

Chapter VII: Theory of Satisfaction

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A CAREFUL discrimination of leading theories on any great question of theology is helpful to its clearer apprehension, and to more definite doctrinal views. But such discrimination requires a careful study of the theories severally. We propose, therefore, to give special attention to the theory of Satisfaction and the more, as the real issue respecting the nature of the atonement is between it and the Governmental theory, rightly constructed.

I. PREFATORY

1. Position in Theology

The theory of Satisfaction holds a prominent place in systematic theology. Its advocates freely call it the Catholic doctrine. The history of doctrines certainly records a very large dissent. Yet as the doctrine of the Calvinistic system, its prominence must be conceded. But even here it is only the leading view. Many Calvinists dissent; and the number is growing. It is difficult, in the face of Scripture and an infinite redeeming love, to maintain the position of a limited atonement; with many, impossible. But this once surrendered and a general one maintained, consistency requires another doctrine of atonement. Here is one law of a large and growing dissent of Calvinists from the doctrine of Satisfaction.

2. Formation

The doctrine is not from the beginning. With others, it has its place in the history of doctrinal construction. Nor did it reach completeness at once. It went through a long discussion, and appeared in different phases. The principle of penal substitution was settled first, though the exact nature of it is scarcely settled yet. But this was found to be insufficient for the Reformed system. An absolute personal election to eternal life requires a "finished salvation" in Christ. And the necessity for a substitute in penalty is easily interpreted to imply the necessity for a substitute in obedience. The law is no more absolute in the demand of punishment than in the requirement of obedience. Any principles, which will admit substitution in the former, will equally admit it in the latter. And in this system Christ must take the place of the elect under the law in both facts. He must answer for their sin in a vicarious punishment, and for their duty of personal righteousness in a vicarious obedience.

Thus the doctrine of Satisfaction found its place and full expression in the "Federal Theology," the logical outcome of the Reformed system. "Christ's atonement was thus the fulfillment of the federal conditions. The Father, who in every part of this great transaction was at once the Lawgiver and the Fountain of the covenant, insisted on the full performance of the law, and yet provided the surety, who was made under the law in the proper sense of the term. It was a true command on God's side, and a true obedience

on Christ's side. He stood in our covenant, which was the law of works; that is, the law in its precepts and in its curse." [Prof. Smeaton: "The Apostles' Doctrine of Atonement," p. 540.]

The atonement of Satisfaction is often called the Anselmic, and is traced to the scheme of Anselm as its original. We have previously noted the insufficiency of his scheme as a scientific basis for this doctrine; and we have a more rational account of its genesis and growth as the logical requirement and product of the Calvinistic system.

3. Two Vicarious Factors

Thus in the completed doctrine there are two elements or factors-substituted punishment and substituted obedience. Nothing less, it is claimed, will satisfy the absolute requirement of justice and law. Sin must be punished; but its punishment neither supersedes nor satisfies the requirement of perfect obedience. The elect have failed in this obedience, and never can fulfill its obligation by their own personal conduct. Hence they need a substitute in obedience as much as in penalty. Christ answers for them in both.

Such is the atonement of Satisfaction. Christ takes the place of the elect in both penalty and precept, and, as their substitute, endures the punishment which, on account of sin, they deserve and in his obedience fulfills the righteousness required of them. Thus justice and law are satisfied. [Dr. Buchanan: "The Doctrine of Justification," p. 308; Dr. A. A. Hodge: "The Atonement," chap. xviii; Dr. Shedd: "The History of Christian Doctrine," vol. ii, p. 341] The vicarious punishment discharges the elect from amenability to penalty on account of sin, and his vicarious obedience renders them deservedly rewardable with the eternal blessedness to which they are predestinated. "The Lord Jesus, by his perfect obedience and sacrifice of himself, which he, through the eternal Spirit, once offered unto God, hath fully satisfied the justice of his Father; and purchased not only reconciliation, but an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven for all those whom the Father had given unto him." [Westminster Confession, chap. viii, v.]

4. Concerned with Penal Substitution

In the review of this theory we shall limit the treatment to the one element of satisfaction by penal substitution. The other element properly belongs to the question of justification. It really belongs to this question in the Calvinistic scheme; only, here the vicarious obedience of Christ is a constituent fact of the atonement itself. It answers to an absolute requirement of the divine law as really as his substituted punishment, and, by imputation to the elect, constitutes in them the ground of a strictly forensic justification. This is a justification by works, not in forgiveness. "If Christ fulfilled the law for us, and presents his righteousness to its demands as the basis of our justification, then are we justified by the deeds of the law, no less than if it were our own personal obedience and righteousness by which we are justified." [Dr. Curry: "Justification by Faith;" Methodist Quarterly view, January, 1845, p. 22.] But in any view of the question, satisfaction by obedience respects a different claim and office of justice from satisfaction by punishment. And whatever reason Satisfactionists may have, as arising from their own scheme of

soteriology, for the inclusion of both elements in the treatment of atonement, we have no reason for the same method in our review. In this restricted treatment we have the precedence of a master in the soteriology of Satisfaction: "By the way, observe I speak only of the penalty of the law, and the passive righteousness of Christ, strictly so called. What place that active righteousness of Christ hath, or what is its use in our justification, I do not now inquire, being unwilling to inmix myself unnecessarily in any controversy." [Owen: "Works," (Goold's,) vol. x, p. 442.]

II. ELEMENTS OF THE THEORY

Most of the elements of this scheme have already appeared; yet it is proper that they here be stated distinctly and in order.

1. Satisfaction in Punishment

The satisfaction of justice in its punitive demand is a cardinal fact of the theory. Indeed, it is so essential, that such satisfaction must enter into the very nature of the atonement. Both a moral influence with men and an important rectoral office are admitted, but only as incidental. Not even the latter is essential; nor has it any place in the foundation of the scheme. But the satisfaction of divine justice in the definite sense of the doctrine—satisfaction in the punishment of sin according to its demerit, and solely for that reason, is essential. It is not omitted in the case of the redeemed and saved, nor can it be. The atonement is in a mode to render the satisfaction required. Indeed, such satisfaction is the atonement as it respects the claim of retributive justice against the demerit of sin.

2. By a Substitute in Penalty

In this doctrine the satisfaction is by substitutional punishment. The absolute necessity for the satisfaction renders this the only possible mode of redemption. Hence, it is maintained, Christ takes the law-place of elect sinners, and suffers in their stead the penalty due to their sins, or such a penalty as satisfies the punitive demand of justice against them.

3. Three Senses of the Substitution

On the nature of the penal substitution, or in what sense Christ suffered the penalty of sin, advocates of the doctrine have not been of one mind. Indeed, it has been with them a question of diverse views, and of no little controversy. The history of the question gives us three forms of opinion.

