

# The Governmental Theory of the Atonement

By John Miley\*

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This theory also has already come into view more than once. But it is proper to treat it more directly and fully, as we have the other two leading theories. Yet the discussion will require the less elaboration, as many of the principles and facts appertaining to the theory have previously been given, and more or less considered. It mainly concerns us now to bring them together, and to set them in the order of a proper method, and in the light of a more exact and definitive statement. We have indicated our acceptance of this theory as the true theory of atonement. But we so accept it in what really constitutes it a theory, and not in any particular exposition as hitherto given: much less in its diversities as it stands in the history of doctrinal theology. It has not always been fortunate in its exposition. It was not entirely so in the beginning. Its cardinal principles have been clearly enough given. With these given, a true construction of the doctrine should follow. Such, however, has not always been the case. The treatment has often been deficient in analysis or scientific method. Alien elements have been retained; vital facts omitted or wrongly placed. We hold the doctrine as we shall construct and maintain it. As such, it is the doctrine of a real and necessary atonement in Christ. It denies to the Moral theory a rightful position as such. And as the true doctrine is really with the theory of Satisfaction or the Governmental, the error of the former concludes the truth of the latter. It will answer to all the requirements of Scripture interpretation, and to the profoundest necessity for an atonement.

## I. PRELIMINARY FACTS

The discussion of the nature of the atonement as represented in the Governmental theory will run through this chapter and the next succeeding one. It will also be involved in the last one-universality of the atonement. The question of extent is more than a question of fact; it concerns the doctrine also. With this Satisfactionists fully agree. And the next chapter, while given to the elements of sufficiency in the redemptive mediation of Christ, treats them in view of the principles of atonement, and thus involves its nature.

### 1. Substitutional Atonement.

The sufferings of Christ are an atonement for sin by substitution, in the sense that they were intentionally endured for sinners under judicial condemnation, and for the sake of their forgiveness. They are an atonement for sin in the sense that they render its forgiveness consistent with the divine justice. They provide for such consistency, in the sense that justice none the less fulfills its rectoral office in the interest of moral government. Such office of justice is so fulfilled in the sense that, in granting forgiveness only on the ground of such a substitution in atonement, the honor and authority of the divine Ruler, together with the rights and interests of his subjects, are equally maintained as by the infliction of merited penalty upon sin. Such facts, here merely stated, will have their unfolding in the progress of discussion.

## **2. Conditional Substitution.**

The forgiveness of sin has a real conditionality. The fact is given in the clearest utterances of Scripture. It is given in the fact of demerit for refusing the overtures of redemptive grace. It is also given as the only explanation of the fact that, with a real atonement for all, some perish. An atonement for all by absolute substitution would inevitably achieve the salvation of all. The logic of the case gives us this consequence. Satisfactionists freely give it. Their soteriology requires it. It must be so. Therefore a universal atonement, with the fact of a limited actual salvation, is conclusive of a real conditionality in its saving grace. It follows, inevitably, that such an atonement is conditional or provisory, not immediately and necessarily, saving.

The substitution of Christ in atonement for sin must be of a nature consistent with these facts. In such a substitution as would make his vicarious suffering the merited punishment of sin, all for whom he so suffers must be discharged from guilt; must be, even on the ground of justice. This we have shown before. We should thus have an absolute substitution in penalty, together with a provisory atonement and a conditional forgiveness. But such facts have no scientific accordance, and it is impossible to combine them in a doctrine of atonement.

## **3. Substitution in Suffering.**

The substitution of Christ must be of a nature agreeing with the provisory character of the atonement. It could not, therefore, be a substitution in penalty as the merited punishment of sin, for such an atonement is absolute. The substitution, therefore, is in suffering, without the penal element. This agrees with the nature of the atonement as a moral support of justice in its rectoral office, rendering forgiveness consistent with the interest of moral government.

Nor could the sufferings of Christ have been, in any strict or proper sense, a punishment. Demerit, the only ground of punishment, is personal to the actual sinner, and without possible transference. We have seen the futility of attempting the transference of guilt without sin. The result of such a fact would leave the sinful guiltless and make the sinless guilty. On such a possibility guilt has no necessary connection with sin: there is no such possibility. And the substitution of Christ in suffering will satisfy all the requirements of the redemptive economy.

Nor have the vicarious sufferings of Christ, without the penal element, less value for any legitimate purpose or attainable end of substitutional atonement. Such an atonement has great ends in the manifestation of the divine holiness, justice, and love; of the evil of sin; and the certainty of penalty, except as forgiveness may be obtained in the grace of redemption. But for all such ends the theory of vicarious punishment has no advantage above that of vicarious suffering.

If the high assertion be true, that God is under obligation to punish sin as it deserves, and solely on the ground of its demerit, then there is a requirement of justice not fulfilled by

vicarious suffering in atonement. But no more is it in the alleged mode of substitutional punishment; and for reasons previously given. Imputation carried over no sin to Christ. Hence no sin was punished when he suffered.

The punishment of sin does manifest the divine holiness and justice. But this fact gives no advantage to the scheme of substitutional punishment; and for the reason that sin is not punished in Christ. If he is punished, it is in absolute freedom from all demerit of sin. And the recoil of so many minds from such a fact, as one of injustice, is not without reason.

Punishment does declare the evil of sin and the certainty of penalty; but only on the condition that the penal infliction fall upon the demerit of sin. But here, again, the scheme of Satisfaction is denied all advantage, because, according to its own admissions, such is not the fact. And the substitution of Christ in suffering, as the only and necessary ground of forgiveness, will answer for these great ends as fully as such alleged substitution in punishment.

A ground of forgiveness provided in a divine sacrifice infinitely great is a marvelous manifestation of the divine love; but that sacrifice, in every admissible or possible element, is as great in the mode of vicarious suffering as in that of vicarious punishment. The gift of the Father is the same. Nor are the sufferings of the Son less, or other, in any possible element. In neither case could there be any remorse or sense of personal demerit. He could have no sense of the divine wrath against himself. Nor could there be such a divine wrath. The scheme of Satisfaction will so deny. It would repel any accusation that even by implication it attributes to the Father any wrathful bearing toward the Son. "Christ was at no time the object of his Father's personal displeasure, but suffered only the signs the effect, not the affection of divine anger." The incarnation, the self-divestment of a rightful glory in equality with the Father, the assumption, instead, of the form of a servant in the likeness of men, are all the same on the one theory as on the other. There is the same infinite depth of condescension. Equal sorrow and agony force the earnest prayer and bloody sweat in Gethsemane, and the bitter outcry on Calvary.

Any question, therefore, between these two theories respecting the sufferings of Christ, concerns their nature, and not either their measure or redemptive office. And in these facts-in the divine compassion which embraced a perishing world, in the infinite sacrifice of that compassion, in the gracious purpose and provision of that sacrifice-is the manifestation of the divine love. "Herein is love." "God so loved the world." And to call his sufferings penal-or had they been so in fact-would add nothing either to the measure or manifestation of the divine love in human redemption.

Yet, without the penal element in the sufferings of Christ, we may attribute to them a peculiar depth and tone arising out of their relation to sin in their redemptive office, and find the explanation in the facts of psychology. It is no presumption so to apply such facts. The human nature was present as a constituent element in the person of Christ. And there is no more reason to deny its influence upon his consciousness than to deny such

influence to his divine nature. So far, therefore, as his consciousness shared in experiences through the human nature, they would be kindred to our own.

We have our own experiences in the clear apprehension of justice, and sin, and penalty. The feelings hence arising would be far deeper on hearing a verdict of guilt and judgment pronounced upon the criminal. The higher and purer our spiritual nature, still the deeper would these feelings be. And could one with the highest attainable moral perfection redeem a criminal simply by vicarious suffering, his inevitable contact with sin, in the realizations of a most vivid apprehension of its demerit and punishment, would give a peculiar cast and depth to his sufferings.

So was it in the redemptive sufferings of Christ, but in an infinitely deeper sense. In such redemption he must have had in clearest view the divine holiness, and justice, and wrath; the turpitude and demerit of sin; and the terribleness of its merited penalty. Only in such a view could he comprehend his own work or sacrifice in atonement for sin. And, remembering the moral perfection of his nature, and that his contact was with the sins of all men in the full apprehension of their demerit, of the divine wrath against them, of the terribleness of their just doom, and that his own blood and life, in the conscious purpose of their offering, were a sacrifice in atonement for all, we have reason enough for their peculiar tone and awful depth.

It is urged that penal substitution is necessary, not only for the satisfaction of justice, but also "for satisfying the demands of a guilty conscience, which mere pardon never can appease." The connection holds the Rectoral atonement to be as powerless as the Moral scheme for the contentment of conscience. It cannot have rest, except with the merited punishment of sin. Therefore, in the case of forgiveness, such punishment must be endured by a substitute.

We fully accept the fact of a deep sense of punitive demerit on account of sin in a truly awakened conscience. This feeling may be so strong as to result in a desire for punishment. There may even be some relief of conscience from the penal endurance. But such a feeling has respect simply to personal demerit, and can be appeased only through personal punishment-if punishment be really necessary to the appeasement.

What is the law of pacification in substitutional punishment? We know not any. Nor can there be any, except such punishment be in relief of personal character. But this will not be claimed as possible. Further, it is claimed in behalf of atonement by penal substitution, that, more than any thing else, it deepens the sense of sin and personal demerit. But if its tendency is to the very state of mind involving the deepest unrest, it is impossible to see how it can be necessary to the pacification of the conscience. And if we can find rest only through merited punishment, personal or vicarious, we shall never find it either in this world or in the next.

All relief from the trouble and disquietude arising in the sense of sin and guilt, must come in the forgiveness of sin. And to be complete, the forgiveness must be so full and gracious as to draw the soul into a restful assurance of the loving favor of the forgiving

Father. It is no discredit to infinite grace to say, that the sense of demerit for sins committed can never be eradicated, not even in heaven; though the remorse of sin may be taken away here and now. But even such a sense of demerit tends to a measure of unrest forever, and, apart from every other law, would so result. There is still a law of complete rest—such as we have just given. The true rest will come in a full forgiveness, in the assurances of the divine friendship and love, and in a grateful, joyous love answering to the infinite grace of salvation. And the atonement in vicarious suffering answers for such facts as fully as that in penal substitution.

Nor has the atonement in vicarious suffering any tendency or liability to Antinomianism. From its own nature it is a provisory or conditional ground, not a causal ground of forgiveness and salvation. From such an atonement no license to sin can be legitimately taken. Antinomianism is utterly outlawed. We know very well that Satisfactionists very generally discard this heresy. They will deny that it has any logical connection with their theory. Yet in the history of doctrines Antinomianism stands with the soteriology of Satisfaction. Nor does it seem remote from a logical sequence to such an atonement. There is substituted punishment, and also substituted righteousness.

Whatever penalty we deserve Christ bears; whatever obedience we lack he fulfills. He takes our place under both penalty and precept. What he does and suffers in our stead answer for us in the requirements of justice and law as though personally our own. In view of such facts, Antinomianism is far worse in its doctrine than in its logic. But the atonement in Christ does not make void the law. Nor has the true doctrine any liability to such a perversion. The atonement in vicarious suffering has this advantage, and is thereby commended as the true one.

