

# A Brief Introductory Sketch of the History of the Grotian Theory of the Atonement

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To understand the place, character, and influence of the Grotian theory of the Atonement, we shall need first to pass in rapid review the previous history of the doctrine in those thinkers whose ideas have proved to be of decisive influence in its development.

The first attempt to explain the nature of the theme, or of any doctrinal value, was that which Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury, embodied in his treatise entitled, "Cur Deus Homo?" It was an attempt as noteworthy for its spiritual as its intellectual qualities. Under the inspiration of profound reverence for the great Creator of all things, Anselm viewed sin principally as an impairment of the honor of God. The creature owes it to God that not only every act, but every thought, and even fleeting wish, should be subject to him. Not to render this is to impair the honor of God, and to incur a debt,—not a commercial debt, it is true, but a real debt, since the honor of God has been impaired precisely as if the sinner had said in words that God had no claim to the absolute obedience of his creatures. Thus sin is fundamentally a denial of the Sovereignty of God.

This debt may be paid by the punishment of the sinner, or by the rendering of a satisfaction. Punishment would annihilate the guilty race, but satisfaction may repair the honor of God and still admit of the salvation of man. The profundity of Anselm's thought is specially manifest at this point, since he treats the satisfaction in a way to relieve it from the cruder conceptions of those later writers who struggled to find a way of expressing the exact equivalency of the sufferings of Christ to the deserts of men. The satisfaction must render, says Anselm, a service fully equal to the service previously refused, but also something more than this. The thief has not made full reparation for his theft when he has returned the simple sum he had appropriated. The satisfaction, since it atones for infinite sin, must be of infinite worth, as well as voluntary, and one which the offerer is not bound to make. Now, when Jesus Christ dies, he has voluntarily rendered that which he was not bound to render. It is the most complete possible denial of self, and so the most emphatic possible acknowledgment of the claim of God upon man. It ascribes to God as clearly as possible that honor of which the sin of man had deprived him. And its infinity adds the "something more," for which the nature of the case called.

The nature and necessity of the atonement, thus brought to the attention of the church by Anselm, were discussed repeatedly during the middle ages, but until the Reformation nothing was added to the development of the theory. Different writers among the scholastics now taught, and now denied, the objective necessity of an atonement, and finally left this point in great obscurity. The direct line of advancing thinkers, leading to the work of Grotius, is not resumed until we reach John Calvin.

Calvin occupies a position in some respects identical with that of Anselm, and in some respects different from it. Like Anselm, he teaches the objective necessity of the atonement, but he founds it upon a different principle. It is not the honor of God, impaired and needing to be restored, but the offended law and holiness of God, which Calvin presents as the ground of the atonement. There is "a perpetual and irreconcilable opposition between righteousness and iniquity," so that the holy God cannot be propitious to guilty man. The guilt must be removed, and this is accomplished through the sacrificial death. This death is therefore a satisfaction to the offended holiness, law or justice of God, and, by a mysterious relation of the cross to man, our entire guilt and punishment are transferred to Christ, and may, therefore, be no longer imputed to or exacted of us. Such are the main thoughts of Calvin; yet it is very noticeable that he does not pursue the abstract course of reasoning which has been so commonly used since his day to establish them. He does not begin with the justice of God "demanding punishment." He looks at the facts. He sees the sufferings of Christ, that he sustained the character of a malefactor, that the punishment of our sins was upon him, and that by his stripes we are healed, and he says, this is what justice demanded because it is justice exacted. Thus his reasoning, was wholly *à posteriori*, and it was left for later writers to start with abstract conceptions and principles and deduce the necessity of the satisfaction by an *à priori* process.

With the increase of the scholastic tendency among the followers of Calvin, the logical formulation of his conception of the atonement was made much more rigid. Beza, Calvin's successor in the theological school at Geneva, defined God as "consummately and perfectly just, from which it follows that he approves no iniquity, nor leaves any unavenged." And when Socinus arose, he found the Calvinistic theory represented by Covetus, a minister of the city of Paris, who derived from the immutability of God the idea that justice was inseparable from his perfections, and that it was therefore necessary, with the necessity which exists in the nature of God, that justice should be satisfied, and that, since it could not be satisfied, if we were to be redeemed, by us, it must be by another. To these ideas and those logically involved in them, Socinus objected. He occupied the same ground as his opponents in viewing God in the light of the party offended by the transgression of the sinner. This had been the common ground of Anselm and all subsequent writers. And here Socinus would seem to have the best of the argument. If God is the offended party, and deals with men in this capacity, then it follows, as Socinus says, that he can entirely forgive sin without any satisfaction whatever. For God thus to forgive sins, says Socinus, "is nothing but relinquishing his right, and any one may relinquish his own right at pleasure. God, in punishing men, or in forgiving them, is not to be conceived of as a judge who administers the law of another from the letter of which he is not permitted to depart; but as a sovereign Lord and Prince, whose will alone, since he is dealing only with his own rights, is the law of all things and the most perfect norm." A private man cannot only do this, but he is praised for doing it. We cannot deprive God of the same right without committing horrible sacrilege. A man can forgive a debt without payment: so can God. These arguments are conclusive, and wholly overturn the fundamental assumption as to the office of satisfaction made by Socinus's opponents from Anselm down. And yet the doctrine which is thus understood is in substance correct, and that propounded in its place by Socinus is wrong. What

adjustment shall be made in the church doctrine to remove from it the error which Socinus refutes?

It is Grotius's immortal service to have answered this question. He silently concedes all that Socinus has to say about imputation and all that he hints as to the non-moral character of the attribute of justice as conceived by the Calvinists. He would perhaps have said, if Socinus had demanded it, that to press the necessity of a satisfaction to justice, as was done by Covetus, was to convert justice into a natural, instead of a moral attribute in God. But he objects to Socinus's destruction of the idea of satisfaction because, as he says, God does not act in the capacity of the offended party in the punishment of sin, but as a ruler. Punishment does not belong to the offended party as such, and it has nothing to do with the regaining of lost rights. It is the act of the sovereign as a sovereign. True, he is the offended party in this case, but he does not act in this capacity, but only in that of a sovereign, in exacting punishment. Hence there may be a necessity for satisfaction, if sin is to be forgiven, and the fact that it is made shows that it is necessary. This is precisely the *à posteriori* method of reasoning which had been adopted by Calvin. Thus the truth Socinus had acknowledged, but the doctrine of satisfaction is maintained in spite of his objection, by showing that the objection derives its force against the doctrine not from the idea of satisfaction, but from this false conception of the relation occupied by God, which corrected leaves the point in hand unaffected.