(i) In Identical Penalty

This view has such palpable difficulties, that of course the thinkers of a great Christian communion could not agree in it. Yet it has its place in the history of Calvinistic soteriology; and, though now generally discarded, it is still thought worthy of the attention and adverse criticism of the Calvinistic authors holding a different view. In the

time of its currency great divines were among its representatives; for instance, John Owen. [."That which I maintain as to this point in difference I have also made 160 apparent. It is wholly comprised under these two ideas: first, Christ suffered the same penalty which was in the obligation; secondly, to do so is to make payment ejusdem, and not tantidem."- Works (Goold's,) vol. x, p. 448.] And he had a following; and such, that it is common to speak of his school.

It is needless to array the many difficulties of such a view. An identical punishment by substitution is in any case psychologically impossible. What, then, must be the fact with such a substitute as Christ? Punishment is suffered in the consciousness of the subject. Its nature, therefore, must be largely determined by his own personal character in relation to sin and penalty. It is hence impossible that Christ should suffer in substitution as the actual sinner deserves to suffer, and would suffer, in his own punishment. Nor can such a principle render any explanation of the difference between the redemptive sufferings of Christ as only temporary, and the merited punishment of sinners, as eternal. Words are easily uttered. Therefore it is easy to attempt a solution of the difficulty by saying that the sufferings of Christ fulfilled the legal requirement of eternal punishment, because, while temporal in fact, they were potentially or intensively eternal. But such terms have no meaning in such a use.

(ii) In Equal Penalty

Christ endured penal sufferings equal in amount to the merited penal sufferings of all the sinners redeemed. This view, also, has its place in historic Calvinism, and a broader one than that of identical penalty. It is now generally discarded. Yet its present disrepute is not properly from any fundamental principle. If possible and necessary, it would be permissible, on the very principle of penal substitution. It is rejected as impossible, or certainly not actual, because rendered unnecessary to a sufficient atonement by the superior rank of Christ as substitute in penalty. Strange that it ever should have found favor or friend. It needs no refutation. And all friends of great doctrinal truth should be glad that now it is generally discarded.

(iii) In Equivalent Penalty

The sense is, that the penal sufferings of Christ, while far less in quantity than the merited penal sufferings of the sinners redeemed, were yet, in quantity and quality combined, of equal value for the satisfaction of justice, and, therefore, an equivalent substitute in the case. The higher supplementary quality is derived from the superior rank of Christ as substitute in penalty. It is as the payment of gold in the place of silver. The claim is satisfied with a reduction of quantity in proportion to the higher quality of the substitute. [Dr. Shedd: "Theological Essays," pp. 300, 301.] This is now the common form of penal substitution as held in the doctrine of Satisfaction. But justice must have penal satisfaction, either in the full punishment of the actual offender or in an equivalent punishment of his substitute.

4. Absolute Substitution

Atonement by substitution is not a distinctive fact of the theory of Satisfaction. The Rectoral theory holds the same fact fully and firmly. Nor is an atonement by penal substitution a distinctive fact of that doctrine. Many hold such a penal substitution as, in their view, constitutes a really conditional ground of forgiveness. [Chap. v, II, 7.] In this scheme the redemptive sufferings of Christ were, in some sense not exactly defined, the punishment of sin; but not such a punishment that the redeemed sinner must in very justice be discharged. We have previously stated the inconsistency of the position. Penal substitution and a real conditionality of forgiveness must refuse scientific fellowship. We accept, therefore, the view of Dr. A. A. Hodge, that it is "by a happy sacrifice of logic that Arminius himself, and some of his leading followers, are with the Calvinists on penal substitution; only, we reject the epithet qualifying the sacrifice. ["The Atonement," p. 14.] We do not think it a happy sacrifice of logic on the part of an Arminian, whereby he mistakes the true nature of the atonement, and at the same time admits a principle which requires him, in consistency, to accept along with it the purely distinctive doctrines of Calvinism. But whatever the sacrifice of logic in the case, the fact of such a theory remains the same. And this fact denies to the doctrine of Satisfaction the distinctive fact of penal substitution.

It hence follows that the distinctive fact of the Satisfaction theory is an absolute penal substitution; absolute in the sense of a real and sufficient punishment of sin in Christ as substitute in penalty; and also in the sense of an unconditional discharge of all for whom he is such a substitute. Such a discharge follows necessarily from the very nature of the substitution alleged, and in the averment of the very masters in the soteriology of Satisfaction. This will appear in its place.

III. JUSTICE AND ATONEMENT

1. Their Relation

Were there no justice, there could be no sin in any strict forensic sense. There could be neither guilt nor punishment. The judicial treatment of sin is from its relation to justice and law. It can neither be judicially condemned nor forgiven, except in such relation. Hence, as the atonement is the ground of the divine forgiveness, there must be a most intimate relation between it and justice. And for a true doctrine of atonement, we require a true doctrine of justice.

It follows, that in any scientific treatment, the theory of atonement must accord with the doctrine of justice upon which it is constructed. The atonement of Satisfaction is exceptionally rigid in its conformity to this law. The same law is observed in the Rectoral atonement; yet here its relation to justice has not been as fully and exactly treated as it should be, and as it must be in order to a right construction and exposition of the doctrine. These facts require some specific statements. ¹⁴³ respecting justice which may be appropriate here, though the fuller treatment will be in connection with the principles specially concerned in the question, as we find them in the Satisfaction and Rectoral theories.

2. Distinctions of Justice

Technically, justice is in several kinds; but, strictly, such distinctions are from its different relations and offices rather than intrinsic to itself.

(i) Commutative

Justice, in this distinction, has a commercial sense, and is specially concerned with business transactions. The rendering or requiring an exact due or equivalent, and whether in money or other commodity, is commutative justice. It has no admitted place in the atonement, except in the now generally discarded sense of identical or equal penalty. Whether that of equivalent penalty is logically clear of the principle, we may yet inquire.

(ii) Distributive

This is justice in a moral and forensic sense. It regards men as under moral obligation and law; as obedient or disobedient; as morally good or evil in their personal character; and is the rendering to them reward or punishment according to their personal conduct. Some divide it into. premial and punitive; but the sense is not thereby changed.

(iii) Public

Public justice, in its relation to moral government, is not a distinct kind, but simply divine justice in moral administration. It is really one with distributive justice, properly interpreted. We do not accept the interpretation of Satisfactionists. On the other hand, advocates of the Rectoral atonement have unduly lowered the truth of public justice. On a right exposition of each, the two are one. But we shall find a more appropriate place for the treatment of public justice when discussing the Governmental atonement. [Dr. Wardlaw: "Systematic Theology," vol. ii, pp. 368-372; Owen: "A Dissertation on Divine Justice," part i, Works, (Goold's,) Vol. x.]

3. Punitive Justice and Satisfaction

Punitive justice is justice in the punishment of sin, or the office of which is to punish it. And punitive, as a qualifying term, best expresses that principle of justice which the theory under review claims to have been satisfied by the penal substitution of Christ.