#### **4. The Grotian Theory**

The theory of atonement now under discussion is often called the Edwardean, and also the New England, theory. It has the former title from the younger Edwards, who contributed much, and among the first, to its American formation. Some find, or think they find, its seed-thoughts in the writings of the elder Edwards, and hence so style it. But Satisfactionists deny this source, and earnestly disclaim for him all responsibility for the doctrine. It is called the New England theory because specially elaborated by leading New England divines. But priority and the true originality are with Grotius. Nor can we accord to these very learned and able divines an independent origination of the doctrine. They could not have been ignorant of the work of Grotius, nor that in the deeper principles they were at one with him. With differences respecting many points, there is yet such an agreement.

By common consent, and quite irrespective of all dissent from him in doctrine, Grotius was a man of very extraordinary ability and learned attainment. The literary achievements of his youth are a wonder. Nor did his mature life falsify the promise of such marvelous precocity. His great abilities and vast learning gave him eminence in science, in philosophy, in statesmanship, in law, in theology. He wrote many books, but to only one of which have we any occasion for reference. In theology he was an

Arminian, and at a time when he, with many others, suffered no little persecution. But all the tendencies of his mind, as well as the logic of his reason, gave him preference for this system as in comparison with the Calvinism of Gomarus or the Synod of Dort. There was no narrowness in the cast of his soul. On all great questions his views were at once broad and profound. On the rights of conscience, and of religious and political freedom he was very far in advance of his time. "And, indeed the Arminian doctrine, which, discarding the Calvinistic dogma of absolute predestination, teaches that man is free to accept or to refuse grace, could not fail to suit a mind such as that of Grotius." Yet he was no latitudinarian; nor was his theology a matter of mere sentiment. It was the fruit of profound study. And the more protracted and the profounder his study the more thorough was his Arminianism.

Grotius held firmly the fact of an atonement in Christ. In this faith he undertook its discussion, having in special view its defense against the assumptions and objections of the Socinian scheme. Such is the import of the title which he gave to his work. It is not clear that he began the discussion with full forecast of the outcome. He probably had no new theory previously constructed or even outlined in thought. On the authority of Scripture he was sure of an atonement in the blood of Christ. He was sure, therefore, of the error of the Socinian scheme, and of the fallacy of its objections against this fact. But in its defense he opened his own way to the new theory ever since rightfully connected with his name.

It is rarely the case that the originator of a new theory, especially in a sphere of profound and broadly related doctrinal truth, clears it of all alien elements, or achieves completeness in scientific construction. Such, on this subject, is the fact with Anselm. It is also true of Grotius. We do not, therefore, accept all his positions. Some are not essential to his doctrine. In others he is not entirely self-consistent. We accept what really constitutes his theory, and have little concern for any thing else. He had an equal right with Anselm to construct a doctrine of atonement, and achieved a higher scientific result. Hence the history of doctrines records less modification in his theory than in the Anselmic. We have no occasion either closely to review or to defend him. This would only anticipate much of the discussion assigned to the present chapter. It would be easy to recite reviews from various authors, and to give references to many others. But their very commonness to discussions of the atonement renders this unnecessary. Yet a few references will follow; and we here give a summary statement of his doctrinal position.

"The fundamental error of the Socinian view was found by Grotius to be this: that Socinus regarded God, in the work of redemption, as holding the place merely of a creditor, or master, whose simple will was a sufficient discharge from the existing obligation. But, as we have in the subject before us to deal with punishment and the remission of punishment, God cannot be looked upon as a creditor, or an injured party, since the act of inflicting punishment does not belong to an injured party as such. The right to punish is not one of the rights of an absolute master or of a creditor, these being merely personal in their character; it is the right of a ruler only. Hence God must be considered as a ruler, and the right to punish belongs to the ruler as such, since it exists,

not for the punisher's sake, but for the sake of the commonwealth, to maintain its order and to promote the public good."

The passage just cited is a very free rendering of the original of Grotius, yet sufficing for the leading ideas. It is given as opening up, especially by the logic of its principles, his theory of atonement. It has not entire acceptability. Respecting the right to punish sin as purely a rectoral one, the principle may apply to man, but not to God. He has such a personal right. If Grotius allows an inference to the contrary, so far we think him in error. The case of forgiveness is different; and it is correct to say that God may not forgive sin irrespective of the interests of his moral government. This is a vital principle in the Governmental theory. It is the ground on which Grotius maintains the necessity for an atonement, and defends it against the objections of Socinianism. Nor did he hold any doubtful view respecting either the intrinsic evil of sin or the imperative office of penalty. Sin deserves eternal penalty, and the penalty may not be remitted, except on rectorally sufficient ground. Thus, after setting forth the reasons for punishment, he says: "God has, therefore, most weighty reasons for punishing, especially if we are permitted to estimate the magnitude and multitude of sins. But because, among all his attributes, love of the human race is pre-eminent, God was willing, though he could have justly punished all men with deserved and legitimate punishment, that is, with eternal death-and had reasons for so doing-to spare those who believe in Christ. But, since we must be spared either by setting forth, or not setting forth, some example against so many great sins, in his most perfect wisdom he chose that way by which he could manifest more of his attributes at once, viz., both clemency and severity, or his hate of sin and care for the preservation of his law." In these views, while essentially divergent from the theory of Satisfaction, he is thoroughly valid and conclusive against Socinianism.

While thus asserting the intrinsic evil of sin, Grotius denies an absolute necessity arising therefrom for its punishment. The punishment of sin is just, but not in itself an obligation. The intrinsic evil of sin renders its penal retribution just, but not a requirement of judicial rectitude. Threatened penalty, unless marked by irrevocability, is not absolute. A threat differs from a promise. The latter conveys a right and takes on obligation; the former does not.

In this sense he regarded the divine law as positive, and its penalty as remissible. The law, in precept and penalty, is a divine enactment; in execution, a divine act. The execution is not a judicial obligation, except for rectoral ends.

And this is the permissible relaxation of law which Grotius maintains. There is such a relaxation, as there is reality in the divine forgiveness of sin. Nor have Satisfactionists any consistent ground for its denial, -nor any sufficient reason for their adverse criticism of Grotius on this account. By their own concession that sin, with its demerit, is not and cannot be transferred to Christ, they admit by inevitable logical sequence that it is not punished in him, and hence, that the law in its penalty is relaxed in every instance of non-execution upon the actual sinner.

Holding thus the remissibility of penalty so far as the demerit of sin is concerned, Grotius, as previously noted, maintains, with its justice, its profound importance in the interest of moral government. Forgiveness too freely granted, or too often repeated, and especially on slight grounds, would annul the authority of the law, or render it powerless for its great and imperative rectoral ends. Thus he finds the necessity for an atonement-for some vicarious provision-which, on the remission of penalty, may conserve these ends. Such a provision he finds in the death of Christ, set forth as a penal example. So he styles it. And he makes a very free use of the terms of penal substitution. Yet he does not seem to regard the sufferings of Christ as penal in any very strict sense-certainly not as a substitutional punishment of sin in the satisfaction of a purely retributive justice. Such an example he regards as at once a manifestation of the goodness and severity of God, of the odiousness of sin, and a deterrent from its commission.

Thus his theory of atonement accords with his view of punishment and its remission. These are rectoral rather than personal acts. So the atonement, taking the place of penalty in its rectoral ends, regards God in his administration rather than in his personal character or absolute retributive justice. And thus he grounds the atonement in the principles which properly constitute the Governmental theory.

The Acceptilatio of Duns Scotus is very freely charged upon Grotius, especially by Satisfactionists. Even Dr. Pope, though an Arminian, is consenting thereto in his late work on theology. Bauer joins in the accusation in the article previously given by reference; though he does not withhold the fact that Grotius himself formally rejected the principle. This he certainly did, and denied that acceptilation could have any place with the punishment of sin. Repelling this accusation as brought by Socinus against the atonement, he says: "For, in the first place, this word may be applied, even when no payment precedes, to the right over a thing loaned, but is not, and cannot be, applied to punishment. We nowhere read that indulgence of crimes was called by the ancients acceptilation. For that is said to be accepted which can be accepted. The ruler properly exacts corporal punishment, but does not accept it; because from punishment nothing properly comes to him." It is as a logical implication that Bauer makes the charge. But Grotius certainly understood the question, and the logic of its facts and principles, as thoroughly as his reviewer. We join issue, and deny that Acceptilation is in any logical sense consequent to the theory of Grotius; while we affirm its close affinity with that of Anselm.

Leading divines of the Church-Abelard, Bernard, Peter Lombard, Duns Scotus, and others-contemporaries of Anselm, or his close followers in time, were not all close followers of his "Cur Deus Homo." Some diverged so widely as to propound really new theories. But Duns Scotus, the heretical Acceptilationist, really propounded no new theory in kind. He dissented from Anselm, not respecting the nature of an atonement in the meritorious obedience and suffering of Christ, and in satisfaction or payment of a divine claim-a claim arising out of the wrong which God had suffered on account of sin,-not on these determining facts, but respecting the amount of the debt and the relative value of the payment. With Anselm, the debt was infinite; with Duns, not strictly infinite. With the former, the payment was in full; with the latter, only in part; which, however,

God graciously accepted in lieu of the whole, his acceptance also giving value to the sum paid. This is the Acceptilatio of Duns Scotus, as known in historical theology. His divergence was specially from a difference in Christology, or respecting the redemptive sufferings of Christ. With Anselm, his sufferings as the God-Man were of infinite value, and therefore a payment in full; while with Duns they were strictly limited to his human nature, and, therefore, of finite value, and a 'payment only in part. But he all the while adheres to the same atonement in kind - atonement by payment toward the satisfaction of a divine claim. This is proof, that his Acceptilatio has a close affinity for the theory of Anselm.

It is only with such a theory that it can have any affinity. It is grounded in the ideas of debt and payment. There must be a divine claim payable in meritorious obedience and suffering. Whatever is paid must go to the account in claim. This is Acceptilation. These ideas of debt and payment have the utmost currency in the Anselmic theory - in the Satisfaction theory. But Grotius held no theory of sin and penalty, and no theory of atonement, which admits any such sense of debt and payment. His adverse critics clearly prove that he did not. And as he formally denied Acceptilation, and the very possibility of it in the case of penalty for sin, so the principles of his doctrine of atonement deny for him all the ideas of debt and payment -and in part as in whole-without which it has no place.

Mr. Watson, while freely citing Grotius as an authority, accuses him of unduly leaning to that view of the atonement which regards it "as a merely wise and fit expedient of government." He probably had specially in view this passage in Grotius : "It becomes us only to make this preliminary remark-that Socinus is not right in postulating that we must assign a cause which shall prove that God could not have acted otherwise. For such a cause is not required in those things which God does freely. But he who will maintain that this was a free action may refer to Augustine, who declares, not that God had no other possible way of liberating us, but that there was no other more appropriate way for healing our misery, neither could be. But also, before Augustine, Athanasius had said : 'God was able by a mere utterance to annul the curse without coming himself at all. But it is necessary to consider what is useful to men, and not always what is possible to God.' Nazarius says: I It was possible for God even without the incarnation (of Christ) to save us by his mere volition.' Bernard: I Who does not know that the Almighty had at hand various methods for our redemption, justification, liberation? But this does not detract from the efficacy of that method which he has selected out of many."