We need not dwell upon the theory of Grotius, since the reader has the treatise itself before him. We pass to the main object of the present essay which is to describe the reception with which this theory met, and its influence upon various schools of thinkers down to the present day. In doing this, we shall for brevity's sake keep in view, for the most part, the fundamental ideas of the Grotian theory, viz. that God is to be considered as a ruler, and that the sufferings of Christ served as a penal example, rather than descend to its more minute elements. The history is not in all respects a pleasant one. It illustrates how theological thinkers, like other men, often decide from appearances, associations, and prejudices, rather than from the merits of the case. The Arminian theology was condemned at Dort, and everything Arminian fell into disrepute with it. Grotius suffered under the ban laid upon his fellow-Arminians. As a commentator, he received considerable attention from time to time, but was often met, even in this field, with prejudice and hostility. But his theory of the atonement never received from the orthodox theologians of his day an adequate consideration.

Of this we have an amusing example in the criticisms of Hermann Ravensperg, Professor at Groningen. His misunderstandings of Grotius are so ludicrous that it would not be worth while to consider him except that Vossius deemed him of sufficient importance to devote a small treatise to a reply. The abundant quotations of Vossius show that he completely misunderstood both Socinus and Grotius. He thought that the former taught that Christ paid the penalty of our sins for us, and that this punishment was for a demonstration of the divine justice; and that Grotius taught that nothing but faith and penitence was necessary to free men from sin, no other means intervening, and denied that the justice of God was one of the causes of the punishment of Christ.

Or if we turn to so eminent a representative of the orthodoxy of Dort as Francis Turretin (1623-1687), we find, to be sure, what may be traces of Grotius's influence, but if this be so, the result has only been an obscuration of Turretin's own thought, not a change in his theory of the doctrine. He introduces the term "Ruler of the Universe" as the appropriate designation of God when inflicting punishment. He says: "God, indeed, occupies the position here not merely of a creditor who can relinquish his own right at pleasure, nor merely that of the offended party and lord, who can do as he will with his own without injuring any one, but of the judge and ruler of the universe, to whom alone pertains the infliction of punishment or liberation from punishment, because, as all jurists recognize, this is the part of the supreme magistrate and of 'the higher power' alone." But this ruler acts not as a ruler, but as the offended party, inasmuch as he conducts his government with exclusive reference to his offended justice. "So far as the punishment is concerned . . . the right [or law, jus] of God is plainly indispensable, inasmuch as it is founded in the justice of God. . . . The satisfaction of Christ, both as respects the justice of God and his will, is necessary." This is proved by the "vindicatory justice of God, for, since this is of the nature and essence of God, as was proved in part I., etc., where the law of God, the judge, was shown to be eternal and natural, from which God can no more dispense than he can deny himself, it is not possible that the exercise thereof should not be necessary." The word "ruler" is accordingly used in a sense altogether different from that of Grotius. Heidegger (1633-1698) was glad to borrow from Grotius the idea of ruler to defend the orthodox doctrine against the objections of Socinus. "The creditor is free to remit a debt. Not so in the case of punishment, especially with him who is to be considered not merely as a creditor, but as the ruler of the universe." And yet, it is again a ruler who is guided by no governmental considerations, but acts solely with reference to his own nature, that is, conducts himself as the offended party; for God was unwilling to save sinners except upon expiation, after the demonstration of the justice of him who punishes sin, nor could ever, indeed, save man otherwise because the justice that punishes sin belongs to his nature." If there can be any doubt as to the meaning of this, the following passage from Heidegger's treatment of the attributes of God will remove it. He says: "Punishment so follows upon committed sin by the fit behavior [decentia], holiness, and justice of God that it cannot be that it should not follow."

To note one more example, but from another school, Coccéius (1603-1669), who mitigated somewhat the severity of some portions of the Calvinistic system, though honoring Grotius with considerable attention, was generally opposed to him on questions of theology and interpretation, and accordingly did not modify the old theory of the atonement. "We say that Christ satisfied justice, that is truly redeemed us from the guilt of sin and the sentence of condemnation, by a worthy price" Justice is so defined as to lead to the sentence: "But he is not able not to punish," which is intended to convey the exact sense of the writers just quoted. And finally he says: "It is therefore a manifest error to confound this dedication or ratification of the New Covenant [viz. in the Lord's Supper,] with the threatening of destruction against him who should not abide by the covenant, by the effusion of the blood of a victim, under the analogy of the legal sanction which subjects the life of man to the law. Compare Hugo Grotius on Matt. xxvi. 28." This passage, while not exactly touching upon the theory of the atonement, sufficiently shows

that Cocceius rejected the analogy between human and divine law in application to this subject.

Hard as was the fate of the Grotian theory among the Orthodox for misunderstanding, confusion, or neglect, it was even harder among the Arminians of Holland, where it could at least hope to be met without prejudice, or even with some degree of sympathy. For one reason or another, it was rejected by all the great leaders of the school.