Remunerative justice has respect to obedience and its reward. The law, as its expression, requires perfect obedience as the ground of the reward. And, on the theory, of Satisfaction, Christ, by his personal obedience meritoriously fulfilled the law in behalf of the elect. But his righteousness so represented as an element of atonement in the satisfaction of justice, respects an essentially different principle from that concerned in his penal substitution, and, as before noted, has no proper place in the present discussion.

Then the essential fact of punitive justice is, that it punishes sin according to its demerit, and on that ground; and must none the less so punish it in the total absence of every other

reason or end. Such is the justice which the theory under review claims to have been satisfied by the penal substitution of Christ.

IV. PRINCIPLES OF THE THEORY

The theory of Satisfaction necessarily posits certain principles as underlying the doctrine of atonement which it maintains. They must constitute the very basis of the doctrine. Yet they require but a brief statement here, as their fuller treatment will be in connection with a critical testing of the theory.

1. The Demerit of Sin

Sin has intrinsic demerit. It deserves the retribution of divine justice on account of its intrinsic evil, and entirely irrespective of all salutary results of its punishment..

We accept this principle, and in the fullest persuasion of its truth. Nor have we any theory to construct upon its denial. It is a truth in fullest accord with the Holy Scriptures. Their announced penalties represent this demerit. Such penalties have no other ground in justice. And our moral consciousness, especially under divine enlightenment and quickening, responds to the voice of Scripture. But the punitive demerit of sin, so given and affirmed, is in no discord with our own doctrine of atonement.

2. A Divine Punitive Justice

There is a punitive justice in God. And it is a fact of his very nature, as specific and real as any other fact. It is no mere phase of his benevolence, nor reaction of his pity, simply, for one wronged, against the author of his wrong. God, in his very justice, condemns sin as such. Nor is such condemnation a mere judgment of the discordance of sin with his own uttered precepts, or with some ideal or impersonal law, or with the welfare of others, but the profoundest emotional reprobation of it because of its inherent evil.

So we maintain. Hence we reject the view of Leibnitz, and of all agreeing with him, "that justice is a modification of benevolence;" [Gilbert: "The Christian Atonement," p. 185] a view that has received too much favor from advocates of the Rectoral atonement. Whether the love of God is his supreme law in moral administration is really another question, and one not negated by the truth of his justice. But our own moral nature, as divinely constituted, joins with the Holy Scriptures in attesting the truth of such a divine justice. Our moral reason distinguishes between the turpitude of a sinful deed and the injury which it may inflict. A like injury, innocently done, awakens no such reprobation. We reprobate the intention of injury where the doing is hindered. Thus our moral reason witnesses for a divine justice. Such justice, in its deepest, divinest sentiment, condemns sin as such, and is a disposition to punish it. We maintain this view.

3. Sin Ought to be Punished

This proposition is freely affirmed, but with little regard to its proper analysis, and, therefore, with little apprehension of its meaning. A sinner may say, and with all sincerity, that he ought to be punished; but all he means is, that he deserves to be punished. He has in mind and conscience his own demerit, and not the obligation of another respecting him. Often the term is used respecting sin in the same sense—that it deserves to be punished; but this adds nothing to what we already have. The proposition is identical in meaning with a former one, which affirms the punitive desert of sin.

But the term ought, as used in the theory of Satisfaction, must have a ground in obligation, and that obligation must lie upon God as moral Ruler. Such is the requirement of the theory. . If sin ought to be punished, God is under obligation to punish it. Such is the inevitable logic of the proposition. This carries Satisfactionists into a very high position, and very difficult to hold, but which they must hold or suffer a destructive breach in their line of necessary principles. For such divine obligation, whether understood as included in the meaning of the proposition or not, is a logical implication and necessity of the scheme. And this obligation must be maintained simply on the ground of demerit in sin, and apart from all the interests of moral government. But for its proper discussion the question goes forward to a critical testing of the theory of Satisfaction.

4. Penal Satisfaction a Necessity of Justice

Sin must be punished. It must be punished on its own account, and none the less in the total absence of all salutary influence of punishment, whether upon the sinner himself or upon the public virtue and welfare. It is a necessity of judicial rectitude in God. Divine justice must have penal satisfaction. This principle is really one with that immediately preceding. It is the last that we need name. And here we part with the theory of Satisfaction. We do not admit this principle. We reject it, not only as without evidence of its truth, but also because of evidence to the contrary.

5. The Determining Principle

The irremissibility of penalty is the determining principle of the theory of Satisfaction. Merited penalty is absolutely irremissible on any and all grounds whatsoever. The scheme allows a commutation of persons in punishment, or will admit a substitute in place of the offender; but such an exchange of subjects in punishment is no omission of penalty. The offender is discharged, but his substitute suffers the deserved penalty in his stead; or suffers, at least, its penal equivalent with the divine law. This, indeed, is the very averment of the doctrine. Nor is there any omission of punishment in an exchange of measure which justice permits in view of the higher rank of the substitute. In any and every way there is, and there must be, the infliction of deserved penalty. The sinner or his substitute must be punished according to the demerit of the sin. This is the necessity for an atonement in the scheme of Satisfaction.

Hence the absolute irremissibility of penalty determines the atonement to be by penal substitution. There is no other possible atonement. We know and welcome the account

made of the rank and worth of Christ as penal substitute; an account logically valueless and unnecessary with the forms of identical and equal penalty, but consistent with that of equivalent penalty. But even here they are of account only as they give punitive value to his atoning sufferings; so that, as before noted, justice is satisfied with a less quantity in proportion to the higher quality. Still it is only penal suffering that counts in this element of atonement. And the very substance of such an atonement is substituted punishment in satisfaction of an absolute punitive justice.

V. Analytic Testing of the Theory

1. Justice as Satisfiable

Since it is so positively asserted that justice must have satisfaction in the punishment of sin, and since the fact itself is so essential to this theory, it is well to inquire wherein, or in what form of justice, this satisfaction may be realized. Propositions given assertively merely, may gain such currency as long to continue even unchallenged. Such, in some measure, is the fact respecting this ground principle of the theory of Satisfaction. It has rightfully no such franchise. We shall more than challenge it. Hence we raise the question respecting the penal satisfiability of justice. A true answer is important; but to be given only in a correct view of cardinal facts in the case.

(i) Mistake Easy

One may easily affirm the necessary penal satisfaction of justice without any proper analysis of the proposition, and, therefore, without any proper apprehension of its meaning, and equally with-out any ground in truth. Hence it is easy to mistake the satisfiability of justice. Much, however, depends upon the conception of justice. If it be the conception of an ideal or impersonal justice, there is little occasion for mistake: for however exalted we may hold it to be even if as eternal and immutable-as above God and the law of his own righteousness in moral administration-yet, as purely ideal or impersonal, we cannot reasonably regard it as satisfiable in any real or proper sense; certainly not in any sense answering to the requirement of the Satisfaction scheme. Mistake arises with the personification of an ideal justice. When we clothe it in personal attributes-intelligence, moral reason, resentment against sin, retributive wrath -then we may regard it as satisfiable, and as really satisfied with the punishment of sin. The idea simply completes the personification. But it is as far from the reality of truth as a mere personification is from a real personality.