We do not understand Grotius to indorse all these citations, though from authors so eminent. If he did, we certainly could not follow him. And his doctrine of atonement has a far deeper sense than that of a dispensable expedient of government. His position here is, that of the divine freedom in the particular manner of human redemption, within the limit of a sufficient redemption. A distinction may properly be here made. Only a divine person could redeem the world; and the redemption could be effected only by a great personal sacrifice. The necessity is from the office which the atonement must fulfill. But, with the profoundest conviction of truth in these facts, we should greatly hesitate to say-indeed, we do not believe-that in the resources of infinite wisdom the precise manner of

the mediation of Christ was the only possible manner of human redemption. We are not sure that Grotius means any thing more.

## **5. The Consistent Arminian Theory**

In the reference to Arminianism we include the Wesleyan school, and take the position of consistency with special reference to it.

Wesleyan Arminianism has ever been true to the fact of an atonement in Christ. In her hymns and prayers, in her utterances of a living Christian experience, in her sermons and exhortations, this great fact ever receives the fullest recognition. In her soteriology "Christ is all and in all." In the fullness and constancy of her faith in the reality and necessity of an atonement in 212 Christ, Wesleyan Methodism has no reason to shun any comparison with the most orthodox soteriology.

What is our doctrine of atonement? The answer to this question is not so simple or unperplexed as many, at first thought, would suppose. The Scripture terms of atonement have, with all propriety, been in the freest use with us. Nor have we been careful to shun the terminology of the strictest doctrine of Satisfaction. An inquiry for the ideas associated with these terms in the popular thought of Methodism respecting the nature of the atonement, would probably bring no very definite answer. In view of all the facts, we are constrained to think that the dominant idea has been, that of a real and necessary atonement in Christ, while the idea of its nature has been rather indefinite. We are very sure, that while the popular faith of Methodism has utterly excluded the Socinian scheme, it has not been at one with the theory of Satisfaction.

Our earlier written soteriology has, at least in part, a like indefiniteness. It is always clear and pronounced on the fact of an atonement, but not always exact or definite respecting its nature. This, however, should be noted, that our written soteriology contains comparatively but little directly on this question. Indeed, we have not contributed much to the literature of the atonement. And most of the little contributed has been given to the two questions of reality and extent, while only the smaller part has been given to the nature or doctrine of the atonement.

Mr. Watson has written more fully and formally on the atonement than any other Methodist author. We recognize his superior ability as a theologian. This ability is not wanting in his discussion of the atonement. But his strength is given to the questions of its reality and extent. His discussion is mainly a polemic with the Socinian scheme and with Calvinistic limitationists. With rare ability he maintains the fact of an atonement against the one, and its universality against the others. But on the question of theories we cannot accord to him any very clear discrimination. Grotius, as it appears, was his chief authority; and next to him, Stillingfleet, who wrote mainly in defense of Grotius. But Grotius, while giving the principles of a new theory, did not, as previously noted, give to its construction scientific completeness. He wrote from the standpoint of the Reformed doctrine, but with such new principles as really constitute another doctrine. But clear and determining as his principles are, he failed to give either theory in scientific

completeness. This is just what Mr. Watson has failed to do. And he is less definite than Grotius himself.

He rejects the doctrine of Satisfaction in its usual exposition, and requires for its acceptance such modifications as it cannot admit. He interprets Satisfaction much in the manner of Grotius, and hence in a sense which the Reformed doctrine must reject. And the doctrine which he arraigns and refutes as the Antinomian atonement, is the historic and current Calvinian doctrine of Satisfaction, with the formal rejection of its Antinomian sequences. He is, therefore, not a Satisfactionist.

The principles of moral government in which Mr. Watson grounds the necessity for an atonement mainly determine for him the Governmental theory. The same is true of his discussion of the "vinculum" between the sufferings of Christ and the forgiveness of sin? And when we add his broader views in soteriology as including the universality of the atonement, its strictly provisory character, and the real conditionality of its saving grace-views necessarily belonging to all consistent Arminian theology, and which Mr. Watson so fully maintained-his principles require for him the Governmental theory of atonement. And the more certainly is this so, as it is impossible to construct any new doctrine of a real atonement between this and the Satisfaction theory.

So far as we know, Dr. Whedon has never given his theory of atonement in the style of the Governmental; yet it is in principle the same. In his statement of the doctrines of Methodism it is given thus: "Christ as truly died as a substitute for the sinner, as Damon could have died as a substitute for Pythias. Yet to make the parallel complete, Damon should so die for Pythias as that, unless Pythias should accept the substitution of Damon in all its conditions, he should not receive its benefits, and Damon's death should be for him in vain; Pythias may be as rightfully executed as if Damon had not died. If the sinner accept not the atonement, but deny the Lord that bought him, Christ has died for him in vain; he perishes for whom Christ died. If the whole human race were to reject the atonement, the atonement would be a demonstration of the righteousness and goodness of God, but would be productive of aggravation of human guilt rather than of salvation from it. The imputation of the sin of man, or his punishment, to Christ, is but a popular conception, justifiable, if understood as only conceptual; just as we might say that Damon was punished instead of Pythias. In strictness of language and thought, neither crime, guilt, nor punishment is personally transferable."

Any one at all familiar with theories of atonement will see at a glance that the principles contained in this statement are thoroughly exclusive of the Satisfaction theory, and that they have a true scientific position only with the Rectoral theory. The same is true of the doctrine, and with much fuller unfolding, in the sermon to which reference is given.

On the theory of atonement we understand Dr. Raymond to be with Dr. Whedon. He gives the atonement thus: "The death of Christ is not a substituted penalty, but a substitute for a penalty. The necessity of an atonement is not found in the fact that the justice of God requires an invariable execution of deserved penalty, but in the fact that the honor and glory of God, and the welfare of his creatures, require that his essential and

rectoral righteousness be adequately declared. The death of Christ is exponential of divine justice, and is a satisfaction in that sense, and not in the sense that it is, as of a debt, the full and complete payment of all its demands."

The principles given in this passage exclude the Satisfaction atonement, and require as their only scientific position the Rectoral theory. All this is even more apparent when the passage cited is interpreted in the light of the further references given.

With this view Dr. Raymond's doctrine of justification, as that of every consistent Arminian, fully accords. It is not a discharge of the sinner through the merited punishment of his sin in his substitute, but an actual forgiveness, and such as can issue only in the non-execution of penalty. We would not place Dr. Raymond in any false light, nor identify him with any theory which he discards. He does discard the theory which represents the death of Christ simply as a governmental display, and especially as implying that this is only one of several possible expedients in atonement. While fully maintaining the rectoral office of the atonement, he regards the death of Christ as also a manifestation of the righteousness of God. But these two facts we think very closely, indeed inseparably, united. Without the manifestation of the divine righteousness, the atonement in the death of Christ could not fulfill its rectoral office. But it is not the Governmental theory, in any true statement of it, that is here criticised. And on its own principles the theory requires the redemptive mediation of Christ as the only adequate atonement.

The principles and office of the atonement in Christ, as maintained by Dr. Bledsoe, agree with the Governmental theory. This will be clear to any one who will read with scientific discrimination his discussion of the question. And with Arminians he is, rightfully, a representative author on questions of this kind. He had both the learning and the ability for the discussion of Methodist doctrines. He gave to them profound study, and had a deep insight into their philosophy. The same is true respecting the atonement. He studied it in the light of the Scriptures and in its scientific relations to other cardinal doctrines of Wesleyan Arminianism. The outcome is a doctrine intrinsically the same as we propound, though not so styled. On the ground of such a doctrine it is easy to answer the Socinian objections arrayed against the fact of an atonement in the death of Christ: objections which the theory of Satisfaction never has answered, and never can.

The soteriology of Wesleyan Arminianism, taken as a whole, excludes the Satisfaction theory, and requires the Governmental as the only theory consistent with its doctrines. The doctrines of soteriology, with the atonement included, must admit of systemization, and be in scientific accord. If not, there is error at some point, as no truth can be in discord with any other truth. Now certain cardinal doctrines of the Wesleyan soteriology are very conspicuous and entirely settled. One is, that the atonement is only provisory in its character; that it renders men salvable, but does not necessarily save them. Another, and the consequence of the former, is the conditionality of salvation. Nor is this such as Calvinism often asserts, yet holds with the monergism of the system, but a real conditionality in accord with the synergism of the truest Arminianism. On these facts there is neither hesitation nor divergence in Methodism. With these facts, the atonement

of Satisfaction must be excluded from her system of doctrines, and the Rectoral theory maintained as the only doctrine of a real atonement agreeing with them.

Such has really been the position of Arminianism from the beginning, though without exact or definitive statement. It never occupied the position of Lutheranism in maintaining a doctrine of atonement which, with its universality, must save all men, and which is disproved by the fact that many are not saved. While the earlier Arminians never formally constructed a doctrine of atonement in scientific accord with their system, yet from the beginning they denied the leading facts of the Reformed soteriology, so vitally connected with the atonement of Satisfaction. Thus they denied its limitation to an elect part; that it is necessarily saving; that it includes its own application; that saving faith is a resistless product of its sovereign grace; that the application is in the full extent of the redeuption. Indeed, these questions were the chief issue in the great polemics between the 224 Arminians and the Calvinists. Hence the former could not consistently hold the doctrine maintained by the latter.

On these same questions, so directly concerning the atonement and so decisive of its nature, Wesleyan Methodism has ever been most thoroughly Arminian. And there is thus determined for her the Rectoral theory as the only doctrine of a real atonement consistent with her soteriology.

## II. Public Justice

We have previously treated justice in its distinctions as commutative, distributive, punitive-the last being a special phase of the distributive. We also named public justice, but deferred it for discussion in connection with the Rectoral theory of atonement. We have now reached the proper place for its treatment.

### 1. Relation to Atonement.

Any theory of atonement embodying enough truth to be really a theory must take special account of divine justice. The relation between the two is most intimate; so intimate, indeed, that the view taken of justice must be determinative of the theory of atonement. This we found to be true of the theory of Satisfaction. It is not only in accord with the principles of justice asserted in connection with it, but is imperatively required by them. They will admit no other doctrine. If justice must punish sin simply for the reason of its demerit, penal substitution is the only possible atonement. So the Governmental theory must be consistent with the doctrine of justice maintained in connection with it; and, to be true, must accord with justice as a divine attribute, and in all its relations to sin and to the ends of moral government.

As in the Satisfaction theory, so in the Rectoral, the sufferings of Christ are an atonement for sin only as in some sense they take the place of penalty. But they do not replace penalty in the same sense in the schemes. In the one they take its place as a penal substitute, thus realizing the office of justice in the actual punishment of sin; in the other they take its place in the fulfillment of its office as concerned with the interests of moral

government. It is the office of justice to maintain these interests through the means of penalty. Therefore, atonement in the mediation of Christ must so take the place of penalty as to fulfill this same office, while the penalty is remitted.

Such being the office of atonement in the Governmental theory, it is clear that for a proper exposition of the doctrine we require an exact and discriminating statement of public justice, or of penalty as the means of justice for the conservation of moral government. We shall thus secure a right construction of the doctrine, and, also, obviate certain objections which have no validity against the doctrine itself, whatever force they may have against defective forms of it. No ground will remain for objecting either that the theory makes light of the demerit of sin, or that it transforms justice into mere benevolence, or that it regards the substitution of Christ in suffering as a mere expedient, in place of which some other provision would answer as well.