Episcopius (1583-1643), it is true, did not live to complete his system of doctrine. As it is presented to us in an imperfect treatise, his statement of the atonement lacks the theoretic demerit. But what is to be found, speaks against rather than for the Grotian theory. He says: "God could, if he would, through his absolute right and supreme power, being, as he is, a lord, under obligations and oath to no one, have forgiven the human race all its sins, and so have plainly yielded his own right by which he could inflict upon it evil and the misery merited by its sins. . . Nor is there any rea-son for saying that the distributive justice of God necessarily demands that he should punish the sin-ner, otherwise divine justice could not consist with the supreme lordship of God," i. e. with his power of forgiving at his sovereign pleasure. This is to agree entirely so far with Socinus both in the point from which the divine person is viewed, viz. as the offended party, and in the recognition of the fact that, as the offended party, he can relax his demands. This is to reject the Grotian theory in its fundamental principle. But Episcopius does not follow the Socinian theory into its extreme antithesis to the Scriptures. He says again: "But the feeling of justice [affectus justitioe] by which God hates the creature which has sinned, and is in misery of its own proper fault, i. e. lies under the dominion and rule of sin, prevented him from simply forgiving. . . . For if God, on account of his feeling of pity, had absolutely and simply remitted all sin, the feeling of justice, by which God hates sin and loves righteousness, would have in no way appeared; there would have appeared also no effect of the divine threatening or of the divine veracity by which he had designed or threatened death to sinners; and consequently a free opportunity for sinning would have always been afforded to man." Hence, as a result, God would not forgive, "except upon the intervention of a propitiatory sacrifice." Thus the object of the atonement is to prevent men from sinning, in which Episcopius agrees with Grotius; and also to reveal the character of God, and in this respect he agrees with the Calvinists; but in the very act of agreeing, he disagrees with both Calvinists and Grotius, for he says that the necessity of an atonement lay in the will of God "God willed that forgiveness should not be granted except through a sacrifice."

It is at this point that the later Arminian theory - for all the great writers subsequent to this take substantially the same position - diverges from Grotius and approaches the Socinians. Vossius indeed, says that the theory that the form of forgiving men through an atonement depended upon the mere will of God is an ancient opinion, and quotes among many others Calvin himself. But the passage from Calvin does not support Vossius. It runs: "If any inquiry be made concerning the necessity of this, it was not indeed a simple, or, as we commonly say, all absolute necessity, but such as arose from the heavenly decree upon which the salvation of men depended." That is to say, when God had decreed to save men, a propitiation was necessary; but conceivably he might not have thus

decreed at all. In the same way, Grotius held that when man had sinned, the punishment of Christ was a governmental necessity. But the later Arminians departed fundamentally from the Calvinistic view. Whatever expressions those agreeing with the Calvinists may adopt as to the sacrifice of Christ depending upon the will of God, they view God's will and his nature as harmoniously operating, and so intimately connected, that the will always is as the nature. Indeed, this position is the only possible one upon their theory of the will, by which the will and the affections are confounded. Hence, whether they argue in the *à posteriori* way like Calvin, or in the *à priori* way, they always hold that the fact of the infliction of punishment on Christ is sufficient proof of its necessity. The Arminian theory of the will was different, and the meaning of the phrase that the propitiation depended upon the will of God fundamentally another. They held that God could relinquish his right; the Calvinists, always, that he that he could not. They held that his not relinquishing it depended upon his mere will; the Calvinists that his will in this matter was as his nature, which demanded the maintenance of his right. Thus Vossius's defence of his theory is superficial, and his attempt to show that he is in the line of the orthodox theories fails.

Curcellaeus ( 1659) follows the line of thought opened by Episcopius. He asks the question whether God was obliged by some necessity of his nature to exact from Christ the performance of the sacerdotal office. He replies, No; because any one can remit as much of his own right as he may wish without impairment of justice, and hence God may forgive without satisfaction. There is a more express rejection of the Grotian theory in the words: "If there were anything which prevented God from remitting sins freely and without intervening satisfaction, this would have to be sought in his nature, not beyond it." He then goes on to speak of essential mercy and essential 25 justice, and the conflict between them, which renders the whole theory of the origin of the atonement in the nature of God absurd. And so he says that "it depends upon the mere will of God (*mero ejus arbitrio*) whether he shall punish or forgive."

But against the Socinians he teaches that there was a satisfaction. "That God might show much he hates sin and might hereafter more effectually deter us from it, he willed not to forgive us, (*noluit id facere*) except upon the intervention of that sacrifice by which Christ offered his own slain body to him." The nature of the satisfaction he places in the performance of the will of the Father, "For God required nothing else of Christ, and could require nothing else."

Limborch (1633-1712), who holds perhaps the next place to Episcopius among the Arminians, but continues this style of thinking. After examining the views of Socinus as to the satisfaction of Christ and then those of the "Contraremonstrants," in which he repeats Curcellaeus's arguments without variation in their order, he presents his own view in the following terms: "Our own view is that the Lord Jesus Christ was a sacrifice for our sins, truly and properly so called; by sustaining the most grievous tortures and the cursed death of the cross, and afterwards, when raised from the dead, by entering with his own blood into the celestial sanctuary, and presenting himself there before the Father, he appeased him, angry with our sins, and reconciled us to him. Thus he bore for us and in our place the most grievous affliction, and so turned away from us deserved punishment."

The phrase most likely to strike the attentive student of the history of this doctrine will be "grievous affliction," which is substituted for our punishment. Limborch dwells somewhat upon this idea at a later point. Christ satisfied justice, he also says, "not as satisfying the rigor of the divine justice, but the will of God, which is both just and merciful," and he did all things "which were demanded by God for our reconciliation." And, like the others, he refers all the plan of salvation to the will of God, saying, that God has the absolute right of declaring at what price he will be satisfied," and that "the supreme Lord may remit of his own right when he chooses."

Such was the reception of his views among Grotius's own countrymen. The reason is not far to seek. Under the pressure of the intolerant measures which followed upon the Synod of Dort, the Remonstrants, driven in upon themselves, deprived of the corrective influences Of free intercourse with their orthodox brethren, grew gradually more and more lax. Their movement lacked the vigorous flow of religious life, and their thinking partook of the same defect. Occupying a middle position between the Socinians and the Calvinists, they had the virtues of neither, and were only saved from entire agreement with the former by their convictions as to the meaning of the Scriptures.

