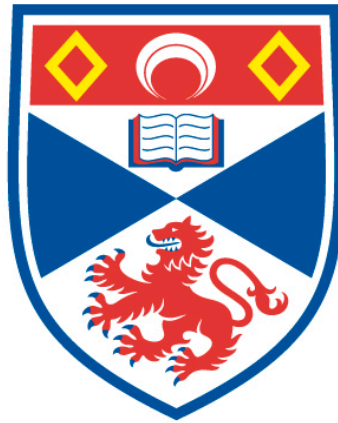# FORGIVENESS & ATONEMENT : A SACRIFICIAL ACCOUNT OF DIVINE-HUMAN RECONCILIATION

Jonathan Rutledge

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD
at the
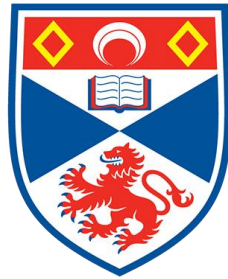University of St Andrews

2018

Forgiveness & Atonement: A Sacrificial Account of Divine-Human Reconciliation

Jonathan Rutledge

University of
St Andrews

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfilment for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

at the University of St Andrews

March 2018

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General acknowledgements

Few things are truly as satisfying and enjoyable as reflecting on the many and various people without whom this project might never have come to fruition. Indeed, no academic endeavor truly materializes without accruing an unpayable debt to the community of scholars and non-scholars whose insight and encouragement have been generously given without any thought as to repayment. I beg the forgiveness of anyone whose name has eluded my memory as I hereby acknowledge my admiration and gratitude to those I can recall. My fellow postgraduates in St Mary's College at the University of St Andrews, some of whom have since graduated, have proved unparalleled conversation and commiseration partners while writing this thesis, especially Michael Anderson, Spencer Bentley, Max Botner, Katelynn Carver, Joy Clarkson, Graydon Cress, Justin Duff, Rebekah Earnshaw Caleb Froehlich, Taylor Gray, Lance Green, Michael Hahn, Derek Keefe, Karen McClain Kiefer, Ethan Johnson, Marian Kelsey, Jasper Knecht, Ethan Knudsen, Erwin Lai, Jared Michelson, Jake Morley David Rathel, Jenna Reed, Adam Renberg, Jordan Senner, Brett Speakman, Jesse Stone, Jarrett VanTine, David Westfall, and Matthew Wiseman. In addition, faculty from all across St Mary's have spurred my thoughts and interests concerning the topics of this dissertations. I extend my deepest thanks to James Davila, Stephen Holmes, T.J. Lang, Donovan McAbee, Madhavi Nevader, John Perry, Elizabeth Shively, Bill Tooman, and Judith Wolfe.

Moreover, I'd like to single out a few individual faculty members for generosity over and above what any postgraduate deserves. My discussions with David Moffitt over lunch & coffee fundamentally redirected my project towards the development of a sacrificial view of atonement, and several discussions with George Corbett allowed me to work out crucial kinks in my understanding of the rationale for punishment. These discussions were also simply enjoyable. Their wisdom and advice were much needed.

Table of Contents

Abstract

In this thesis, I construct a sacrificial explanation of atonement, the expanded version of which explains how the work of Christ addresses in various ways every component of the problem of sin. The first two chapters of this endeavor argue for a Wolterstorffian definition of forgiveness according to which forgiveness is *the act of ceasing to treat a wrong as part of a wrongdoer's moral history and instead as part of their personal history*. Moreover, I demonstrate that this definition of forgiveness is superior to the major alternatives in the literature due in no small part to its consistency with various philosophical desiderata and biblical constraints detailed in the first two chapters.

In the final two chapters, I turn to an investigation of the doctrine of atonement. The most popular contemporary model of atonement in many Protestant Christian circles is a penal substitution model that assumes the centrality of a strong form of retributivism in the biblical narrative. In chapter three, I argue that the major biblical passages usually thought to support retributivism do not do so. Rather, they support an understanding of justice as fundamentally restorative in nature. I then develop an alternative form of penal substitution that rests on this restorative rationale for justice rather than the typical retributivist strain. This model of atonement, however, seems to me lacking in explanatory *scope* due to its limited appeal to the biblical texts. Thus, in chapter four, I offer an alternative atonement model—i.e. a sacrificial one—that combines elements of the rituals of *yom kippur* and *Passover* to explain how the work Christ addresses most of the components of the problem of sin. Lastly, I combine this sacrificial model with my account of forgiveness to address the remaining components of the problem of sin.