## 2. One with Divine Justice.

Public justice is not a distinct kind of justice; not other than divine justice. It is divine justice in moral administration. God is moral Ruler only as he has moral subjects. Therefore, in the eternity antecedent to their creation he existed without any rectoral office of justice. Their creation gave him no new attribute, though it brought him into new relations. In these new relations to moral beings his justice, an essential and eternal attribute of his nature, found its proper office in moral government. In the fulfillment of this office, it rules through the means of reward and penalty. So, in the moral system, public justice is the one divine justice in moral administration.

## 3. One with Distributive Justice.

In principle public justice is one with distributive justice. Subjects differ in moral character. Some are obedient to the law of duty; others, disobedient. This makes a difference in character. The difference is real and intrinsic. So the law of God discriminates the two classes. And in this our moral reason is in full consent with the divine law. In the profoundest convictions of our moral consciousness we are assured of the reality of moral obligation, and of an essential ethical difference between obedience and disobedience; and equally, that the former has merit or rewardableness, and the latter, punitive desert. So in moral administration God deals with men according to their conduct, rewarding their obedience, and punishing their sin. The fact does not require exact or full justice in the present state of probation. It is the law of our responsible being. But this, in essential principle and in rectoral office, is simply public justice, or justice in moral administration. All its use of reward and penalty, and for whatever reason or end, is in the view of moral character in the subjects of government. Public justice is, therefore, no law of mere expediency, or of mere expedients; in essential principle and in office it is one with divine justice, one with distributive justice.

## 4. Ground of its Penalties.

Within the realm of the divine government the sole ground of the penalties of administrative or public justice lies in the demerit of sin. The fact is not other, nor in any sense modified by any or all the ulterior ends or utilities of penalty in the interest of moral government. All penal infliction falls upon the demerit of sin as really and restrictedly as though its punishment were the sole thing in the divine view. This is justice, and this only. Public justice has no other ground for its penalties. Nor may it, except on such ground, inflict any penalty for any ulterior end or interest, however great and urgent. This truth cannot be too deeply emphasized.

We are speaking of divine justice in moral administration. Any thing qualifying the administration of justice in human government arises, in part, from a want of punitive prerogative over the intrinsic demerit of sin; in part, from an inability to know in any given case what the real demerit is. We may infer the guilt from the apparent motive. We cannot search the heart. Hence, in dealing with human conduct, our rightful use of penalty is not really to punish sin as having intrinsic demerit, but to protect society from its injury. The former is the divine prerogative. God searches the heart. He knows all the secret springs and motives of human action. He knows all the sinfulness of such action. It is his sole right to punish it, simply as such. In all the universe, and for any and all purposes, he has nothing but sin to punish.

On this ground public justice is one with distributive justice, one with divine justice; and as wrought into a proper Rectoral atonement even more rigidly adheres to the principle than the purely retributive justice as wrought into the theory of Satisfaction. This theory equally asserts the same principle, but departs from it in the futile attempt to separate guilt from demerit, to carry it over by imputation to Christ, and so to have the merited penalty inflicted upon him, while the sinner and the sin are left behind. This is a real departure from the principle. We may technically distinguish between sin and guilt, taking the former for personal demerit and the latter for answerableness in penalty. We go further, and say that on such distinction there may be personal demerit without guilt—as a soul graciously forgiven still has such demerit but not such guilt. But the converse, that there may be guilt apart from demerit—guilt as an amenability to penalty—does not follow and is not true. Yet it is the very-truth of this converse that the scheme of Satisfaction requires as vital to its doctrine of atonement by penal substitution.

We emphasize the principle, that in moral government personal demerit is the only source of guilt, and the only ground of just punishment. If there be any thing valid in the imputation of another's sin, it must transfer the demerit before guilt can arise or the punishment be just. And whatever in the providence of God, whether from the constitution of things or by immediate interposition, transcends the limit of demerit, ceases to be punishment. Without such a principle punishment has no possible rationale.

On this principle all divine penalties, whether executed or only uttered, and in the utterance as in the execution, at once express both the divine justice and the demerit of sin. Hence the execution is not really necessary to that expression. The use and value of the fact will come directly. And we shall find with it a sure basis for the Governmental theory.

## 5. End of its Penalties.

We have not a full exposition of justice simply in its relation to the demerit of sin. In this demerit we have the real and only ground of punishment. But in making the retribution of sin the sole office of penalty we deny all distinction of a proper public justice. There is no such justice. Penalty has no reformatory purpose respecting the subject of its infliction, no exemplary character, no office as a deterrent from sin. With such functions of penalty we have a public justice. Also, we have weighty reasons for punishment beyond the demerit of sin. Any doctrine of justice which omits such facts, or holds it simply to the retribution of sin, is very narrow, and utterly fails to measure its vast sphere. Justice, as concerned in moral government, must deeply regard all legislation, that laws be in accord with the obligations, rights, and interests of subjects; that the sanctions of reward and penalty, while equitable, be wisely adjusted to their high rectoral ends. In all moral administration it must be supremely concerned for the promotion of virtue, and the protection of the rights and interests of all. Thus we have profound reasons for penalty beyond the demerit of sin. Nor has penalty any rational account simply as retributive. It does not so answer to the common moral judgment respecting it, nor to the severe denunciations of Scripture against criminal injuries, nor to the many appeals therein to instances of divine retribution as a deterrent from sin. And for a right exposition of justice we must take large account of its strictly rectoral ends. Advocates of the Satisfaction scheme feel the force of this truth, and are ever tacitly confessing it. This is manifest in a common practice of maintaining the necessity for an atonement from a necessary office of penalty in the interest of moral government.

There is another extreme view, even more impotent, if possibly so, for any philosophy of penalty. It is in making the strictly rectoral ends of punishment the whole account of it. This omits the proper retributive element. Punishment thus becomes an injustice. No interests of government, however great and urgent, could render it just. Only demerit in the subjects of its infliction can do this. Besides, such a view denies to penalty all capacity for service in such interests. Except in the most restricted measure, such service can be rendered only through a right moral impression. Unmerited punishment never could make such an impression. The moral nature never can respond in loyalty to injustice. And however such punishment might influence outward action, it would ever turn away the heart into rebellion rather than win it to obedience. "Take away from punishment this foundation of justice and you destroy its utility; you substitute indignation and abhorrence for a salutary lesson and for repentance, both in the condemned and in the public; you put courage, sympathy, all that is noble and great in human nature, on the side of the victim; you rouse all energetic souls against society and its artificial laws. Thus even the utility of punishment rests upon its justice. The punishment is the sanction of law, not its foundation." All this is as true in the divine government as in the human sphere. And, whatever temporary service might be rendered in the latter case, in the divine government, the consequences would be fatal: for here only the loyalty of the heart will answer. This never could be secured by a measure of injustice from which it must revolt. And personal demerit, as the only ground of justice in punishment, is absolutely necessary to all the service of penalty in the interests of moral government. A true doctrine of public justice never departs from this principle.

We thus combine the two elements in the exposition of public justice. Only thus have we a public justice. Omitting the rectoral element, justice is purely retributive, having regard to nothing except the punishment of sin. Omitting the retributive element, justice is injustice. Holding the distinction of justice as retributive and rectoral, and combining the two elements in the one doctrine, we free the question of punishment from the perplexity which its history records. The distinction 226 is valid. There are the two offices of justice. But they must never be separated. Penalty, as a means in the use of justice, has an end beyond the retribution of sin. But, whatever its ulterior end, it is just only as it threatens, or falls upon, demerit. And only thus can it fulfill its high office in the interests of moral government.

It is in the failure first properly to discriminate the two offices of justice in the punishment of sin and the protection of rights, and then to properly combine the two elements in the one doctrine of punishment, that the Rectoral atonement exposes itself to really serious objections, which yet have no validity against a true construction of the theory. And it is against such an erroneous construction that objections are chiefly urged. They are specially urged against it as embodying, or as assumed to embody, that view of justice which makes its strictly rectoral ends the sole account of penalty. "It is on this false principle that the whole governmental theory of atonement is founded. It admits no ground of punishment but the benefit of others." We represent no such a theory. We 227 discard it as fully as Dr. Hodge, or any other advocate of the Satisfaction atonement. Our previous discussions so certify. Hence the objection which the quotation implies is utterly void against the doctrine of atonement, as we construct and maintain it.

It is in the same line of objection that we have cited a story of an English judge who once said to a criminal, "I You are transported, not because you have stolen those goods, but that goods may not be stolen." We would not defend the propriety of such a delivery. Indeed, we think it very 228 injudicious. A criminal should feel that he deserves the penalty inflicted upon him; otherwise, his punishment can have no tendency toward his amendment. An impression of such desert should also be made upon the public mind, as necessary to the public benefit. But in neither case can the necessary salutary impression be made where all mention of punitive desert is omitted, or where any reference to it is entirely to dismiss it from all connection with the punishment inflicted. Yet there is a deep sense in which such an utterance is true. It is clearly so in human jurisdiction. Nor is the view either novel or rare. "The proper end of human punishment is not the satisfaction of justice, but the prevention of crimes." "As to the end or final cause of human punishments, this is not by way 229 of atonement or expiation for the crime committed-for that must be left to the just determination of the Supreme Being-but as a precaution against future offenses of the same kind."230

There is really no error here. And all is consistent with the doctrine of punishment which we have maintained. Demerit is still the only ground of punishment. Penalty falls upon sin, and upon that only. But prominence is given to its exemplary or strictly rectoral function. It is inflicted for the sake of its governmental ends, yet only on sin as deserving it. Against such a doctrine of punishment the adverse criticism of Dr. Hodge is utterly nugatory. And the same principles are valid in respect to the divine administration. While

divine penalty falls only upon sin, the supreme reason for its infliction is in the rectoral ends with which moral government is concerned. Nor is the penal infliction a moral necessity apart from these ends. And this distinction between the ground and end of penalty, together with such a connection of the two that penalty is never inflicted for the sake of its end except on the ground of demerit, gives us the true philosophy of punishment.

With such principles it is easy to show the fallacy and impertinence of another objection urged against the Governmental atonement. It is, that the theory of penalty which the scheme represents would justify the punishment of the innocent in case the common welfare could thereby be the better served. "If the prevention of crime were the primary end of punishment, then if the punishment of the innocent—the execution, for example, of the wife and children of a murderer—would have a greater restraining influence than the punishment of the guilty murderer, their execution would be just." An advocate of the Satisfaction scheme should be a little cautious how he charges 231 upon even a hypothetic penal substitution of the innocent, lest he suffer in the recoil of his own objection. Certainly he will find trouble in the matter of self-consistency, for his own principles render the supposed instance admissible, so far as justice is concerned. But why the supposition of so impossible a thing? Dr. Hodge well knows that such a benefit, by such means, is utterly impossible. And neither the attainableness nor actual attainment of such a result would render such penal substitution just. This follows from our doctrine of justice, as it does not from that of the Satisfactionists. In ours, only personal demerit is a ground of just punishment; while in theirs mere guilt, apart from demerit, and carried over by imputation to another, constitutes in him a ground of just punishment. But we need not further answer to the arraignment in the quotation given above, for whatever weight the objection which it urges may have against the doctrine of others, it have no validity against our own.