There was at this time another movement, often supposed to be of a liberal character, which was represented by the school of Saumur in France. Schweizer, the learned historian of the Reformed Theology, has selected the following sentence as comprising the whole peculiarity of this school: "God wills that all men be saved under the condition of faith, a condition which they are certainly able of themselves to perform but without exception, in consequence of inherited depravity despise, so that this general purpose of salvation brings no single individual actually to salvation. In addition to this, God wills particularly from all eternity to save a certain number of particular persons, but to pass over all other persons with this grace; these elect are as certainly saved as all others are certainly lost." This is precisely the doctrine which is known in America as the doctrine of general atonement, and it is logically entirely inconsistent with the idea that the atonement of Christ is the payment of a debt, or the satisfaction of justice strictly so called, as in the Calvinistic scheme. If God wills in any way the salvation of all men, then the atonement of Christ must be sufficient for all men, and so he must have satisfied for all. But if Christ has satisfied for all men, and only a limited number are saved, he has, if satisfaction be the payment of a debt, paid an unnecessary price, which is inconceivable; or, in accordance with another valid objection to the theory, if he has suffered for all men, he has on this theory paid the debt of all men, and so all men not only can be, but are already saved, precisely as James Rely actually argued. Hence this "hypothetical universalism" is inconsistent with the theory which starts out with making God the offended party, and insists upon the satisfaction of distributive justice.

But it does not seem that this inconsistency was perceived, or that the Grotian theory, which is the natural ally of the doctrine of general atonement, was received with any favor at Saumur. The "Theses Salmurienses" are so arranged that the treatise amounts to a standard of dogmatics for the whole school. It consists of disputations held under the presidency of different members of the faculty at Saumur, and probably all would agree with the opinions presented in it. It expresses itself with entire distinctness in agreement

with the ordinary Calvinistic doctrine of the atonement. La Place employs in one place the following language: "We confess that human salvation might have been provided for in many other manners and ways, if God had so willed . . . but nevertheless we think the divine virtues demanded such a sacrifice; and so we affirm that it was necessary." If this is not a momentary confusion of thought, it must be explained in accordance with the principles suggested in the remarks made upon Vossius above.

Such was the reception of the theory upon the continent, amid friends at home and those abroad who would naturally have formed a more favorable opinion of, or actually adopted the ideas of Grotius, had they not been too much absorbed in the theological controversy in which they were engaged on their own account to be in a frame of mind hospitable and receptive to new ideas. Among the English Arminians, however, Grotius found a different atmosphere, and a kinder reception. The English theologian has never been so inaccessible to extra-theological influences as his continental neighbors, and, from the first, Grotius's work upon international law and his defence of the Christian religion were favorable consideration of his dogmatic writings. The original editions of the "Defence" were read in England; it was reprinted at Oxford in 1636; and the first translation was made in 1692. The English Arminians read, and, as we shall see, largely adopted, the Grotian theory.

Archbishop Tillston (1630-1694) stands first in ecclesiastical rank among this school, but his theological importance is not so great. There is little of theological definition in his discourses, or of sharp discrimination and cogent reasoning. He is evidently largely under the influence of such men as Episcopius, and reminds us of him and of the other writers of the same school by the use of their characteristic language. In a sermon upon "The Sacrifice and Satisfaction of Christ," he says: "Both of these [viz. forgiveness and satisfaction], if God had so pleased, might, for anything we certainly know to the contrary, have been effected by the abundant mercy and powerful grace of God without this wonderful method and dispensation of sending his Son in our nature to take away sin by the sacrifice of himself; but it seems the wisdom of God thought fit to pitch upon this way and method of salvation, and no doubt for good reasons, among which these three seem to be very obvious and very considerable:

1. To vindicate the honor of his laws, which, if sin had gone altogether unpunished, would have been in great danger of falling into contempt. . .
2. That God might forgive sin in such a way as yet effectually to discountenance and discourage it, and to create in us the greatest horror and hatred of it.
3. A gracious condescension and compliance of Almighty God with a certain apprehension and persuasion which had very early and universally obtained among mankind concerning, the expiation of sin, and appeasing the offended deity by sacrifices."

The implication of the last phrases is elsewhere confirmed, and it seems that the archbishop thought it doubtful whether the Jewish sacrifices arose from a divine revelation. He speaks in another place of God's accepting Christ's "death as a meritorious sacrifice and propitiation for the sins of the whole world, that by this wise counsel and

permission of his providence he might forever put an end to that barbarous and inhuman way of serving God, which had been so long in use and practice among them." The feebleness of Tillotson's grasp of theological principles is very evident in these remarks. They follow neither Calvin, Socinus, nor Grotius. Tillotson seems to view God as the offended party, as when he suggests that God's demands for punishment may be entirely relaxed, and then explains the actuality of the atonement by God's purpose to vindicate his laws and to deter men from sin. He even goes so far as to say: "God did not command his Son to be sacrificed, but in his providence permitted the wickedness and violence of men to put him to death. And then his goodness and wisdom did overrule this worst of actions to the best ends." In the same line he remarks that the sufferings of Christ were "so highly acceptable and well pleasing to him, that he thereupon was pleased to enter into a covenant of grace and mercy with mankind."

But Symon Patrick, Bishop of Ely (1626-1707), was a more vigorous thinker. Like others of his school, he is not given to theological theorizing in his treatises or popular sermons. But in his published works the following passage occurs, which is distinctly Grotian in its theory, and even in its language. He says: "What do you mean . . . when you say that Jesus suffered for your sins? What was it . . . that he gave satisfaction unto? Was it not all those glorious attributes of God; his wisdom, his truth, his justice, his holiness; saving the honor of which he might not pass by the offences of returning sinners? Was it not that the credit of all these might be maintained, and yet the rebels not perish? That the sentence might not be executed, and yet the authority of the laws preserved? There is nothing plainer than that this death of Christ did do great honor to God in the face of the world: asserted his right; gave countenance to his authority; proclaimed his righteousness and purity; was a notable testimony on his behalf against sinners; and so there could be nothing more powerful to move God to grant a pardon to those rebels that would submit to him, since now he should lose nothing by it, but that which he had a mind to give away and not demand, viz. the penalties which they had incurred by the breach of his laws. But is it not manifest then that God cannot love sin, nor be friends with sinners until they amend? Did not the death of Christ show that his nature is such that he cannot indulge men in their trespasses? Is it not apparent that it was not fit to pardon even penitent and returning offenders unless he showed his displeasure at their offences? Did he not take care to secure his authority when he issued pardon? . . . How should he maintain any government in the world if he himself should be the cherisher of traitors? If he should take care for their protection and set up a sanctuary to which they may boldly fly? . . . It cannot be that God should be so liberal as to give away all his own right. He cannot quit his title and claim unto our universal obedience. It is impossible that Christ by his death should repeal all the laws of God and absolve us from our duty. There is no question that he intended to strengthen them when he made a relaxation; and when he procured a dispensation, he did more establish and secure that which is not dispensed withal. It is a rule of reason, that all exceptions do confirm the law."