Hence, if we would answer truly wherein, or in what form of it, justice may be satisfied with the punishment of sin, we must avoid all figurative modes of thought and expression, particularly of personification, and turn from an abstract to a concrete justice-to justice as a personal attribute.

(ii) Satisfiable only in Personality

Justice has no self-personality, and no separate self-existence. Nor is it satisfiable, except as a personal attribute or in personality.

In speaking, as we often do, of punishment as satisfying justice, we may have primary reference in thought to some personal injury or wrong, or to the demerit of sin, or to the legal penalty, or to the principle of justice; but satisfaction is so referable only as such conceptions represent personal sentiments of moral justice. And, strictly, the sense of satisfaction has reference solely to such personal sentiments. Without them justice can have no satisfaction in the punishment of sin, and is in no proper sense satisfiable.

Hence, if in any case we assert a necessary satisfaction of justice in the punishment of sin, we assume such a punitive disposition and sense of judicial obligation in some person or persons as will render the satisfaction possible, and as will inevitably execute the deserved penalty. There is no other law which can necessitate the punitive satisfaction of justice.

(iii) True of Divine Justice

Such are the facts of divine justice. It is not something separate or separable from God, except in abstract thought. Apart from him, it is void of all capacity for satisfaction in punishment, and of all power and disposition to exact it. But justice as an attribute of God is penally satisfiable.

As such, it is no impersonal or abstract principle. It is more than a mere cognitive judgment; it is a moral judgment, a condemnatory sense of sin, a moral resentment against it, a disposition to punish it. Such resentment and disposition of justice are right, as true to the demerit of sin and the divine holiness. Their satisfaction in the punishment of sin is the satisfaction of divine justice. Such is the only satisfaction.

When, therefore, Satisfactionists assert a necessity for the retributive satisfaction of divine justice in the definite sense of their own doctrine, they assume such a punitive disposition in God, or such a sense of obligation in the requirement of judicial rectitude, as must imperatively demand the satisfaction and necessitate the infliction of merited penalty in its realization. There can be in the justice of God no other necessitating law of penal satisfaction.

2. Question of Necessity for Penal Satisfaction

Must God have the satisfaction of his justice in the punishment of sin? The question seems to reach toward unreachable heights. But those who allege the necessity lead the way; and if they may lead, we may follow. The real point, however, must be held in clear view. In such a question all jumbling must be carefully avoided. Nor must we lose sight of the facts which must condition and necessitate the satisfaction of justice. Such facts have, as we have seen, full application to the divine justice. Any necessity in God for the punitive satisfaction of his justice must arise either from his own disposition as hostile to sin, or from his sense of judicial, obligation as absolutely requiring its merited

punishment. On the ground of such facts, must divine justice have retributive satisfaction?

3. No Necessity in Divine Disposition

We admit -and maintain a retributive justice in God. We also assert a punitive disposition as a fact of his justice. It hence follows, that, so far as this disposition is concerned, there is a divine impulse toward the punishment of sin, and a divine satisfaction therein. Is this disposition such as to necessitate the satisfaction?

It should be distinctly noted, that we are here concerned simply with this disposition. The rectoral office and obligation of justice, and the punishment of sin, simply on the ground of its demerit as a requirement of personal rectitude in God, are questions entirely apart from the one in hand, and to be treated separately.

In reasoning from a divine disposition, we must not forget that it is such, nor allege any thing respecting it inconsistent with the divine character. We may suppose a punitive disposition of men so vindictive and revengeful that only an insuperable hindrance would prevent its satisfaction in punishment. In a mere question of power there can be no such hindrance to the divine justice. But who would ascribe to God such a disposition as this analogy would suggest? Its admission would involve a denial of the possibility of an atonement. For such a disposition in God would necessarily exact penal satisfaction, and also by an equal necessity exact it of the actual offender. As a personal disposition exacting personal satisfaction, it could admit no substitute in penalty. Besides, such a disposition is so contrary to the character of God as given in the Scriptures, that no one attempting the construction of a doctrine of atonement in the light of their teaching could maintain such a necessity for the punishment of sin.

Apart from this special aspect of the question, and treating it simply in view of a punitive disposition in God, there is no necessity for the punishment of sin from the fact of such a disposition.

There is no necessity in the divine nature for the satisfaction of every divine impulse or feeling. Yet only such a necessity could conclude a necessity for the satisfaction of the punitive disposition. For if there be no such necessity respecting other divine dispositions, there may be none respecting this.

Besides, to assume a necessity for the satisfaction of all divine dispositions is to assume what is impossible; for in every instance of punitive satisfaction there is a sacrifice of the -feeling of compassion. "For at the very instant when the immaculate holiness of God is burning with intensity, and reacting by an organic recoil against sin, the infinite pity of God is yearning with a fathomless desire to save the transgressor from the effects of this very displeasure." [Dr. Shedd: "Theological Essays," p. 270.] Nor is this any mere speculation or inference. Explicit words of Scripture give the fact of this divine sacrifice. "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live." [Ezek. 33:11] "How shall I give thee up? mine heart

is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together," (Hosea 11:8.) are his words of compassion over the perishing. And he is declared to be "long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." (I Pet. 3:9.) The cross voices the truth and depth of this compassion. The precious blood thereon shed is the down flowing of pitying love upon guilty souls. Now in the coincidence of divine feelings, so diverse in kind, complete satisfaction is impossible. Hence, the satisfaction of justice is no necessity of a punitive disposition in God.

4. As Concerning the Divine Rectitude

We come to the gist of the question in the scheme of Satisfaction. On the punishment of sin as a requirement of the divine rectitude, very much is said assertively. So far, a mere denial is all that a fair polemic requires. Yet we may further consider the main position of the doctrine under review. It is, that in the very rectitude of the divine justice sin must be punished, and, therefore, that substitutional punishment is the only possible atonement for sin. But we want the exact position as concerning the divine rectitude. It must be separated from all else, and held in clear distinction. A retributive sentiment in God, as disposing him to the punishment of sin, has no place here. Nor has the rectoral office of justice any place in the present issue. All interests of moral government, as ends of justice in moral administration, are outside of the question. The position is, that in the maintenance of personal and judicial rectitude God must punish sin in the measure of its demerit, and solely on this ground. The requirement would be none the less imperative in the absence of all salutary influence of punishment upon the interest of moral government; indeed, none the less imperative, as the position is taken, were the result a detriment to such interest.

It will readily be asserted that even the supposition of such a detriment is not permissible.