#### 6. Remissibility of its Penalties.

There is no sufficient reason why sin must be punished solely on the ground of its demerit. The forgiveness of the actual sinner as a real remission of penalty, at the time of his justification and acceptance in the divine favor, is proof positive to the contrary. And, all other ends apart, retributive justice may remit its penalty. It may do this without an atonement. Indeed, it does not admit of an atonement in satisfaction of such remission. It is here, as noticed before, that we part by a fundamental principle with the theory of Satisfaction. It denies the remissibility of penalty, as due solely to the demerit of sin, on any and all grounds. Hence, it requires for any discharge of the actual sinner a vicarious punishment in full satisfaction of a purely retributive justice. We maintain the proper retributive character of divine justice in all the use of penalty in moral administration; but this retributive element of justice does not bar the remissibility of its penalties. The law of expediency determines the measure of divine penalties within the demerit of sin. And from their ends in the interest of moral government, they are remissible on such ground, but only on such ground, as will equally secure these ends. This principle is fundamental with us, and determinative of our theory of atonement. But our previous discussion of the

question respecting the remissibility of divine penalty supersedes the requirement of further treatment here.<sup>232</sup>

#### 7. Place for Atonement.

Thus the way is open for some substitutional provision which may replace the actual infliction of penalty upon sin. The theory of Satisfaction, as we have seen, really leaves no place for vicarious atonement. Its most fundamental and everasserted principle, that sin as such must be punished, makes the punishment of the actual sinner an absolute necessity. Its own admission, and maintenance even, that sin as a personal demerit is untransferable, has this inevitable logical sequence. Nor is there any escape through a technical distinction between demerit and guilt, and an alleged transference of the latter to Christ as a sufficient ground for the just punishment of sin in him. The sin, with all its demerit, and all, therefore, that is punishable, is still left behind with the sinner himself. This fact thoroughly blanks all attempt so to escape. And the scheme of Satisfaction is inseparably bound with the logical consequence, that if sin, as such, must be punished, then it must be punished, and can only be punished, in the actual sinner. But as penalties are remissible so far as a purely retributive justice is concerned, so, having a special end in the interest of moral government, they may give place to any substitutional measure equally securing that end. Here is a place for vicarious atonement.

#### 8. Nature of Atonement Determined.

The nature of the atonement in the sufferings of Christ follows necessarily from the above principles. It cannot be in the nature required by the principles of the Satisfaction scheme. In asserting the absoluteness of divine justice in its purely retributive element, the theory excludes the possibility of a penal substitute in atonement for sin. And, therefore, the sufferings of Christ are not, as they cannot be, an atonement for sin by penal substitution. But while his sufferings could not take the place of penalty in the actual punishment of sin, they could, and do, take its place in its strictly rectoral ends. And the atonement is thus determined to consist in the sufferings of Christ, as a provisory substitute for penalty in the interest of moral government.

### III. Theory and Necessity for Atonement

#### 1. An Answer to the Real Necessity.

The redemptive mediation of Christ implies a necessity for it. There should be, and in scientific consistency must be, an accordance between a doctrine of atonement and the ground of its necessity.

The Moral theory finds in the ignorance and evil tendencies of man a need for higher moral truth and motive than reason affords; a need for all the higher truths and motives of the Gospel. There is such a need-very real and very urgent. And Christ has graciously supplied the help so needed. But we yet have no part of the necessity for an objective

ground of forgiveness. Hence this scheme does not answer to the real necessity for an atonement.

Did the necessity arise out of an absolute justice which must punish sin, the theory of Satisfaction would be in accord with it, but without power to answer to its requirement, because such a necessity precludes substitutional atonement.

We do find the real necessity in the interests of moral government-interests which involve the divine glory and authority, and welfare of moral beings. Whatever will conserve these ends while opening the way of forgiveness, answers to the real necessity in the case. Precisely this is done on the doctrine of atonement which we maintain. In the requirement of the sacrifice of Christ as the only ground of forgiveness the standard of the divine estimate of sin is exalted, and merited penalty is rendered more certain respecting all who fail of forgiveness through redemptive grace. And these are the special moral forces whereby the divine law may restrain sin, protect rights, guard innocence, and secure the common welfare. Further, the doctrine we maintain not only gives to these salutary forces the highest moral potency, but also combines with them the yet higher force of the divine love as revealed in the marvelous means of our redemption. Thus while the highest good of moral beings is secured, the divine glory receives its highest revelation. The doctrine has, therefore, not only the support derived from an answer to the real necessity for an atonement, but also the commendation of a vast increase in the moral forces of the divine government.

## 2. Grounded in the Deepest Necessity.

We are here in direct issue with the doctrine of Satisfaction: for here its advocates make special claims in its favor, and urge special objections against ours. We already have the principles and facts which must decide the question.

In their scheme, the necessity lies in an absolute obligation of justice to punish sin, simply as such, and ultimately in a divine punitive disposition. But we have previously shown that there is no such necessity. We have maintained a punitive disposition in God: but we also find in him a compassion for the very sinners whom his justice so condemns. And we may as reasonably conclude that his disposition of clemency will find its satisfaction in a gratuitous forgiveness of all as that he will not forgive any, except on the equivalent punishment of a substitute. Who can show that the punitive disposition is the stronger? We challenge the presentation of a fact in its expression that shall parallel the cross in expression of the disposition of mercy. And, with no absolute necessity for the punishment of sin, it seems clear that but for the requirements of rectoral justice, compassion would triumph over the disposition of a purely retributive justice. Hence this alleged absolute necessity for an atonement is really no necessity at all.

What is the necessity in the Governmental theory? It is such as arises in the rightful honor and authority of the divine Ruler, and in the rights and interests of moral beings under him. The free remission of sins without an atonement would be their surrender. Hence divine justice itself, still having all its punitive disposition, but infinitely more concerned

for these rights and interests than in the mere retribution of sin, must interpose all its authority in bar of a mere administrative forgiveness. The divine holiness and goodness, infinitely concerned for these great ends, must equally bar a forgiveness in their surrender. The divine justice, holiness, and love must, therefore, combine in the imperative requirement of an atonement in Christ as the necessary ground of forgiveness. These facts ground it in the deepest necessity.

The rectoral ends of moral government are a profounder imperative with justice itself than the retribution of sin, simply as such. One stands before the law in the demerit of crime. His demerit renders his punishment just, though not a necessity. But the protection of others, who would suffer wrong through his impunity, makes his punishment an obligation of judicial rectitude. The same principles are valid in the divine government. The demerit of sin imposes no obligation of punishment upon the divine Ruler; but the protection of rights and interests, by means of merited penalty, is a necessity of his judicial rectitude, except as that protection can be secured through some other means. It is true, therefore, that the Rectoral atonement is grounded in the deepest necessity.

### 3. Rectoral Value of Penalty

We have sufficiently distinguished between the purely retributive and the rectoral offices of penalty. The former respects simply the demerit of sin; the latter, the great ends to be attained through the ministry of justice and law. As the demerit of sin is the only thing justly punishable, and as unjust penalty may not even be legislated, the retributive element always conditions the rectoral office of justice; but the former does not necessarily include the latter. The distinction of these facts is real.

Penal retribution may, therefore, be viewed as a distinct fact, and entirely in itself. As such, it is simply the punishment of sin because of its demerit, and without respect to any other reason or end.

Now as we rise to the contemplation of divine justice in its infinitely larger sphere, and yet not as an isolated attribute, but in inseparable association with infinite holiness, and wisdom, and love, as attributes of the one divine Ruler over innumerable moral beings, we must think that his retribution of sin always has ulterior ends in the interests of his moral government. We, therefore, hold all divine punishment to have a strictly rectoral function.

Punishment is the ultimate resource of all righteous government. Every good ruler will seek to secure obedience, and all other true ends of a wise and beneficent administration, through the highest and best available means. Of no other is this so true as of the divine Ruler. In the failure of such means, there is still the resource of punishment, which shall put in subjection the harmful agency of the incorrigible. Thus rights and interests are protected. This protection is a proper rectoral value of penalty, but a value realized only in its execution.

There is a rectoral value of penalty simply as an element of law. It has such value in a potency of influence upon human conduct. A little analysis will reveal its salutary forces. Penalty, in its own nature, and also through the moral ideas with which it is associated, makes its appeal to certain motivities in us. As it finds a response therein, so has it a governing influence, and a more salutary governing influence as the response is to the higher associated ideas. As punishment is the ultimate resource of all righteous government, so all the salutary influence of penalty, simply as an element of law, is through motive.

First of all, penalty, as an element of law, appeals to an instinctive fear. The intrinsic force of the appeal is determined by its severity and the certainty of its execution; but the actual influence is largely determined by the state of our subjective motivity. Some are seemingly quite insensible to the greatest severity and certainty of threatened penalty, while others are deeply moved thereby. Human conduct is thus greatly influenced. This, however, is the lowest power of penalty as a motive. Yet it is not without value. Far better is it that evil tendencies should be restrained, and outward conformity to law secured, through such fear than not at all.

The chief rectoral value of penalty, simply as an element of law, is through the moral ideas which it conveys, and the response which it thus finds in the moral reason. As the soul answers to these ideas in the healthful activities of conscience and the profounder sense of obligation, so the governing force of penalty takes the higher form of moral excellence. As penalty is the clear utterance of justice itself, even in its highest rectoral office—the declaration of rights in all their sacredness, and which it must sacredly guard—the reprobation of crime in all its forms of injury or wrong and depth of intrinsic punitive desert—so it conveys the imperative lessons of duty, and rules through the profounder principles of moral obligation. Now rights are held sacred and duties fulfilled because they are such, and not from fear of the penal consequences of their violation or neglect. The same facts have the fullest application to penalty as an element of the divine law. Here its higher rectoral value will be, and can only be, through the higher revelation of God in his moral attributes as ever active in all moral administration. In its simple retributive element, or as an expression merely of the divine wrath against sin, penalty makes its appeal only to an instinctive fear. Therefore, it can govern through nothing else. But this is its very lowest rectoral force. Of course, we speak with respect to quality, not quantity. And however great the amount of such force, the quality is not in the least heightened. Though in such measure as by a moral certainty, or necessitation even, to sway all moral beings, it would still be the lowest governing force. It could still rule only through an instinctive fear or servile dread of punishment. A true moral obedience never could be so secured. There might be the eye-service of slaves, but never the hearts-service of sons. Let the common moral consciousness clothe the divine Ruler in an absolute punitive justice, and that justice will hang as a pall of darkness and despair upon the vision of a trembling world. The penalty of such a justice, voiced in the thunders and flashed in the lightnings of Sinai, could have rectoral force only through a servile fear. But God is one. And there is no schism among his attributes, nor isolation of any one. The just One is also holy and good. And justice, as penally retributive, must not be doctrinally isolated, nor made in any case the sole law of divine administration. In his

punitive ministries God is still love; and now, under the Gospel, the thunders of Sinai may never silence the voices of Calvary. Thus as in both his legislative and administrative justice God reveals the fullness and harmony of his moral attributes, and himself as looking out upon moral beings pre-eminently, from the mount of love, and as ruling with a view to his own glory and the common good, so does he associate with penalty the highest moral ideas, which find a response in the profoundest facts of our moral nature, and give to penalty its truest, best rectoral force. Now it rules no longer through an instinctive fear, but through the profoundest ideas and motives of the moral reason.