In Daniel Whitby (1638-1726) we find a still clearer presentation of the Grotian theory. He entirely rejects the several ideas that "God could freely pardon the sins of the whole world without a satisfaction to his offended justice"; that "there be nothing in God as Rector of the Universe that requires that he should punish sin or show his displeasure

against it"; and that "the punishment of sin ... depends ... purely upon his arbitrary will." This is to leave the standpoint of the Dutch Arminians and come clearly back to the Grotian position. In his sermon on "The Satisfaction of Christ" he presents the Grotian theory in terms very largely drawn from Grotius's work. All his language is cast in the mould of the Grotian terminology, as when he says that God would not pardon sins "without a valuable consideration." A portion of his defence of the wisdom of God in making the atonement may be inserted here. He says: "Should God have issued out a general indemnity and given us a full remission of our sin without anything required by way of reparation for the violation of his law, he must have pardoned sinners without any demonstration of his holiness and justice, or of his hatred of sin and resolution not to let it go unpunished, and so without sufficient motive to deter us from it for the future; which seems not well consistent with his holiness and justice or that relation to us of our governor and great lawgiver which seemeth plainly to require the vindication of his honor, and the preservation of the laws he hath established, from contempt." And he further says: "By the obedience of our Lord Christ to the death in our stead, all the great ends of punishment designed by wise governors were signally obtained," etc. These are: "Firstly, *paradeigma* that they who suffer may be examples to others, etc. Secondly, *vouresia* instruction, that the offender may learn wisdom. Thirdly, *timoria*, the vindication of the prince's honor and the preservation of the laws he hath established, from contempt." The "ends of punishment designed by wise governors" are evidently Grotian in their origin, for not only is the idea entirely so, but the first two terms here employed are to be found associated in a similar definition in Grotius's work and the third is also not unfamiliar to him. So completely does Whitby stand upon the Grotian basis.

We come now to the last of this school of English Arminians we shall notice, Samuel Clarke (1675-1728). He unfolds his views in a sermon upon "The Nature of the Sufferings of Christ." There is some degree of uncertainty in his conception of the relation which God sustains in the matter of punishment, and the sharp distinctions of the second chapter of Grotius's "Defence" are not always kept in mind. He says: "God, being the supreme and absolute lord of all things, has an absolute and unquestionable right to remit upon what conditions he pleases offences committed against himself; either without requiring any satisfaction at all, or upon whatever satisfaction he shall think fit to appoint in conjunction with the sincere repentance of the offender, for the vindication of the authority of his laws and government. For the obligation to punishment is . . . only a right in the lawgiver to inflict it; which right being entirely his own, he may remit as much of it as he pleases, and upon whatever terms or conditions he thinks fit." In this passage Clarke either views God as the offended party in the matter of forgiveness, or else hopelessly confounds the two Positions of offended party and ruler. However, he rights himself in the following passage, which is in juxtaposition with the other: "When the honor of God's laws had been diminished by sin, 'twas reasonably and necessary (notwithstanding God's power and absolute right of forgiving; yet with respect of his wisdom in governing the world) 'twas reasonable and necessary that there should be a vindication of the authority of his laws; and therefore it was necessary, in that sense of necessity, either that the sinner should perish, or that some other satisfaction should be made in his stead." And again he says: "We cannot presume to say but God might consistently with mere justice have remitted as much of his own right as he pleased, by his own supreme and

uncontrollable sovereignty, without requiring any satisfaction at all; but the death of Christ was necessary at least in this respect, to make the pardon of sin consistent with the wisdom of God in his good government of the world, and to be a proper attestation of his irreconcilable hatred against all unrighteousness." It seems accordingly that he would have said, had he had the strict antithesis brought before him which we have in mind in these discussions, that if God be considered as the offended party, the position of Calvin must be abandoned for that of Socinus; but that the true part performed by God in forgiving or punishing sin is that of a ruler, as Grotius said.

Upon this basis, Clarke summarizes his theory in the following terms:

1. That it was from the beginning infinitely reasonable that all possible honor and obedience should at all times be paid by all creatures to all the laws and commands of God.
2. That this honor due to the laws of God is diminished, as much as in us lies, by the sins and impieties of men.
3. That it is highly reasonable and necessary, after such presumptuous transgression, that God should make some proper vindication of his divine authority.
4. That the first and most obvious method of doing this is by the punishment or destruction of the offenders. But because God hates not the persons of sinners and hath no pleasure in their destruction, but only a just zeal for the honor of his divine and righteous laws, therefore, when that is by any means vindicated, his wrath is appeased.
5. Lastly, that our Saviour, by his obedience and humiliation even unto death, has in the most glorious manner vindicated the honor and authority of God and, by establishing a covenant of grace upon the merits of his sufferings and obedience, has secured, to all that truly repent, pardon and remission of sin, consistent with the honor of the divine laws.

In one important point Clarke makes an improvement upon the phraseology of Grotius by avoiding the designation of the sufferings of Christ as a punishment. He says: "God was pleased to accept the vicarious suffering of his Son in the stead of the punishment that was due to the sinner in his own person;" and speaks of the Messiah's suffering, of the effect of Christ's suffering, but, unless some passage has been overlooked, nowhere of his being punished.