But the assertion is far from apodictic. Divine rewards, both premial and punitive, have an office in the interest of moral government-necessarily an influence upon such interest. The tendency of the influence much depends upon the temper or disposition of the subjects of government: and the result, whether beneficial or detrimental, is determined by the view taken of such rewards; and not necessarily right views, or such as should be taken, but such as may be or actually are taken. Now it is certain that in secular government, of whatever form, punishment may be too severe, as well as too lenient, for the public good. The very severity has a hardening influence, engenders hatred, and the very spirit of rebellion. And subjects are the same in susceptibility to the rectoral influence of penalty under the divine as under human government. It is, therefore, a permissible supposition that even within the limit of demerit there is a possible severity of penalty which would be a detriment to the highest good of moral government. But even in such a case, the doctrine of Satisfaction asserts, and must assert, the punishment of sin in the full measure of its demerit as a necessity of the divine righteousness. And such a fact is sufficient for the disproof of a doctrine to which it is a logical consequent. Is God under an absolute obligation to punish sin in the measure of its demerit, and solely on that ground? Is he under such an obligation that any omission of punishment, even in part, would be an injustice and a sacrifice of personal rectitude? The doctrine of

Satisfaction answers affirmatively. This is its ground-principle for the necessity of an atonement, and determinative of its nature. The requirements of the divine rectitude in the case specially concern the two questions of veracity and justice.

5. No Necessity of Divine Veracity

Some maintain the asserted necessity for punishment on the ground that the divine veracity is involved therein. God has proclaimed his own law, with its clearly expressed penalties, as due to sin. It is hence claimed that his word is really given for the execution of these penalties, and, therefore, that his truthfulness or fidelity to his own word requires the execution. Any omission would be a sacrifice of his personal rectitude.

This really gives another ground for the alleged necessity of punishment as concerning the divine rectitude. So far as the present position reaches, we might infer that if God had not given his word for the punishment of sin, he would be under no such obligation: but now, having so given his word, the obligation of veracity requires the execution of uttered penalty.

Such position is logically valid only on the ground that the divine utterances of penalty are absolute. All condition, even implied condition, must be excluded. How far is this the fact?

We admit that many divine utterances of penalty are absolute in form; we equally deny that all are so in fact. The Scriptures give us instances of implied conditionality with absolute form. The threatened doom of Nineveh was most absolute in form but not so in fact, as the result proved. (Jonah 3:1-4, 10) There are many like instances. No words could be more absolute in form than those which gave expression to the punishment of disobedience under the primitive probation: "For in the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." (Gen. 2:17) It was not absolute in fact, else it must have been executed in exact accordance with its terms, as certainly it was not. Now such utterance of penalty, absolute in form but not so in fact, does not absolutely bind the divine veracity to its execution. And until the doctrine of Satisfaction can make good the position of absoluteness in the divine utterance of penalty, and in the fact as well as in the form, it has no sufficient premise for the consequence, that any remission of penalty, except through an equivalent substitutional punishment of sin, is a surrender of the divine rectitude, in the matter of veracity.

We see clearly the seeming delicacy of the position here taken. Yet the facts are as we have given them. And we have only stated them, not made them. But it may be inferred that the position which we ground in such facts puts all penalty in uncertainty. It has no such consequence. There is never any remission, except on such ground and conditions as fully justify it. The ground is such that except thereon there is absolutely no forgiveness. And the conditions are such, that except upon their observance there is absolutely no forgiveness. In the case of the first sin the divine administration was modified, and the sin rendered forgivable only through the incoming of a redemptive economy in Christ. Our sin is forgivable only on the ground of atonement. Except on such ground, there is

absolutely no forgiveness. Salvation in Christ is freely offered on the condition of faith, but with the announced penalty of damnation to him who believes not. Thus, apart from Christ, and without faith in him, penalty is absolute, and in no uncertainty of execution.

But, further, the doctrine of Satisfaction cannot, except in self-destruction, base the necessity for penal substitution on the ground that the divine veracity requires the actual infliction of uttered penalty. Any such requirement must include the execution of penalty according to the very terms and import of its utterance. The divine penal utterances against sin are no more exact and positive in the designation of penalty than in the designation of its subject. It is no more absolutely affirmed that sin shall be punished with death than that "the soul that sinneth, it shall die." (Ezek. 18:4, 20) And if the divine veracity requires the execution of penalty according to the terms of its utterance, clearly the case will admit no substitute in punishment. The actual sinner must himself die. Only this will fulfill the terms of the law. For illustration, take again the law of the primitive probation. "Death" is no more absolute as the penalty of disobedience, than "thou" as the subject of its infliction. And Satisfactionists themselves interpret this penalty of disobedience in Adam as death physical, spiritual, eternal, to him and also to all his posterity as in him, or represented by him, and, therefore, justly answerable in penalty for his sin. Hence, in the case of any other destiny for any one, the penalty is not executed according to the terms of its divine utterance.

The assumption of a necessity for substitutional punishment as the only atonement, because God has declared the punishment of sin, is such an assumption as must preclude vicarious atonement. No penal substitution can so answer to the terms of divinely uttered penalty as to fulfill the alleged requirement in the divine veracity. No ingenuity in Scripture exegesis, nor any dialectic acumen, can make the punishment of a substitute the same, either in fact, justice, or law, as the punishment of the sinner himself. We have an alternative conclusion, and in either way, against the scheme under review. The doctrine of Satisfaction either makes good its position for the necessity of punishing sin as a requirement of the divine veracity, or it does not. In the former case, penal substitution is excluded, as being no clearance of the divine veracity; in the latter, no proof is brought from the alleged requirement of the divine veracity for penal substitution, as the only possible atonement.

6. No Necessity of Judicial Rectitude

It is proper here again sharply to discriminate the position in issue. Its advocates too often ran into illegitimate argumentation. It is easy to assert, as so commonly done, that sin has intrinsic demerit; that God is holy and abhors it; that he must manifest his displeasure against it; that he must vindicate his justice and law before the moral universe. But such facts belong equally to another doctrine of atonement; some of them exclusively so. Why must God reveal his holiness? Why must he manifest his displeasure against sin? Why must he vindicate his justice and law before men and angels? The proper answer to such questions turns away from the atonement of Satisfaction and gives support to the Rectoral scheme. The position in issue is, that God must, in judicial rectitude, punish sin because of its demerit, and solely for this reason. No other reason must be here alleged. To allege

any other, is to depart from all that is peculiar and essential to the scheme of Satisfaction. God would be unjust or remiss in the duty of justice in any omission of punishment, simply because of the intrinsic demerit of sin. By such omission, whatever other reason is present or absent, he, would sacrifice his judicial rectitude. His administration would not be just. He would not fulfill the obligation of his justice. This is the position. It is essential to the doctrine of Satisfaction, and must be maintained, or the scheme fails.

How do we know of any such necessity in the judicial rectitude of God? How do we know that back of all the interests of moral government, and all requirements of the divine administration in their service, there is upon him an obligation to punish sin in the full measure of its desert? Such a principle is not given in the Scriptures. Nor is it inductively verifiable. It is no apodictive truth; and its *à priori* assertion is far above the power of our highest reason. Within the sphere of actual moral government we know something of God and his laws, as he has been pleased therein to reveal himself and them. Beyond this we know but little; certainly not enough for the assertion of a necessity in the divine rectitude to punish sin solely on the ground of its demerit. But if there be such a necessity, it must bar an economy of substitutional punishment, unless sin itself can be put upon the substitute in penalty. This, however, is impossible, even with God. But without penal substitution, or the punishment of sin in a substitute, the doctrine of Satisfaction is utterly groundless.