#### 4. Rectoral Value of Atonement

The sufferings of Christ, as a proper substitute for punishment, must fulfill the office of penalty in the obligatory ends of moral government. The manner of fulfillment is determined by the nature of the service. As the salutary rectoral force of penalty, as an element of law, is specially through the moral ideas which it reveals, so the vicarious sufferings of Christ must reveal like moral ideas, and rule through them. Not else can they so take the place of penalty as, on its remission, to fulfill its high rectoral office. Hence the vicarious sufferings of Christ are an atonement for sin, as they reveal God in his justice, holiness, and love; in his regard for his own honor and law; in his concern for the rights and interests of moral beings; in his reprobation of sin as intrinsically evil, and utterly hostile to his own rights and to the welfare of his subjects.

Does the atonement in Christ reveal such truths? We answer, Yes. Nor do we need the impossible penal element of the scheme of Satisfaction for any part of this revelation. God reveals his profound regard for the sacredness of his law, and for the interests which it conserves, by what he does for their support and protection. In direct legislative and administrative forms he ordains his law, with declarations of its sacredness and authority; embodies in it the weightiest sanctions of reward and penalty; reprobates in severest terms all disregard of its requirements, and all violation of the rights and interests which it would protect; visits upon transgression the fearful penalties of his retributive justice, though always at the sacrifice of his compassion. The absence of such facts would evince an indifference to the great interests concerned, while their presence evinces, in the strongest manner possible to such facts, the divine regard for these interests. These facts, with the moral ideas which they embody, give weight and salutary governing power to the divine law. The omission of the penal element would, without a proper rectoral substitution, leave the law in utter weakness.

Now let the sacrifice of Christ be substituted for the primary necessity of punishment, and as the sole ground of forgiveness. But we should distinctly note what it replaces in the divine law, and wherein it may modify the divine administration. The law remains, with all its precepts and sanctions. Penalty is not annulled. There is no surrender of the divine honor and authority. Rights and interests are no less sacred, nor guarded in feebler terms. Sin has the same reprobation; penalty the same imminence and severity respecting all persistent impenitence and unbelief. The whole change in the divine economy is this that on the sole ground of the vicarious sacrifice of Christ, all who repent

and believe may be forgiven and saved. This is the divine substitution for the primary necessity of punishment. While, therefore, all the other facts in the divine legislation and administration remain the same, and in unabated expression of truths of the highest rectoral force and value, this divine sacrifice in atonement for sin replaces the lesson of a primary necessity for punishment with its own higher revelation of the same salutary truths; rather, it adds its own higher lesson to that of penalty. As penalty remains in its place, remissible, indeed, on proper conditions, yet certain of execution in all cases of unrepented sin, and, therefore, often executed in fact, the penal sanction of law still proclaims all the rectoral truth which it may utter. Hence the sacrifice of Christ in atonement for sin, and in the declaration of the divine righteousness in forgiveness, is an additional and infinitely higher utterance of the most salutary moral truths. The cross is the highest revelation of all the truths which embody the best moral forces of the divine government.

The atonement in Christ is so original and singular in many of its facts, that it is the more difficult to find in human facts the analogies for its proper illustration. Yet there are facts not without service here.

An eminent lecturer, in a recent discussion of the atonement, has given notoriety to a measure of Bronson Alcott in the government of his school. He substituted his own chastisement for the infliction of penalty upon his offending pupil, receiving the infliction at the hand of the offender. No one can rationally think such a substitution penal, or that the sin of the pupil was expiated by the stripes which the master suffered instead. The substitution answered simply for the disciplinary ends of penalty. Without reference either to the theory of Bronson Alcott, or to the interpretation of Joseph Cook, we so state the case as most obvious in the philosophy of its own facts. Such office it might well fulfill. And we accept the report of the very salutary result, not only as certified by the most reliable authority, but also as intrinsically most credible. No one in the school, and to be ruled by its discipline, could henceforth think less gravely of any offense against its laws. No one could think, either, that the master regarded with lighter reprobation the evil of such offense, or that he was less resolved upon a rigid enforcement of obedience. All these ideas must have been intensified, and in a manner to give them the most healthful influence. The vicarious sacrifice of the master became a potent and most salutary moral element in the government maintained. Even the actual punishment of the offender could not have so secured obedience for the sake of its own obligation and excellence.

Instances have occurred in which an innocent pupil has given himself as a substitute for a guilty one, and received the stripes penally due the offender. We have here like facts to those in the preceding case, and the same philosophy of them. The disciplinary stripes are not penal to the substitute, as they would have been in their infliction upon the offender. There are wanting all the conditions of a veritable punishment. There is no demerit in the substitute. The law of the school has no penalty for him, and must turn aside from its retributive course to reach him. The master has for him no condemnation, and finds no retributive satisfaction in his vicarious suffering. The substitution, therefore, is not for the punishment of sin, but for the sake of the rectoral ends of penalty. These ends are secured through the moral ideas which the substitution conveys.

We may also instance the case of Zaleucus, very familiar in discussions of atonement, though usually accompanied with such denials of analogy as would render it useless for illustration. It is so useless on the theory of Satisfaction, but valuable on a true theory.

Zaleucus was law-giver and ruler of the Locrians, a Grecian colony early founded in Southern Italy. His laws were severe, and his administration rigid; yet both were well suited to the manners of the people. His own son was convicted for violating a law, the penalty of which was blindness. The case came to Zaleucus both as ruler and father. Hence there was a conflict in his soul. He would have been an unnatural father, and of such a character as to be unfit for a ruler, had he suffered no conflict of feeling. His people entreated his clemency for his son. But as a statesman, he knew that the sympathy which prompted such entreaty could be but transient; that in the reaction he would suffer their accusation of partiality and injustice; that his laws would be dishonored and his authority broken. Still there was the conflict of soul. What should he do for the reconciliation of the ruler and the father? In this exigency he devised an atonement by the substitution of one of his own eyes for one of his son's.

This was a provision above law and retributive justice. Neither had any penalty for the ruler and father on account of the sin of the son. The substitution, therefore, was not penal. The vicarious suffering was not in any sense retributive. It could not be so. All the conditions of penal retribution were wanting. No one can rationally think that the sin of the son, or any part of it, was expiated by the suffering of the father in his stead. The transference of sin as a whole is unreasonable enough; but the idea of a division of it, a part being left with the actual sinner and punished in him and the other part transferred to a substitute and punished in him, transcends all the capabilities of rational thought.

The substitution, without being penal, did answer for the rectoral office of penalty. The ruler fully protected his own honor and authority. Law still voiced its behests and penalties with unabated force. And the vicarious sacrifice of the ruler upon the altar of his parental compassion, and as well upon the altar of his administration, could but intensify all the ideas which might command for him honor and authority as a ruler, or give to his laws a salutary power over his people.

This, therefore, is a true case of atonement through vicarious suffering, and in close analogy to the divine atonement. In neither case is the substitution for the retribution of sin, but in each for the sake of the rectoral ends of penalty, and thus the objective ground of its remissibility. We have, therefore, in this instance a clear and forceful illustration of the rectoral value of the atonement. And such are the instances previously given. But so far we have presented this value in its nature rather than in its measure. This will find its proper place in treating the sufficiency of the atonement.

## 5. Only Sufficient Atonement

Nothing could be more fallacious than the objection that the Governmental theory is in any sense acceptilational, or intrinsically indifferent to the character of the substitute in atonement. In the inevitable logic of its deepest and most determining principles it

excludes all inferior substitution as insufficient, and requires a divine sacrifice as the only sufficient atonement. Only such a substitution can give adequate expression to the great truths which may fulfill the rectoral office of penalty. The case of Zaleucus may illustrate this. Many other devisements were at his command. He, no doubt, had money, and might have essayed the purchase of impunity for his son by the distribution of large sums. In his absolute power he might have substituted the blindness of some inferior person. But what would have been the signification or rectoral value of any such a measure? It could give no answer to the real necessity in the case, and must have been utterly silent respecting the great truths imperatively requiring affirmation in any adequate substitution. The sacrifice of one of his own eyes for one of his son's did give the requisite affirmation, while nothing below it could. So, in the substitution of Christ for us. No inferior being and no inferior sacrifice could answer, through the expression and affirmation of great rectoral truths, for the necessary ends of penalty. And, as we shall see in the proper place, no other theory can so fully interpret and appropriate all the facts in the sacrifice of Christ. It has a place and a need for every element of atoning value in his substitution.

#### 6. True Sense of Satisfaction

The satisfaction of justice in atonement for sin is not peculiar to the doctrine of Satisfaction, technically so-called. It is the distinctive nature of the satisfaction that is so peculiar. The Rectoral atonement is also a doctrine of satisfaction to divine justice, and in a true sense. The narrow view which makes the retribution of sin, simply as such, an absolute obligation of justice, and then finds the fulfillment of its office in the punishment of Christ as a substitute in penalty, never can give a true sense of satisfaction. But with broader and truer views of justice, with its ends in moral government as paramount, and with penalties as the rightful means for their attainment; then the vicarious sufferings of Christ, as more effectually attaining the same ends, are the satisfaction of justice, while freely remitting its penalties. This is a true sense of satisfaction. Love also is satisfied. And a redemption of love must be in satisfaction of love as well as of justice.

Consistently with these views we may appropriate the following definition, and none the less consistently or freely because of its appropriation by Dr. Symington, although a Satisfactionist in the thorough sense of the Reformed soteriology: *By Satisfaction, in a theological sense, we mean such act or acts as shall accomplish all the moral purposes which, to the infinite wisdom of God, appear fit and necessary under a system of rectoral holiness, and which must otherwise have been accomplished by the exercise of retributive justice upon transgressors in their own persons."*

#### IV. Theory and Scripture Interpretation

We have previously stated that any theory of atonement, to be true, must be true to the Scriptures. It must also fairly interpret the more specific terms of atonement, and be consistent with all truths and facts having a determining relation to it. We freely submit the theory here maintained to this test. It will answer to all the requirements of the case. Nor will an elaborate discussion be necessary to make the fact clear.

## 1. Terms of Divine Wrath

The Scriptures abound in expressions of the divine wrath. Our theory fully recognizes the fact. And these terms of expression have not their full sense simply as rectoral or judicial. Nor have we any need of such a restriction.

There is ground for a distinction as we think of God personally and rectorally. There is the same distinction respecting a human ruler. He has his personal character and also his rectoral sphere. Judicial obligation may constrain what the personal feeling not only fails to support, but strongly opposes. Yet a personal disposition in condemnation of crime is very proper in a minister of the law. It is necessary, and must extend to the criminal, if law is to be properly maintained. And the denial of all personal displeasure of God against sin and against sinners would be contrary to his essential personal righteousness. Even with men, the higher the moral tone the profounder is the reprobation of sin. In the moral perfection of God it has its profoundest depth. Yet it is not vindictive or revengeful, and coexists with an infinite compassion. These dispositions, so diverse in tone and ministry, are harmonious in God.

It is in no contrariety to this, that, while punishment is with God in sacrifice of his disposition of clemency, his punitive disposition is in moral support of the sacrifice. Without a retributive disposition in man, law has no sufficient guarantee of enforcement. Mere benevolence toward the common welfare would not answer for the protection of society through the means of penalty. We will not allege such a disability in the divine benevolence: but it is clear that without a retributive disposition in God, the punishment of sin would impose a far greater sacrifice upon his compassion. And his punishment of sin is not simply from his benevolence toward the common welfare, nor from the requirement of judicial rectitude, but also from the impulse of a personal punitive disposition. Hence the terms of the divine wrath have a personal as well as an official sense. The doctrine we maintain so interprets them, and thus shows their consistency with itself.