We have thus far followed the Grotian theory among men whose names will have a somewhat questionable sound among the generality of those (of whom the writer will confess himself one) in whose estimation the name of orthodoxy is venerable, and to whom the maintenance of a sound theology seems to be one of the principal duties of Christians. These English Arminians are essentially heterodox. If Tillotson and Patrick are not to be reckoned among the Arians, there can be no doubt that Clarke and particularly Whitby were the chief promoters of that movement which gave rise to Unitarianism in both England and America. A theory, like a man, is known by the company it keeps. The admirers of Grotius must confess that hitherto he has been found in questionable company; and they can only offset the prejudice which may be excited by

this fact, by calling attention to the further fact that the Arminian school in Holland, which was soon to land in utter Rationalism, had already illustrated its downward tendency by the rejection of the Grotian view, and the adoption of a vacillating and untenable intermediate position between the Calvinists and the Socinians.

We are soon to enter upon scenes altogether different, amid which whatever odium may have attached to the Grotian theory from its surroundings is, as we hope, to be entirely removed. But we pause at this point to anticipate the course of history for the sake of completing our consideration of English theology. The heterodox Arminians, whom we have just been reviewing, were succeeded after the lapse of almost exactly one hundred years by an evangelical Arminian school - the Wesleyans - among whom the Grotian theory reappeared.

Wesley left no System of Doctrine. The place of the systematic divine among his followers was filled by Richard Watson (1781-1833), whose "Theological Institutes" appeared in the year 1823-24. In his theory of the atonement he rests directly and confessedly upon Grotius. He begins with a discussion of the "principles of God's moral government." "The existence of a divine law, obligatory upon man, is not doubted by any who admit the existence and government of God." This law involves penalties which it is important to understand "both with reference to [God's] essential holiness and to his proceedings as governor of the world." Hence certain definitions of holiness and justice follow, in which the distinction is made between commutative, distributive, and rectoral justice, of which the last, "by which [God] maintains his own rights and the rights of others, and gives to every one his due according to that legal constitution which he himself established," is the underlying motive governing his acts. The essential rectitude of God was concerned . . . to regard these rights in the creatures dependent upon him, and to adopt such a legal constitution and mode of government under which to place them as should respect the maintenance of his own rights of sovereignty and the righteous claims which his creatures, that is the general society of created beings, had upon him." This requires the infliction of penalty upon transgressors of God's laws and the provision of some mode of sustaining the authority of the law, if any such transgressor is to be forgiven.

It is thus clear that Watson accepted the position of Grotius that God was to be considered in the matter of forgiveness as a ruler and not as the offended party. He expressly rejects the latter idea when he says that there is "no relaxation of right in the divine administration and no forgiveness of sin by the exercise of mere prerogative." He presents his own theory in antithesis to that which makes distributive justice "inflexibly require the punishment of those who are . . . objects of [God's wrath]" and in which the satisfaction consists in Christ's "taking the place of the guilty," and to that of the looser Arminians described above, who taught that satisfaction was not absolutely necessary, and insisted upon the "wisdom and fitness of the measure." He himself says: "We call the death of Christ a satisfaction offered to the divine justice for the transgressions of men with reference to its effect upon the mind of the supreme lawgiver. As a just God, he is satisfied and contented with the atonement offered by the vicarious death of his Son, and the conditions upon which it is to become available to the offenders; and their

punishment, those conditions being accomplished, is no longer exacted . . . The satisfaction of divine justice by the death of Christ consists, therefore, in this, that, this wise and gracious provision on the part of the Father having been voluntarily carried into effect by the Son, the just God has determined it to be as consistent with his own holy and righteous character and the ends of the law and government to forgive all those who have true faith in the blood of Christ, the appointed propitiation for sin, as though they had all been personally punished for their transgression." Thus the necessity of the atonement is founded upon the necessity of the government of God in the universe.

We return from this anticipation to take up the course of the history where we left it. We have meantime seen that the Grotian theory is not necessarily allied only with heterodoxy and with corrupt systems of theology, for the Evangelical Arminianism of the Methodists is not such. But we are now to see it handed on, possibly by its English latitudinarian and Arian Supporters, and introduced into new surroundings. It shall find its home now among men who are possessed of an earnest and evangelical spirit, who are sending missionaries to the heathen on the one hand, and to the wilds of a new country, but just in the process of settlement, on the other. It shall be embosomed in churches which have passed through declension and revival, and for a hundred years are to prove an aggressive, converting, and saving influence in the midst of a nation developing under new conditions and in absolute freedom. The doctrinal errors which were condemned at Dort and which infected the Arminian body of Holland, and the doctrinal looseness and indifference which characterized the English Arminians, are to be replaced by earnest devotion to dogmatic truth and by a Calvinistic orthodoxy which in undergoing various internal modifications is to remain in substance Calvinistic to the last. To watch the development of the theory in surroundings so novel and at first glance so unfavorable, will be to see its genuine character tested and exhibited. And such surroundings the theory found in New England.

The line of connection between the treatise of Grotius and the New England theory of the atonement is direct though obscure. We know that the treatise itself was early read in New England. John Norton quotes it with approval in the year 1653. A copy was in the library of Harvard College as early as 1723, and thus accessible to men who borrowed from that source. Nathaniel Mather, writing on justification, quotes Grotius's Commentary upon Rom. v. 21, in the year 1694. But, aside from the influence of Grotius's books themselves, his doctrine had a number of other ways of entering into the mind of the New England divines. They were men of catholic reading, though not engaged in such forms of literary work as would naturally lead them to be scrupulous to refer every idea to its known source. Richard Baxter was an author familiarly known and highly prized among them. He speaks in many places of his obligations to Grotius, from whom, in his own language, he had "learned more than from almost any other writer," expressly mentioning the treatise "De Satisfactione." But Baxter did more than merely quote Grotius. Although he did not entirely accept the theory that the relation sustained by God in the matter of forgiveness was that of a ruler alone, he says expressly: "Government and punishing justice formally as such belong to God only as rector, and satisfaction is made to him eminently in that relation." He generally explains the atonement from the Grotian standpoint, as in the following case: "The true reason for the

satis-factoriness of Christ's sufferings was that they were a most apt means for the demonstration of the governing justice, holiness, wisdom, and mercy of God, by which God could attain the ends of the law and government better than by executing the law on the world in its destruction." Thus Baxter introduced the person of Grotius, and the special work which he did upon the atonement, to the notice of the New England divines in that favorable manner in which one who is himself much trusted and admired always can.

