

The power of the devil, which he wielded over man as a punishment from God, has been abolished. Heb. 2:14: "Forasmuch, then, as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same, that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil." Christ's expiatory death is the judgment on the devil, the expulsion from the Kingdom. "Now shall the prince of this world be cast out" (John 12:31). Cp. 14:30. 16:11: Col. 2:15. Through Christ's atoning sacrifice men are delivered from the dominion of sin. "Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works" (Tit. 2:14). Cp. 1 Pet. 1:18; 2:24; especially Rom. 7:1-6. But all of this, our deliverance from all evil, is due to our deliverance from sin. Scripture constantly reminds us that our deliverance from the guilt of sin through the one sacrifice of Christ must be kept in the foreground. It is the cause and fountainhead of all other blessings. Because our guilt is wiped out before God, therefore we are also redeemed from death, etc.²⁸

The Vicarious Satisfaction (*Satisfactio Vicaria*)

The expression *vicarious satisfaction* is an ecclesiastical term. It is not found in the Bible, but its meaning — that Christ vicariously (in the place of man) rendered to God, who was wroth over the sins of man, a satisfaction which changed His wrath into grace toward men — fully and adequately expresses what Scripture teaches on the redemption which Christ procured. As the ecclesiastical term *ὑποστάσις* summarizes what Scripture teaches concerning the true deity of the Son of God, so the ecclesiastical term *vicarious satisfaction*, over against all heresies, is a concise epitome of what Scripture teaches on the work of Christ.

The term *vicarious satisfaction* expresses the following truths which are clearly revealed in Scripture:

1. The immutable justice of God demands of men a perfect obedience to His Law (*iustitia legislativa, normativa*) and pronounces eternal damnation on all transgressors (*iustitia vindicativa, punitiva*).

²⁸ Th. Harnack takes the right position over against V. Hofmann: "Salvation does not consist primarily in the abolition of death, but in the abolition of God's sentence of condemnation and man's state of guilt. It is that which constitutes the cause and power of death and which makes death deadly. As our Confessions teach in accord with Scripture, the state of guilt had to be removed before death was abolished" (in a postscript to Dr. G. Thomasius' work "*Das Bekenntnis der luth. Kirche von der Versöhnung*," p. 138 f.).

The *iustitia legislatoria* is taught Matt. 22:37, 39: "Thou shalt love the Lord, thy God, with all thy heart. . . . Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," and the *iustitia vindicativa*, God's wrath against the sinner, Gal. 3:10: "Cursed is everyone that continueth not in all things which are written in the Book of the Law to do them." And this wrath and curse of God extends into eternity. Mark 9:48: "Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched."

Modern theologians set aside the *iustitia legislatoria* and its consequence, the *iustitia vindicativa*, by asserting that "the punitive justice of God pertains more to the government of the world in the sense of providence, while the clemency of God marks the economy of salvation," and that the justice of God "does not deal with individuals."²⁹ These are anti-Biblical thoughts. According to Holy Writ the legislative and punitive justice of God pertains not only to the government of the world as a whole, but does "deal with the individuals": "Thou shalt love the Lord, thy God"; "Cursed is *everyone*" that transgresses the Law. And since every single individual cannot but transgress the Law of God, Scripture pronounces the verdict that every single individual is a sinner, guilty before God, lying under God's wrath, or the curse of the Law. Rom. 3:9-18: Jews and Gentiles are all under sin; Rom. 3:19: all the world is guilty before God (*ὑπόδικος*, subject to punishment); Rom. 5:10: all men are *ἐχθροί*, hated by God, under His wrath³⁰; Eph. 2:3: children of wrath by nature.

2. The term *vicarious satisfaction* brings out the Scriptural truth that God laid upon Christ, and that Christ willingly accepted, the obligation in man's stead both to keep the Law and to bear the punishment the Law exacts of the transgressors. Christ fulfilled the Law in the stead of man, for Scripture declares: "God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, *made under the Law*, to redeem them that were under the Law" (Gal. 4:4-5).³¹ And Christ vicariously suffered the punishment which men had incurred by their transgression of the Law, for Scripture declares: "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us" (Gal. 3:13); "One died for all" (2 Cor. 5:14); "Christ hath once suffered for sin, the Just for the

²⁹ See the argument of Nitzsch, *Ev. Dog.*, p. 468.

³⁰ Luthardt: "*ἐχθροί ὄντες* does not have the active sense (as, e. g., Beck and Ritschl hold), but the passive sense: whose enemy God was, who lay under God's wrath." Thus also Meyer and Philippi.