But the divine wrath, so interpreted, asserts no dominance in the mind of God, and is in fullest harmony with his love. It has no necessity for penal satisfaction either in personal contentment or judicial rectitude. As personal, it neither requires nor admits a substitute in penalty as the ground of its surrender. It is in the nature and necessity of such a disposition that any penal satisfaction be found in the retribution of the actual sinner. To exaggerate it into a necessity for satisfaction, and then to find the satisfaction in the retribution of Christ as substitute in penalty, is to pervert Scripture exegesis, and equally to pervert all theology and all philosophy in the case. In entire consistency with his personal displeasure, God may and does wish the absence of its provocation and the repentance of the rebellious, that he may receive them in clemency. And real as the divine displeasure is against sin and against sinners, atonement is made, not in its personal satisfaction, but in fulfillment of the rectoral office of justice. Hence, on the truth in the case, our theory fully interprets the terms of divine wrath.

## 2. Terms of Divine Righteousness

The Scripture texts which in different ways attribute righteousness to God, form a very numerous class. He is righteous; righteousness belongeth unto him; and his doings are righteous. These terms, so applied, are often synonymous with holiness; often, with goodness; sometimes, with justice. And they give no place to the narrow view which mostly restricts the divine righteousness to the retribution of sin.

If, as asserted, the punishment of sin according to its demerit is an absolute requirement of judicial rectitude in God, so that he is righteous only as he so punishes, or unrighteous in any omission, it follows that our doctrine will not properly interpret these terms. But, as we have previously shown, the divine righteousness has no such necessity.

In that God legislates, not arbitrarily or oppressively, but wisely and equitably, as with respect to his subjects-inflicts no unjust punishment, but by means of just penalty protects all rights and interests which might suffer wrong from the impunity of sin, except as forgiveness is granted only on such ground as may equally secure the same end-and rewards his children according to the provisions and promises appertaining to the economy of grace-he is righteous in the truest and highest sense of judicial righteousness which the Scriptures attribute to him. But these facts are in the fullest accord with our doctrine of atonement. It, therefore, fairly and fully interprets the Scripture terms of the divine righteousness.

### 3. Terms of Atonement

The more special terms of atonement, as previously given, are, atonement itself, reconciliation, propitiation, redemption, and the appropriated term substitution. All these terms have a proper interpretation in the Governmental theory. As an expression of the office and results of the redemptive mediation of Christ, they are properly rectoral terms. Yet in a deeper sense they imply the personal displeasure of God against sinners, and a change in his personal regard in actual reconciliation. Now they are no longer held in reprobation, but accepted in a loving friendship. Yet the atoning sacrifice of Christ neither appeases the personal displeasure of God nor conciliates his personal friendship. These facts are required and verified by the further fact, that, although the subjects of reconciliation in the death of Christ, yet as sinners we are none the less under the personal displeasure of God, and so continue until, on our repentance and faith, there is an actual reconciliation. The atonement, therefore, is in itself provisory. It renders us salvable consistently with the rectoral office of justice. But these personal regards of God respect man simply in his personal character, condemning him in his sinning, and accepting him in friendship on his repentance and obedience.

Such an exchange of personal regard is not only a consistency in God, but a necessity of his nature. Hence, the case is supposable, and with men sometimes actual, where personal friendship and judicial condemnation are co-existent. And could a sinner, without the helpful grace of redemption, sincerely repent and render a true obedience, there would be a coincidence upon him of the divine regards of personal friendship and judicial condemnation. Hence, these terms of atonement, while deeply implying the personal displeasure of God against sinners as such, represent the sufferings of Christ, not as

appeasing such displeasure, nor as conciliating his personal favor, but as the ground of his judicial reconciliation; yet -always and only on such conditions of a new spiritual life as to carry with his judicial forgiveness his personal reconciliation and friendship. Such is their true sense; and such is their interpretation in the Governmental theory.

#### 4. Terms of Atoning Suffering

Any issue on these terms respects neither the intensity of the sufferings of Christ nor the fact of their atoning office, but the question whether they were in any proper sense penally retributive.

This may be noted first, that there is neither term nor text of Scripture which explicitly asserts the penal substitution of Christ in atonement for sin. It is a noteworthy fact: and the assertion of it will stand good until the contrary be shown. As a fact, it is against the theory of atonement by penal substitution, and in favor of that of vicarious suffering.

The punishment of Christ as substitute in atonement is rendered familiar by frequency of utterance in theological discussion; but this is the utterance of theology, not the assertion of Scripture. Exegesis often asserts the same thing; but this is interpretation, not the texts themselves. They neither require nor warrant the interpretation. Redemption by vicarious suffering, without the penal element, will give their proper sense. Nor is there any term or text of Scripture expressive of the atoning suffering of Christ which this doctrine cannot freely appropriate in its deepest sense. Yet we do not think it necessary to review all the texts in question. It will suffice briefly to notice a few of the stronger.

"For he hath made him to be sin for us." A common rendering of the original is sin-offering. This has ample warrant, and avoids the insuperable difficulties attending any restriction to a primary or ethical sense of sin. That the Scriptures often use the original term in the sense of sin-offering there is no reason to question. In the references given, after a description of the sin-offering, we have for it the simple phrase, "*hamartia esti*," and so used several times; also, after the preceptive instruction respecting the daily sacrifice of atonement, we have the phrase, "*to moscharion to tes hamartias poieseis*," the last two words being the very same used in the text under review. On hamartia, as used in the references given in Leviticus, Sophocles says that "it is equivalent to "*Thuaia pepi humartias*." Thus we have in Scripture usage ample warrant for rendering the same term in the text under review as sin-offering. Nor do we thereby surrender any vital truth or fact of atonement. Christ is all the same a sacrifice for sin.

If this rendering be denied, what then? Will sin be held in any strictly ethical sense, or under any legitimate definition of sin proper? Certainly not. Christ could not so be made sin for us. No one who can analyze the terms and take their import will so maintain. Sin must still be subject to interpretation. Shall the rendering be the turpitude or demerit of sin? Even Satisfactionists must discard this, as they deny the possibility of its transference. Shall it be the guilt of sin? This some will allege. But guilt as a punishable reality cannot be separated from sin as a concrete fact in the person of a sinner. Only

punishment remains as a possible rendering. But here is a like difficulty, that sin as punishable is untransferable.

"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse (*katara*) for us: for it is written, Cursed (*epikataratos*) is every one that hangeth on a tree." The more literal sense is obvious, and is specially emphasized by the citation in the text. Nor would we conceal or avoid any force of the terms used. The curse of the law on us, and from which Christ redeems us, is the law's condemnation and the imminence of its penalty. And he redeems us by being made a curse for us in his crucifixion. But in what sense a curse? In the literal sense of the terms, and as emphasized by the quotation? This in the Hebrew text is, "for he that is hanged is accursed of God.

The doctrine of Satisfaction requires this full sense. If the curse is the divine punishment of sin, then whoever is so punished is accursed of God. So, if our sins were thus punished in Christ, then was he accursed of God. Will the doctrine of Satisfaction hold the literal sense, with its inevitable implications? Only in a sense consistent with the facts in the case is he that hangeth on a tree the subject of a divine curse. In many instances the most holy and beloved of the Father have been so executed. They were not accursed of God. And along with the fact of the divine malediction we must ever take the criminality of the subject. As such, and only as such, is any one accursed of God. Thus it is written of odious criminals, executed for their crimes and then exposed in suspension upon a tree, that they are accursed of God. Was Christ so accursed? Did the malediction of God fall upon him in his crucifixion as upon a criminal in the expiation of his sins under a judicial punishment?

We must depart from such a sense of this text. Its implications in the case of our Lord and Saviour would be violative of all truth and fact, and repugnant to all true Christian sentiment. We never again can go back to Luther's shocking exposition of the text; which, however, is in the order of its more literal sense, and within the limit of its inevitable implications. And that Christ in our redemption submitted to a manner of death which, as the punishment of heinous crime was in the deepest sense an accursed death, will, without the curse and wrath of God on him, or any penal element in his suffering, answer for all the requirements of a proper exegesis.

"Who his own self bare our sins, in his own body on the tree." The apostle no doubt had in mind the words of the prophet uttered in his marvelous prevision of the redemptive work of Christ. Hence the two passages here stand together.

They are much in the style and sense of those previously considered. That they fully mean the fact of an atonement for sin in the vicarious suffering of Christ there is no reason to question. And but for the insuperable difficulties previously stated, we might admit an element of penal substitution. The texts neither assert nor require it. Nor will the doctrine of Satisfaction appropriate them literally. Let it put upon "our sins" any proper definition according to the literal sense, and then answer to the question, whether Christ really bore them in his own body on the tree? It will not answer affirmatively. From such

a sense the strongest doctrine of penal substitution will now turn aside, and proceed to an interpretation in accord with its more moderate views.

As previously stated, we have in these texts the fact of an atonement for sin in vicarious suffering. This fact justifies the use of their strongest terms of substitution, and answers for their interpretation. With the sufferings and death of Christ as the only and necessary ground of forgiveness and salvation, we can most freely and fully appropriate them. Nor do we need the penal element for such appropriation. And on no other doctrine than on that which we maintain can it be said of Christ more truly, or with deeper emphasis, that "he was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed," "who his own self bore our sins in his own body on the tree."

## V. Theory and Scripture Facts

There are a few special facts, clearly scriptural and with decisive bearing on the nature of the atonement, which may be noted here. They will be found witnessing for the theory which we maintain, and against that in special issue with it.

### 1. Guilt of Redeemed Sinners

It is an obvious fact both of the Scriptures and of the reason of the case, that sinners as such are under divine condemnation and guilt. There is no exception in favor of elect sinners, whose sins are alleged to have suffered merited punishment in Christ as substitute in penalty. Even admitting the Calvinistic distinction between the elect and non-elect, redeemed and non-redeemed, there is no such exception so long as sin is their habit. The divine law condemns all alike. The penalty of justice threatens all alike.

Why should this be true of any one whose sins have suffered merited punishment in Christ as his accepted substitute? It cannot be true. Whoever suffers the just punishment of his own sins is thereafter as free from guilt or answerableness in penalty as though he had not sinned. If such punishment be possible and actual by substitution, the same consequence must follow. And we have previously shown, by quotations from the highest authorities on the doctrine of Satisfaction, that justice itself imperatively requires the discharge of all sinners the just punishment of whose sins Christ has suffered in their behalf.

On such a scheme the discharge of redeemed sinners must take place at once. Indeed, guilt is never actualized in them. The punishment anticipates their sin. Then so must their justification or discharge. And all that is said to the contrary respecting the requirement of proper conditions or the divine determination when the discharge shall issue is either irrelevant or inconsistent, and therefore nugatory. Guilt and punishment are specific facts. The penalty of justice once inflicted, the subject is free. And on the scheme of Satisfaction redeemed sinners can no more be answerable in penalty for their sins at any time than Christ as their substitute can be answerable again for the same after he has once suffered their merited punishment. "So far as the guilt of an act-in other words, its

obligation to punishment-is concerned, if the transgressor, or his accepted substitute, has endured the infliction that is set over against it, the law is satisfied, and the obligation to punishment is discharged." This is consistent, and to the point.