There were also other modes in which the ideas of Grotius could be introduced, at first sight less favorable to them. Circumstances had made the New England divines particularly acquainted with the writings of the English Arminians for they had been early spread throughout the country. Whitby's "Discourses on the Five Points" was the work which called out Edwards's Treatise on the Will, and John Taylor's "Original Sin," the provoking cause of his work upon that subject. Whitby and Clarke were read by Dr. Samuel Hopkins, in whose writings the governmental theory of the atonement makes its first appearance in New England. And at least Dr. Clarke was well known to Dr. Jonathan Edwards, the chief formulator of the doctrine, who also had access, if he chose to avail himself of it, to Grotius's original text in the library of Yale College during his settlement in New Haven. That he did read Grotius, the illustration of Zaleucus, introduced into his third sermon on the atonement, is some evidence. From these Arminian writers the New England fathers, who rejected their fundamental principles, nevertheless learned much. John Taylor's doctrine of original sin was never accepted in New England, and yet many of his single objections to the prevailing theory were subsequently to be found word for word in New England divines. These early heroes read much Latin, and knew the meaning of the sentence "Fas est ab hoste doceri." They were hospitable to good and useful thoughts wherever they might be found, and it is by no means incredible that to Samuel Clarke or Whitby may be due the credit for introducing that suggestion which, under the influence of the Edwardean theory of virtue, has led to the prevalence of the governmental theory of the atonement in the Congregational and a large portion of the Presbyterian denomination in America.

Prof. Park, in the elaborate essay prefixed to a collection of treatises on the atonement, has drawn out in detail those modifications of the common method of stating the doctrine which are to be regarded as preliminary to the introduction of the Edwardean theory by the sermons of Jonathan Edwards in 1785. In the case of both Prest. Edwards and Bellamy, one cannot avoid the impression that various thoughts are stirring in their minds which do not start from any determinate principle, or tend to any definite end. Bellamy was a close friend of Hopkins, and in one passage seems to present clearly the governmental theory. But this is an isolated case, the significance of which is much diminished by the inconsistencies of the writer. Samuel Hopkins (1721-1803) seems, however, to have adopted the governmental idea completely, and thus to have incorporated the first of those two ideas which in beautiful harmony were to form the logical frame and substance of the New England theory.

A brief examination of Hopkins's writings will show how complete is his adoption of the Grotian idea.

He begins with the law of God, of which, "in order to understand the work of the Redeemer, we must have right views." This "points out the duty of man and requires of him what is perfectly right, and no more or less . . . It is, therefore, an eternal, unalterable rule of righteousness which cannot be abrogated or altered in the least iota by an infinitely perfect, unchangeable legislator and governor, consistent with his character, his perfect rectitude and righteousness . . . Every creature under this law is under infinite obligations to obey it without any deviation from it in the least possible instance . . . and every instance of rebellion tends to infinite evil, to break up the divine government and bring ruin and misery on all the moral world . . . If man cannot be redeemed and saved consistent with maintaining this law and showing the highest regard to it, God cannot be true, just, wise, or good in saving man or showing him any favor. But to pardon man and restore him to favor and happiness in this situation . . . would be joining with the sinner to disregard and dishonor the law, and favor, justify, and encourage rebellion. This would be inconsistent with rectitude, righteousness, wisdom, and goodness . . . and would put an end to all perfect, moral government. It would dethrone the governor of the world, destroying his kingdom, and give full scope to the reign of rebellion, confusion, and misery forever . . . Here [in Rom. iii. 25-26] the great design of the Redeemer is expressed, and the great thing he is to accomplish is to maintain and declare the righteousness, rectitude, and unchangeable truth and perfection of God in opening a way by his blood, his sufferings unto death, for the free pardon of man consistent with rectoral justice and truth, and doing that which is right and just, both with respect to himself, his law and government, and all the subjects of his kingdom." This he did by "suffering the penalty of the law."

It will be noted that the whole tendency of this passage is to exalt the government of God. God establishes a moral government over moral creatures. He is the ruler who maintains and executes his law. He Cannot dishonor it, but must maintain and execute it, though he forgives the sinner who transgresses it. All this is Grotian. But there is already a tendency to deepen the Grotian conception. The government of God rests upon his character. The law which establishes the rule of right for men is the reflection of God's own righteousness. He is worshipped by his creatures because he is and is known to be infinitely worthy of their worship. Hence the necessity of maintaining the law is made more evident, and grounded upon a deeper thought than Grotius reached, who neglected to state the relation existing between the government and the character of God. Hopkins has thus taken his stand upon what is the characteristic feature of the Grotian theory, viz. the idea that in the matter of forgiveness God acts not as the offended party, but as a ruler. He is a ruler with a character whose government depends upon his character, and he is a ruler engaged in maintaining his law through the satisfaction of Christ.

Like Grotius, Hopkins uses the word "penalty," but he means the same thing as was meant by Grotius, not the satisfaction of distributive justice, but an example. He may not use this word, but he uses such language as the following repeatedly. "He says: "All the ends of the threatening and of a penalty are as fully answered by the sufferings of Christ as they could be by the execution of it upon the sinner. As much respect is paid to the divine law; government is as well supported; the rectitude and righteousness of God as much declared; and his displeasure with the sinner, and hatred of rebellion and

determination to punish it, as much manifested; and in some respects much more, and to greater advantage."

The underlying thought of Hopkins's entire system is the sovereignty of an infinitely good God. It is natural, then, that the idea of God's goodness in providing the atonement should have some place; and yet it is remarkable that, though Hopkins was the editor of *Prest. Edwards's* work upon the nature of virtue, he did not apply that theory to the subject of the atonement. One hint, only, repeated here and there, do we find in this direction. It is in the passage in which Hopkins is showing that the "redemption of man is the greatest exercise and manifestation of the benevolence of the love and goodness of God that ever took place or ever will." He says: "It was inconsistent with rectoral righteousness and infinite goodness to set aside and disregard this law . . . It was of infinite importance that the law and moral government of God should be maintained." But he has in mind the maintenance of the character of God as the ground of this "importance." Had he said that holy love for the creature himself and his well-being demanded that the law should be so administered as not to break down government or tempt man to sin, he would have crossed the little interval which separates him from a clear application of the theory of virtue to the atonement. This application it was left for another to make.