There is neither injustice nor omission of justice, except in some wrong or omission of duty. And there can be neither, except in respect of some right or interest. A father omits the deserved punishment of his son. This is no wrong to the son simply in the matter of his demerit, because demerit is not in the nature of a personal right. But the impunity supposed might be to the detriment of the son, or of the family government. Here is a reason for punishment, and such as would render its omission a wrong; but a reason outside of the demerit in the case, and arising in the sphere of rights and interests concerned. A crime is committed, and the criminal is suffered to go unpunished. This, so far as his desert is concerned, is no injustice to him; for, again, punitive demerit is not in the nature of a personal right. So far as punishment might have a restraining or reformatory influence upon the criminal, any obligation is with the administration, but with respect to the criminal's interest, not his demerit. Or, his impunity might encourage crime, to the serious detriment of the community. In such a case omission of punishment would be an injustice or wrong, not, however, because of demerit in the criminal, but because of a neglect of the rights and interests of others which justice should protect.

Such principles equally apply to divine justice. One sins against God. His sin has intrinsic demerit, and, apart from every thing else, deserves the penalty of justice. But demerit in itself simply, neither constitutes any punitive right in the sinner nor imposes any punitive obligation upon God. All that it does or can do is to render punishment just; while any punitive obligation of justice must arise in respect of rights or interests either personal to the sinner or appertaining to others which justice should protect. On the ground of demerit, punishment for such ends is just, which it would not be without the demerit. And surely an infinitely just, wise, and good Sovereign may take account of such great ends, and determine his punitive ministries simply in view of them. Nor can any omission of

punishment by the divine Ruler be a violation of judicial rectitude, except such omission be an avoidable detriment to some right or interest. But when we go beyond the demerit of sin as the only ground of just punishment, and find the reason for its infliction in rights, whether of the divine Ruler or his subjects, we find such reason, not in the most essential principle of the Satisfaction scheme, but in facts which go into the Rectoral theory, and give their support to it.

We are all under the obligations of a divine law, with its precepts, promises, penalties. One obeys, and rightfully claims the promised reward. He is wronged if it be withheld, because an acquired right is denied him. Such is the fact irrespective of all questions of rectoral influence from the character of the administration. But there is with justice a double reason for giving the promised reward: an acquired right, and the interest of a salutary rectoral influence. Another disobeys, and thereby acquires a desert of punishment, but no right to it. Either himself or others might suffer wrong on account of his impunity; but, as we have before seen, the consequent obligation to punish him arises entirely apart from his demerit. And it is still true that the consequence of his demerit is simply to render his punishment just. He may, therefore, be justly punished, either for his own good or for the good of others.

Nor do such views cast any doubt upon justice as an essential attribute of God. It is such an attribute. So is love. And neither excludes the other, though love is supreme. And God rules, not simply as just, but also as eternally wise and good. Penalty has a special function in his government. It is a rightful means for the vindication of his own honor and authority, and for the conservation of the rights and interest of his subjects. And justice does not cease to be such, nor becomes injustice, by any omission of penalty which does not contravene such ends of its infliction. Its punitive obligation is fulfilled when penalty is so wisely and benevolently, as well as justly, executed, as to achieve in the highest degree attainable the great ends of moral government. [The doctrine of punishment maintained is without logical consequence respecting its duration. It would follow, that should punishment ever cease to be a rectoral necessity it might then terminate. But this fact is without logical consequence in the case, because the duration of punishment is a question of revelation, not of reason.

Were the duration of punishment treated as a question of reason, it would be necessary to prove two things by rational evidence in order to conclude its eternity: one, that sin deserves eternal punishment; the other, that it must be punished in the measure of its desert. Reason can prove neither. But, while we write this, we further write that reason is equally powerless to disprove the eternity of punishment. The question of its necessary duration is above the sphere of her powers. On the ground of such facts, our doctrine is without logical consequence respecting the duration of punishment.

This is a question of revelation, and as purely so as the question of the divine Trinity, the incarnation of the Son, or the resurrection of the dead. On the ground of revelation the eternity of punishment is fearfully certain. It is, therefore, both just and necessary, because it is the ministry of a just God, and infinitely wise and good as well as just. Such is the order of these facts. The Scriptures do not first posit an infinite demerit of sin as the

ground and necessity of endless penalty; but, conversely, they give the fact of endless penalty, and with this, as an inevitable implication in view of the character of the divine Ruler, its justice and necessity. And we add nothing to the certainty or proof of endless penalty by assuming that it is a necessity simply from the demerit of sin. Nor do we in the least abate the force of its Scripture proof as a fact-the only real proof in the case-by a denial of its absolute necessity simply to that demerit.]

7. Elements of Punitive Satisfaction

Divine justice, traced to its only satisfiable form as a punitive disposition or obligation in God, has, apart from a salutary rectoral influence, only two supposable elements of satisfaction in the execution of penalty: one, in the mere suffering inflicted; the other, in the punishment of sin. The two are clearly separable, at least in thought, and together cover the whole case. There is no other element of such satisfaction.

8. No Satisfaction in Mere Suffering

The first is, of course, excluded. We could not say that it never had any place in religious sentiment or opinion. It would be none the less reprobate on that account. And only a fanatical dogmatist, with the temper of an inquisitor and a morbidity of the moral nature, could understandingly give it a place either in his conscience or creed. Any pleasure of any community or officer of the law simply in the sufferings of a criminal is a cruelty and a sin. And no place should be given to the notion of such a fact in God. As a God of love, without pleasure in the death of the wicked, he punishes no sinner without pity for his sufferings. It is impossible, therefore, that he should find satisfaction in his sufferings simply.

9. Only Satisfaction in Punishing Sin

Is there a satisfaction of divine justice in the punishment of sin? Yes; and we so answer without any hesitation. It is realized in a punitive disposition of justice. But this is far short of the doctrine of Satisfaction in the assertion that such satisfaction must be had. On this position it fails, as we have previously shown. But, further, while there is a satisfaction of divine justice in the punishment of sin-sin with its turpitude and demerit-the satisfaction is realized only therein. It is not, else, possible. Take away the conditioning facts of sin, and only the suffering remains with justice. But in this it can find no pleasure.

10. Satisfaction by Substitution Impossible

The atonement is in the satisfaction of justice by penal substitution. This is a vital principle in the theory. There is no atonement without this satisfaction; nor can there be any. So the deepest principles of the theory determine.