The illogical jumbling which asserts an atonement for sin by actual penal substitution, and then makes it over into a kind of deposit, to be drawn upon or dispensed at the option of the depository, and that may be utterly refused to any and all, should be done with. It is in utter contrariety to the Reformed soteriology, into which the doctrine of Satisfaction by penal substitution is so deeply wrought, as it is to that doctrine itself. Yet we are constantly meeting this very jumbling. Here is a specimen: *"God is under no obligation to make an atonement for the sin of the world; and, after he has made one, he is at perfect liberty to apply it to whom he pleases, or not to apply it at all. The atonement is his, and he may do what he will with his own."* We have no adverse criticism, except upon what is so palpably inconsistent with the doctrine of Satisfaction, as it is with the citation just now given from the same author and taken from the same discussion. Whenever the payment of a debt is accepted, and from whomsoever, the debtor is free. Whenever a sin is justly punished, and in whomsoever, the sinner is free. Any detention, either in punishment or in liability to it, is an injustice. And the atonement of Satisfaction is not a deposit which may go to the payment of our debt of guilt, but the actual payment; not something that may be accounted to us for the punishment of our sins, but their actual punishment. The making of such an atonement is the application of it. And now to represent it as a deposit that may be drawn upon-to write of its optional application, and of its rightful refusal to any or to all-is to jumble egregiously.

It is still a fact of the Scriptures, as also of the reason of the case, that sinners as such, though the subjects of redemption, are in a state of guilt. It is a fact contrary to the theory of Satisfaction and in its disproof, as we have previously shown. But the atonement in substituted suffering, not in substituted punishment, and a provisory ground of forgiveness, not only agrees with such a fact, but requires it. Therefore, as the only alternative to the doctrine of Satisfaction for a real atonement in Christ, the fact of guilt in redeemed sinners witnesses with all the force of its logic to the truth of the Governmental theory.

## 2. Forgiveness in Justification

As sin in the redeemed has real guilt, and no less on account of the redemption, therefore justification, whatever else it may be, must include an actual forgiveness of sin. There must be a discharge from guilt as then real, a remission of penalty as then imminent. There is such a forgiveness. Nor is it really questioned, except for the exigency of a system, by truly evangelized minds. The Scriptures are full of it. It is in all the warnings against impending wrath; in all the urgent entreaties to repentance and salvation; in all the requirement and urgency of faith as the necessary condition of justification; in the deep sense of guilt and peril realized in a true conviction for sin; in the earnest prayer springing from such distress of conscience, and importuning the mercy of heaven; in the peace and joy of soul when the prayer is answered and the Spirit witnesses to a gracious adoption.

Justification is not merely the information, given at the time of such experience, of a discharge from guilt long before achieved through the merited punishment of sin in a substitute. As up to this time the guilt is real, so the forgiveness is now real. And it is much against the theory of Satisfaction that it cannot give us a true doctrine of forgiveness in justification. But the doctrine which we maintain encounters no such objection. Such an atonement, while a sufficient ground of forgiveness, leaves all the guilt with the sinner until his justification by faith. Then his sins are really forgiven. So witness the Scriptures; and so witnesses many a happy experience.

### 3. Grace in Forgiveness

The Satisfactionist thinks his own doctrine pre-eminently one of grace. Is it such in the forgiveness of sin? This is the special point we make here. Forgiveness is in the very nature of it an act of grace. That the divine forgiveness in our justification is such an act the Scriptures fully testify. Still, it is true that a debt paid, and by whomsoever, is not forgiven; that a penalty inflicted, and upon whomsoever, is not remitted. And let it be remembered that the absolute irremissibility of penalty is the groundprinciple in the theory of Satisfaction.

But since the economy of redemption is of God; since it originated in his infinite love; and since he provided the sacrifice in atonement for sin, is not his grace in forgiveness free and full? So the Satisfactionist reasons. Nor would we abate aught of the love of God in human redemption. There is infinite grace in his forgiveness of sin; but on the doctrine of atonement which we maintain, and not on that of Satisfaction.

If a doctrine is constructed, as that of Satisfaction, in the fullest recognition of a distinction of persons in the divine Trinity, and also of the specific part of each in the economy of human salvation, then it must not, for any after-exigency, ignore or suppress such distinction. If in the atonement, and as the only possible atonement, the Father inflicted the merited punishment of sin upon the Son, and the Son endured the punishment so inflicted, then they fulfill distinct offices in redemption. Yet the fact is often ignored or suppressed, in order to defend the doctrine of Satisfaction against the objection that it denies to the Father a gracious forgiveness of sin. Even Marshall Randles finds it convenient to do this in the defense of his own doctrine of a conditional penal substitution against the same objection.

If, in the obligation of an absolute retributive justice the Father must inflict merited punishment upon sin-and if in the atonement he inflicted such punishment upon his Son as the substitute of sinners-then he does not remit the penalty. No dialectics can identify such infliction with remission. And where there is no remission of penalty there can be no grace of forgiveness. Hence, the doctrine of Satisfaction does not admit the grace of the Father in forgiveness; which fact of grace, however, is clearly given in the Scriptures.

But this great fact of grace is in full accord with the Governmental theory. A provisory atonement in substituted suffering, rendering forgiveness consistent with the rectoral office of justice, yet in itself abating nothing of the guilt of sin, as its punishment must,

gives place for a real and gracious forgiveness. There is a real forgiveness in our justification, and an infinite grace of the Father therein. And the Rectoral theory, agreeing with these facts so decisive of the nature of re-demptive substitution, and the only theory of a real atonement so agreeing, gives us the true doctrine.

#### 4. Universality of Atonement

We have previously noted the fact that the doctrine of Satisfaction requires, on the ground of consistency, a limited atonement; and also that its universality, as given in the Scriptures, is fatal to the scheme. But the Governmental theory is consistent with the universality of the atonement, with a real conditionality of its saving grace, and with the fact that the subjects of redemption may reject its overtures of mercy and perish. It is the only theory of a real atonement in accord with these facts, and, therefore, the true one.

#### 5. Universal Overture of Grace

Who will hesitate in such an overture? Who will question its obligation? But without a universal atonement the offer would be made to many for whom there is no grace of forgiveness: hence there could be no such obligation. And if the atonement be for all, it must be of a nature to render its universality consistent with all the facts of soteriology. It is such only on the Rectoral theory.

#### 6. Doctrinal Result

The fact of a real atonement in Christ is with the Satisfaction and Governmental theories. Hence the question of its nature is between them. We appeal it to the decision of the facts given in this section. Here are five scriptural facts, all prominent in soteriology, and all vitally concerning the very nature of the atonement. They are inconsistent with the doctrine of Satisfaction, but in full accord with the Rectoral theory. They, require such an atonement, and, therefore, certify its truth.

#### 7. Relation of Atonement to Childhood

We may not entirely omit the question of this relation. Yet it is not directly in the line of our discussion, and is, therefore, to be passed with little more than a reference. And the reference is properly to a particular phase of the question. There are questions of a common infant justification and regeneration, but these we entirely omit as irrelevant. The reference we make is to the atonement in its relation to the salvation of such as die in infancy.

But even this aspect of the question is only incidental to our discussion. We treat the atonement in view of the fact of sin and the requirements of moral government. It is a provision for the salvation of sinners, and necessary for them as sinners. On the ground of such facts rests the validity of our argument for the necessity of an atonement, and the correctness of our theory of its nature. Hence the question of its relation to childhood is irrelevant to this discussion; or, if relevant, not peculiar, and, therefore, requiring no

separate consideration. If there be a native guilt and damnableness as well as a native depravity-ever two distinct questions, however jumbled in theological treatment-then the relation of the atonement to the salvation of dying infants is the same as to that of adult sinners. But if, with the reality of a native depravity, there be not a native demerit and damnableness, then this relation is peculiar, and, therefore, not relevant to our discussion of atonement.

From the facts thus brought into view it is apparent that the question of this relation is, first of all and chiefly, a question of anthropology, particularly of original sin, and not in the sense of a native depravity, but in the far deeper sense of a native demerit and damnableness. The view taken of this question must consistently determine the view respecting the relation of the atonement to the salvation of such as die in infancy.

With a native guilt and damnableness, dying infants would, as just noted, require for their salvation the same atonement and forgiveness as adult sinners. This is really the Calvinistic position, and without difficulty at this point. There is no peculiar relation of the atonement to the salvation of infants, and hence no place for any perplexing question respecting it. There is still, however, a very great difficulty in this system, but lying back in the matter of a native demerit and damnableness.

But if, with a doctrine of native depravity, that of a native demerit and damnableness is denied--the really consistent Arminian position-then the redemptive economy has some peculiarity of relation to the salvation of such as die in infancy. The question is not without its difficulty. But we are not disposed to replace it with the far greater difficulty in the Calvinistic position. We must confess that the usual Arminian treatment of this question is not very satisfactory. It often hesitates, vacillates. There is a native guilt, but not guilt as of actual sin. There is a native demerit and damnableness, and there is not-especially not such as might, consistently with the divine justice, be visited with endless judicial wrath. The indecision is from an attempt to hold Calvinism and Arminianism together beyond the point of a real divergence, or from a failure to give scientific completeness to the latter. But demerit and damnableness are such specific facts, and facts in such positive relation to justice and law, that they cannot be and not be at the same time. Hence the answer respecting them should be categorical-yea or nay, not yea and nay. It must be so before we can conclude the question whether the atonement has any peculiar relation to the salvation of such as die in infancy.

We have previously noted the real distinction between the two questions of a native depravity and a native demerit and damnableness. The former we hold fully and firmly; the latter we do not hold. It is not in our article "Of Original or Birth Sin." The fact has the deeper doctrinal significance because of the history of the article as adopted into our creed. The original article from which it is taken-ninth of the thirty-nine articles of the Church of England-is very strong in the assertion of a native demerit and damnableness; and the very significant fact is, that all this part was authoritatively omitted from the article on its adoption as our own symbol. But our native depravity is in itself a moral ruin. Deliverance therefrom is only through the economy of redemption. Infants dying in infancy are saved in Christ. This we fully and gratefully believe. But the relation of his

redemptive mediation to their salvation is peculiar. Their salvation has not the same sense in every fact as that of adult sinners. The question is a mystery as yet without solution. The Scriptures are quite silent respecting it. We have no clear light to give; as certainly we have received none from others.

For ourselves we make this concession of mystery in the question before us without the slightest hesitation. Every great doctrinal system encounters serious, even insoluble difficulty at some point. When the case arises let it be frankly confessed. In this our Calvinistic brethren are worthy of most honorable mention. Yet some Arminians, accustomed to think every thing very clear on this question, will regard our position with surprise and dissatisfaction. They are probably not such as have studied the question most deeply.

A proper discussion of this question, as previously noted, would require a discussion of anthropology, especially of original sin. It would also require a treatment of the application of redemptive grace in salvation. But these questions belong to other divisions of theology, and would lead us quite aside from the discussion in hand.

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\* John Miley, D.D., 1813-1895, was a Methodist theologian and professor of systematic theology at Drew Theological Seminary in Madison, New Jersey. These series of articles are taken from Chapter 8 of his work, "The Atonement in Christ", originally published in 1881