To this other, Dr. Jonathan Edwards (1745-1801), we now turn.

Like Hopkins, Edwards begins with the idea of moral government. "When moral creatures are brought into existence, there must be a moral government . . . in order to a moral government, there must be a penalty . . . if a penalty be denounced, indeed, but never inflicted, the law becomes no law . . . as well might no law have been made or published, nay, in some respects it would have been better . . . to enact a law and not execute it, implies a weakness of some kind or other; either an error in judgment, or a consciousness of a depraved design in making the law, or a want of power to carry it into effect, or some other defect. Therefore such a proceeding as this is dishonorable and contemptible; and by it both the law and the legislator not only appear in a contemptible light, but really are contemptible . . . if God maintains the authority of his law by the infliction of penalty, it will appear that he acts consistently in the legislative and executive parts of his government. If the authority of the divine law be supported by the punishment of transgressors, it will most powerfully tend to restrain all intelligent creatures from sin. But if the authority of the law be not supported, it will rather encourage and invite to sin than restrain from it."

To this point there is no addition to Hopkins, and but little change. But an addition is soon made and is introduced in a discussion of the question, suggested by the Socinian objections of Dr. Priestley, whether the ideas of free grace and atonement are reconcilable. Edwards distinguishes between three kinds of justice, 1) commutative, "which respects property and matters of commerce solely, and secures to every man his own property; 2) distributive, which consists in properly rewarding virtue or punishing vice, "and has respect to a man's personal character or conduct;" and 3) general or public justice, which, he says, "comprehends all moral goodness." Speaking of the latter kind of

justice, he says: "To practise justice in this sense is to practise agreeably to the dictates of general benevolence, or to seek the glory of God and the good of the universe." In respect to the relation of the atonement to these three kinds of justice, it has nothing to do with commutative justice, nor does it satisfy distributive justice, because the character of the sinner is the same whether the atonement be made or not; but it is in complete accord with general justice. It is out of the benevolence of God that the atonement is provided for men. This provision makes it consistent with the honor of his law and the good of his creatures to forgive the repentant sinner, and this is the greatest conceivable exhibition of the love of God. It is as important for the sinner as for any other member of the universe, that the authority of the law should be preserved; and thus it is out of the love of God that the atonement is made and forgiveness secured through it.

It is not our purpose to trace the progress of this doctrine through the New England divines. The Grotian theory, fairly introduced, soon found its home among them and justified itself by its perfect conformity to the system of modified Calvinism which their various studies had finally led them to adopt. The briefest summary of that system will exhibit the relations of the Grotian theory, when properly developed, to the fundamental ideas of evangelical theology better than can be done in any other way, and will serve as the best answer to the various unwarranted criticisms which orthodox theological writers have generally passed upon it.

The New England theology views the object for which the universe was created as the glory of God. When creatures exist, this glory includes their highest well-being. The decree of creation renders it certain, but not necessary, that man will fall. The race of man derives from its first parent a natural corruption, which produces the certainty but not the necessity of the complete sinfulness of every member of the race prior to regeneration. But God determines to save some of this sinful and guilty race. He has put them under a moral government and system which is the best possible, and he leaves them in general to the operation of its laws. Love to them which chooses their well-being must in and with the same act choose this system which has been formed for their good. Love to them involves also choice of their holiness and of everything which will tend to promote that holiness as well as the rejection of everything which will tend to prevent it. Since sin forgiven without the execution in any sense of the penalty of the law will promote disregard of the law, and hence ill-being and sin, this, as well as regard for the law and the system, compels God, in choosing to forgive repentant man, to provide a way for the maintenance of the authority of his law. This he does by substituting the sufferings of Christ for the punishment of sinners, which as an example has the effect of more highly honoring the law than even the punishment of sinners would do. Repentance, and faith involve the element of absolute submission to the will of God. They are produced by the persuasive influences of the Holy Spirit. The general purpose of mercy is to send forth all the influences of the Holy Spirit in the case of each individual being which the whole system of divine operation in history permits. The decree of individual election is to send upon the elect such influences of the Spirit that they will, not must freely yield themselves to these, repent and believe. Such a person is justified, i. e., forgiven; he begins a life of obedience, i. e., of love to God and man; he is adopted into God's family as his dear child; he is sanctified by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit; and at the day of

judgment he is received into everlasting salvation, while the wicked, who could have repented in the exercise of their free will but have not done so, are justly excluded forever from the presence of God.

It will be noted that the ethical root of this entire system is the idea of love to every creature according to its worth, and that the Grotian theory is the only theory of the atonement which fits this idea in combination with the idea of the freedom of the will.

We pause here. We might trace the influence of the theory upon denominations in America other than those already mentioned. This would form a delightful and fascinating theme, and would lead to a review of some of the most interesting passages in our ecclesiastical history. But the influence of the New England divines in extending the theory has not been confined to this country. England has been influenced by New England, and Andrew Fuller (1754-1815) may be mentioned as an example. The grand object of the atonement of Christ, he says, "is to express the divine displeasure against sin, and so to render the exercise of mercy, in all the ways wherein sovereign wisdom should determine to apply it, consistent with righteousness." Again he says: "I conceive it to be that satisfaction to divine justice by virtue of which nothing pertaining to the moral government of God hinders any sinner from returning to him." These, with other expressions, show him to be clearly a follower in this respect as he was also in others of the New England divines.

We have thus followed the history of the Grotian theory of the atonement to the present day. Its orthodox affinities are exhibited by its survival and its final adoption in an orthodox Calvinistic system, and its firm establishment there, though not conclusive proof, is at least such evidence as history can give that it does afford, in spite of the frequent denials of the critics, the true mean between the old Calvinistic and the Socinian theories, rejecting the errors of both and combining their truths in a consistent form.

To the study of its original form the reader is now commended.

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