It is entirely truthful, and not uncharitable, to say that here Satisfactionists themselves find no little perplexity. Indeed, it would be a marvelous fact if they did not. And the

vacillations of opinion and diversities of view which the history of the doctrine records, bear ample testimony to this perplexity. [Prof. Bruce: "The Humiliation of Christ," pp. 378-384, 488-492; "Methodist Quarterly Review," July, 1846, pp. 403-410.]

The effect of the imputation of sin to Christ, and the nature and degree of his penal sufferings, are questions entering deeply into the difficulties of the subject. Did imputation carry over sin, with its turpitude and demerit, or only its guilt to him? Did he suffer, instead of the elect, the same punishment which, otherwise, they must have suffered? Did he endure penal suffering equal in amount, though differing in kind, to the merited punishment of the redeemed? Did he suffer an equivalent punishment, less in amount but of higher value, and thus a penal equivalent with justice? Did he suffer the torment of the finally lost? Was his punishment potentially or intensively eternal? Such questions have been asked and answered affirmatively; though a negative is now mostly given to those of more extreme import. The boldness of earlier expositors is mainly avoided in the caution of the later. The former are more extravagant; the latter, less consistent. But the theory, in every phase of it, asserts the just punishment of sin in Christ; and, therefore, asserts or implies all that is requisite to such punishment. A denial of any such requisite is suicidal.

In denying the possible satisfaction of a purely retributive justice by a substitute in penalty, we are content to make the issue with the more moderate and carefully guarded position of Satisfactionists. This is but polemical fairness, as such is now the more common position

(i) The Satisfaction Necessary

The necessary satisfaction of justice, as maintained in this theory, respects not merely a punitive disposition in God, but specially and chiefly an obligation of his justice to punish sin according to its demerit, and on that ground. And it is because the punishment of sin is a necessity in the rectitude of divine justice, that the only possible atonement is by penal substitution.

This position is so important in the present question, that we should have the views of leading Satisfactionists respecting it. "The law of God, which includes a penalty as well as precepts, is in both a revelation of the nature of God. If the precepts manifest his holiness, the penalty as clearly manifests his justice. If the one is immutable, so also is the other. The wages of sin is death. Death is what is due to it in justice, and what, without injustice cannot be withheld from it." [Dr. Hodge: "Systematic Theology," vol. i, p. 423.] "Justice is a form of moral excellence. It belongs to the nature of God. It demands the punishment of sin. If sin be pardoned, it can be pardoned in consistency with the divine justice only on the ground of a forensic penal satisfaction." [Ibid., vol. ii, p. 488.] "The Scriptures, however, assume that if a man sins he must die. On this assumption all their representations and arguments are founded. Hence the plan of salvation which the Bible reveals supposes that the justice of God, which renders the punishment of sin necessary, has been satisfied." [Ibid., vol. ii, p. 492.]

The position maintained in these citations is clearly given, and fully agrees with our statement. From the nature of justice the punishment of sin is necessary. The obligation of justice is such that any omission of punishment would be an act of injustice. Thus, from the very nature of divine justice, the necessary punishment of sin is deduced as a consequence. Justice is as essential and immutable in God as any other attribute; therefore he must punish sin according to its desert, and on that ground. Thus his justice binds him to the infliction of merited punishment upon sin, just as other moral perfections bind him to holiness, goodness, truth.

We may give additional authorities. "But again, concerning this justice, another question arises, Whether it be natural to God, or an essential attribute of the divine nature-that is to say, such that the existence of sin being admitted, God must necessarily exercise it, because it supposes in him a constant immutable will to punish sin, so that while he acts consistently with his nature he cannot do otherwise than punish and avenge it-or whether it be a free act of the divine will, which he may exercise at pleasure?"[Owen: "Works," (Goold's,) vol. x, p. 505.] This is submitted as a question. There are really two questions; 178 but we are concerned simply with the fact that Owen maintains the position of the former: and we are now concerned with this only, in its relation to penal substitution. It asserts a necessity in the very nature of God for the punishment of sin simply as such; a necessity, not from the domination of a punitive disposition, but from the requirement of judicial rectitude.

" God is determined, by the immutable holiness of his nature, to punish all sin because of its intrinsic guilt or demerit; the effect produced on the moral universe being incidental as an end." [Dr. A. A. Hodge: "The Atonement," p. 53.]

" Law has no option. Justice has but one function. The law itself is under law; that is, it is under the necessity of its own nature; and, therefore, the only possible way whereby a transgressor can escape the penalty of law, is for a substitute to endure it for him." [Dr. Shedd: "Theological Essays," p. 287] Here, again, we have the same doctrine of an immutable obligation of divine justice to punish sin, and none the less in the absence of every other reason than its own demerit. We here make no issue with the doctrine, but, as before noted, give it prominence on account of its vital logical connection with the doctrine of penal substitution.

(ii) The Substitution Maintained

There is also a vital logical connection between the imputation of sin to Christ and his penal substitution in atonement. In any proper treatment of the question the two facts must be in scientific accordance. And we have, with the carefully guarded doctrine of substitution, an equally cautious exposition of the imputation of sin to Christ. In such exposition, sin is treated analytically, not as a concrete whole. This is necessary to the moderation of the theory maintained. For to treat sin as a whole, and to allege its imputation to Christ and just punishment in him, is to involve the facts of the more extravagant theory. Guilt is distinguished from the attributes of turpitude, criminality, demerit, and claimed to be separable from sin in the deeper sense, both in thought and

fact. It is freely admitted that the transference and substitutional punishment of sin in the former sense is an impossibility; but it is fully claimed that guilt-the amenability of sin to the penalty of justice-could be transferred to Christ and justly punished in him.

We shall give this view from Dr. Charles Hodge. It has no better authority. "By guilt, many insist on meaning personal criminality and ill desert; and by punishment, evil inflicted on the ground of such personal demerit. In these senses of the words the doctrine of satisfaction and vicarious punishment would, indeed, involve an impossibility. And if punishment means evil inflicted on the ground of personal demerit then it is a contradiction to say that the innocent can be punished. But if guilt expresses only the relation of sin to justice, and is the obligation under which the sinner is placed to satisfy its demands, then there is nothing which forbids the idea that this obligation may, on adequate grounds, be transferred from one to another or assumed by one in the place of others." ["Systematic Theology," vol. ii, p. 532.] The omission cannot, in the least, affect the sense of the author.

Leading facts are clearly given in the passage cited. One is, that moral character is absolutely untransferable; another, that if punishment is a judicial infliction upon the ground of personal demerit, the satisfaction of justice by penal substitution is impossible. Hence the distinction of sin into personal demerit and guilt, and the assumption that the latter, as the legal amenability of sin, could be transferred to Christ, and punished in him in fulfillment of the punitive obligation of justice.

(iii) No Answer to the Necessity

We now have the facts respecting the alleged necessity for the punishment of sin, and also the facts of penal substitution as meeting that necessity. Do the latter answer to the requirements of the former? Does the penal substitution, maintained, fulfill the alleged absolute obligation of justice to punish sin according to its demerit? There is no such answer or fulfillment. So we affirm, and proceed to the proof.

The analytic treatment of sin is entirely proper if it be remembered that such treatment is in thought only. And we may distinguish between the demerit and the guilt of sin, using the former term in the sense of its intrinsic evil, and the latter in the sense of its amenability to retributive justice. In the former sense, we have sin in the violation of obligation; in the latter, under judicial treatment. Is such distinction a sufficient ground for the more moderate theory of substitutional punishment constructed upon it? If so sufficient, will such substitution answer to the absolute necessity for the punishment of sin which the theory asserts?

It should here be specially noted that the principles of the theory are not even modified, much less surrendered. They are still asserted and held in all their integrity and strength as the very necessity for an atonement, and as determinative of its nature in the substitutional punishment of sin. We have previously seen what these principles are. [In IV of this chapter.] And they are inseparable from the doctrine of Satisfaction. We have also given citations from leading authors in the unqualified assertion of an absolute

necessity for the punishment of sin. [In 10, i, of this section.] Advocates of the more moderate theory of imputation and penal substitution are no exception. All agree in the obligation of divine justice to punish sin according to its demerit, and on that ground. But it is denied that the turpitude and demerit of sin can be transferred to Christ. All that is claimed, or even admitted to be so transferred, is the guilt of sin; guilt as an amenability to the retribution of justice. Is such a substitution the merited punishment of sin?

Nothing could be punished in Christ which was not transferred to him, and in some proper sense made his. This we regard as apodictic. Hence if, sin, with its demerit, could not, as now admitted, be put upon Christ by imputation, no punishment which he suffered, fell upon such demerit, or intrinsic evil of sin. And we think it impossible to show how sin is punished according to its demerit, and on that ground, in the total absence of such demerit from the substitute in punishment. With the admissions of the theory, its only resource is with guilt as a distinct fact of sin. If guilt, as the amenability of sin to the penalty of justice, is separable from sin, and as a distinct fact transferable to Christ-and if his punishment, as so constituted guilty, is the punishment of sin according to its demerit and on that ground-then the penal substitution maintained answers to the asserted absolute necessity for the punishment of sin. If any one of these suppositive facts fail the theory, then the theory itself inevitably fails.

Guilt, as distinctively treated in this theory, arises in the relation of sin to divine justice, and as an obligation of sin to suffer the merited penalty of justice. It is so defined and discriminated from the turpitude of sin in the carefully exact statement recently cited from Dr. Charles Hodge. He makes the same distinction elsewhere. ["Systematic Theology," vol. ii, p. 189.] But guilt, considered as apart from sin, exists only in conception, not in objective reality. It may be said that it becomes a concrete fact in Christ by imputation to him.

Then the result is a guilty Christ. But guilty of what? Not of sin, for that is not transferred to him, nor in any proper sense made his. Guilty of guilt, we may suppose. For as guilt is the only thing imputed, and the imputation makes him guilty, we find not any better expression of the fact in the case. There seems a harshness even in such an expression; yet it is mollified by the fact, that at most Christ is guilty of only a conceptual guilt.

But the original difficulty remains. Guilt, apart from sin, is still guilt in the abstract, and exists only in conception, as much so as roundness, concavity, redness. And how could such a conceptual guilt render Christ guilty, or constitute in him a just ground of punishment? It were as easy to transform a cube into a globe by imputing sphericity to it. But is not guilt a reality? Certainly, and a terrible one; but only as a concrete fact of sin. And with the imputation of such an abstract guilt to Christ, while sin, with its turpitude and demerit, with all that is punishable and all that deserves to be punished left behind, how can the redemptive suffering which he endured be the merited punishment of sin?

(iv) No such Answer Possible

Guilt cannot exist apart from sin. It is impossible by the very definition of it as the obligation of sin to the retribution of justice. The necessary conjunction of facts is obvious. On the one side is justice, with its precept and penalty; on the other, sin; hence, guilt. There is guilt, because justice asserts a penal claim upon sin. The demerit of sin, the intrinsic evil of sin, is the only ground of such a claim. Nothing but sin can be guilty, or render any one guilty. And there can no more be guilt apart from sin, than there can be extension without either substance or space. It is not in itself punishable, but simply the punitive amenability of sin to justice. It cannot, therefore, be so put upon Christ as to render him punishable, unless the very sin is put upon him. But this is conceded to be impossible.

Indeed, sin itself is a punishable reality only as a personal fact. In the last analysis only a person, only a sinful person, is punishable. We may here apply such a principle as we applied to justice as punitively satisfiable. Such is no impersonal justice, or justice in generalized conception, but justice as a personal attribute. So, not any impersonal sin, or sin in generalized conception, but only a sinful person, is answerable to justice in penalty. Sin has no real existence apart from the agent in the sinning. The guilt of sin lies upon him, and can no more be put upon a substitute as a punitive desert than his sinful act can cease to be his and be made the sinful act of such substitute.

But the principles of the satisfaction scheme still remain, with the necessity for the punishment of sin according to its demerit, and on that ground. So imperative is this obligation, that any omission of such punishment would be an injustice in God. With this the very masters in the theory fully agree. Indeed, there is no dissent. Is sin so punished in Christ? It is not, even if we admit the separability of guilt and its transference to Christ. Guilt is not sin. The scheme itself carefully discriminates the two. Such is its necessity, as it denies the transferableness of sin. For, otherwise, it has nothing which it may even claim to be transferred as the ground of merited punishment. By the alleged facts of the scheme, no penalty is inflicted upon sin. Yet its punishment is the asserted absolute requirement of moral rectitude in divine justice. And the conclusion is most certain, that the penal substitution which the theory of Satisfaction holds can give no answer to the necessity for the punishment of sin which it asserts.

11. The Theory Self-destructive

The necessary punishment of sin and the nature of penal substitution, which the theory maintains and seeks to combine in the doctrine of Satisfaction, absolutely refuse all scientific fellowship. Yet the theory can neither dispense with the one nor so modify the other as to agree with it. The former is its very ground-principle, and therefore cannot be dispensed with. The necessary modification of the latter, in order to be in scientific agreement with the former, would require a transference of the turpitude and demerit of sin to Christ; therefore such modification must be rejected. Consequently, whether there be or be not an absolute necessity for the punishment of sin, the theory of Satisfaction is self-destructive. For with such a necessity, not only does the penal substitution maintained utterly fail to answer to its imperative requirement, but no possible substitution can so answer. But without such a necessity for the punishment of sin, the

theory is utterly groundless. Therefore, whether there be or be not the asserted necessity for the punishment of sin, the theory is self-destroyed.

* Dr. Miley was a Methodist theologian of the 19th Century. This essay constitutes Chapter VII, of his monumental work, *The Atonement in Christ*, published in 1881. The chapter explores the Penal Substitution theory of the atonement. At the time of its writing Dr. Miley was Professor of Systematic Theology at Drew Theological Seminary in Madison, New Jersey.