³¹ Nothing in the text indicates that *νόμος* here means only the Jewish Ceremonial Law.

unjust" (1 Pet. 3:18). And "for us," "for all," does not mean merely "for the benefit of men." This is the rationalistic misinterpretation of these passages. It means that Christ subjected Himself to the Law and underwent its punishment "in the stead" of men (*loco hominum*). It was "for our benefit" only because Christ died "in our stead."³²

3. The term *vicarious satisfaction* reproduces the teaching of Scripture that through Christ's substitutional obedience and death God's wrath against men was appeased, in other words, His judgment of condemnation was set aside. Rom. 5:18: "By the righteousness [v. 19: obedience] of One the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." And Rom. 5:10: "When we were enemies [*ἐχθροί*, passive: *Deo invisī*], we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son." Luthardt: "A change of attitude *on the part of God* is meant." 2 Cor. 5:19 furnishes additional proof that by the objective reconciliation which Christ has effected a change of heart took place, not in men, but in God. "Reconciling the world unto Himself" is defined as "not imputing their trespasses unto them." God reconciled man with Himself by not imputing their sins, by forgiving them their sins in His heart (*in foro divino*), that is, causing His wrath over the sins of man to come to an end. And this reconciliation took place not by a fiat of His power, but through the intervention of Christ as Mediator ("Mediator between God and man"), through the interposition of His obedience and suffering ("by the righteousness of One," "by the obedience of One," "by the death of His Son," "One died for all").

This is the doctrine of Scripture which we uphold against the modern opponents of the Vicarious Satisfaction. It is not "a theory,"³³

³² Kliefoth: "Hofmann insists that *ὑπὲρ* ('died for us,' 'given for us,' etc.) can mean only 'for our benefit,' that it cannot mean 'in our stead.' He is simply repeating what the old rationalists have been saying. The question is *how* the death of Christ benefited us, and the answer is that only because He died in our stead do we benefit by it." (*Der Schriftbeweis des Dr. v. Hofmann*, p. 482 f.) *Ἀντί*, too, is used in the sense of "in the place of," as Matt. 20:28, 1 Cor. 11:15, and other passages clearly show. Meyer on Matt. 20:28: "*Ἀντί* denotes substitution. The thing which is given as ransom takes the place of, stands in the stead of, those who are ransomed by it. The *λύτρον* is an *ἀντίλυτρον* (1 Tim. 2:6)." Also *ὑπὲρ* has the sense "instead of" in passages such as 2 Cor. 5:14: "One died for all," and 1 Pet. 3:18: "The Just for the unjust." Steiger on the latter passage: "By *ὑπὲρ* an interchange of persons is expressed: *we* are the unjust who by our sins have deserved suffering; Christ deserved no suffering, but nevertheless took upon Himself the suffering which the sinners should have suffered, hence suffered in their stead and therefore, of course, for their benefit."

³³ Luthardt calls it that, *Dogmatik*, p. 225, in the Luthardt-Jelke edition, p. 293.

but the doctrine which has been believed by Christians of all times, before the terms *satisfactio* and *satisfactio vicaria* had been used, and has been confessed by the Christian Church in her hymns. Not merely the "basic idea," as moderns say, is correct, but the whole matter is entirely Scriptural. Luthardt forsakes the Scripture principle when he writes: "Since Christ did not suffer exactly the same punishment as we should have suffered (He did not suffer eternal damnation), one should not say that He fully settled our account with God." If anything is clear from Scripture, it is this fact, that the redemption of Christ balanced our account with God. It is a complete settlement, complete *extensive*, for Christ acted for all men; complete *intensive*, for the wrath of God is totally removed, and God receipted the bill against us by raising Christ from the dead. Christ was delivered for our offenses, and He was raised again "for our justification." Christ, in the most real sense, took over our debt and discharged it in full.

What Luther and the dogmatians taught regarding the Vicarious Satisfaction has been already presented in the chapter "Grace in Christ." Luther states that it is paganism (the faith "of the Turks and Jews") to imagine that God is gracious to men "without cost" — without the Vicarious Satisfaction. All the concepts belonging to the Vicarious Satisfaction are found in Luther. See, for instance, St. L. XI:1084 ff. (on John 3:16-21); St. L. VII:1716 ff. (on John 1:29); St. L. IX:367 ff. (on Gal. 3:13). Christ is no longer "an innocent and sinless Person, but a sinner who has and bears the sin of Paul, the blasphemer and persecutor, and of Peter, the denier of his Master, and of David, the adulterer and murderer; in a word, He bears and has all the sins of all men in His body. . . . He Himself is innocent, but since He bears the sins of the world, His innocency is weighed down by the sins and guilt of the whole world. Whatever sins I and you have done have become the sins of Christ, as though He Himself had committed them. Is. 53:6 says: "The Lord hath laid upon Him the iniquity of us all." (St. L. IX:369 f.) The writings of Luther against the Antinomians also belong here (St. L. XX:1610 ff.); the denial of the Vicarious Satisfaction and Antinomianism go together.

OBJECTIVE AND SUBJECTIVE RECONCILIATION

Scripture teaches the *objective reconciliation*. Nineteen hundred years ago Christ effected the reconciliation of all men with God. God does not wait for men to reconcile Him with themselves by means of any efforts of their own. He is already reconciled. The reconciliation is an accomplished fact, just like the creation of the world. Rom. 5:10: