recognition that “some of their Reformed predecessors had adopted the medieval solutions on this point.”