Chapter 1
Prolegomena & Forgiveness in Philosophy

In this dissertation, I seek to develop a distinctively Christian account of forgiveness and trace the implications of such an account in developing an explanation of Christ's atonement. Such a project is certainly a vast one, for the literature on forgiveness spans many academic disciplines—biology, psychology, philosophy, religion, political theory, anthropology, etc.—and has grown steadily since at least the beginning of the common era. Indeed, due to the daunting scope of such a project, one might rightly wonder whether we should expect anything new to be discovered.

As any academic understands, however, every area of study progresses, even if such progress is difficult for the outsider to discern. Philosophers, for instance, developed remarkable standards of logical rigor throughout the twentieth century[1] that have since found applications in areas of study such as linguistics[2] or computer science[3]. And, of course, the hard sciences have not ceased to progress in their own obvious ways including, but not limited to, the development of Einsteinian mechanics and continued work in evolutionary theory[4]. Such examples of progress in these disciplines indicate that legitimate new terrain might plausibly be found for an understanding of our topic concerning the nature and value of Christian forgiveness and their application to the atonement.

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[1] For examples of such developments in logic, see (i) Bertrand Russell & Alfred North Whitehead, *Principia Mathematica* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1910), (ii) Ian Hacking, *An Introduction to Probability and Logic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001) (iii) Graham Priest, *An Introduction to Non-Classical Logic: From If to Is* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

[2] P. Cintula, C. G. Fermüller, & C. Noguera, (2016, March 20). *Fuzzy Logic*. Retrieved from Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy: http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/logic-fuzzy.

[3] C. Hewitt-Horsman, "An Introduction to Many Worlds in Quantum Computation'." *Foundations of Physics* 39 (2009): 869-902.

[4] See, for instance, two contributions to the Princeton Foundations of Contemporary Philosophy Series: (i) Tim Maudlin, *Philosophy of Physics: Space and Time* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015) & (ii) Peter Godfrey-Smith, *Philosophy of Biology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014).

My starting point in approaching this topic is two-fold. First, I take it as axiomatic that an understanding of the concept of forgiveness informed by *Christian* theology can valuably contribute to the general conversation concerning forgiveness. And whether or not one is persuaded that *all* the propositions constitutive of the Christian religion are true, insofar as such a body of propositions exists, is beside the point. Rather, all I assume is that Christian propositional claims concerning a doctrine of forgiveness are worthy of serious consideration in the broader conversation concerning forgiveness (i.e. outside of a Christian context) and should be held consistently throughout any Christian's systematic theology.

Second, of the recent developments in theology, one of the most important is the emergence of analytic theology. Although any definition offered of analytic theology will be controversial to some, it is (roughly) the practice of theology informed by the methods of contemporary analytic philosophy.[5] These methods include the use of logical argumentation and concepts, exhibiting clarity and concision as values of writing style which should not, all things being equal, be compromised, and drawing on the wide body of literature in philosophy when considering questions saliently connected to philosophy's various sub-disciplines: epistemology, ethics, aesthetics, metaphysics, philosophy of language & logic. Such methods have proved extremely fruitful both within philosophy and when applied to specifically theological topics (e.g. the logic of the Trinity or Incarnation).[6] Thus, this dissertation will be largely an exercise in this sort of analytic theological enterprise.

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[5] A number of edited volumes and books on analytic theology have appeared in the twenty-first century, including: (i) Thomas H. McCall, *An Invitation to Analytic Christian Theology* (Intervarsity Press Academic, 2015); (ii) Oliver D. Crisp & Michael C. Rea, *Analytic Theology: New Essays in the Philosophy of Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); and (iii) Thomas P. Flint and Michael C. Rea, *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophical Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

[6] See, for instance, these two contributions to the fine *Oxford Studies in Analytic Theology*: William Hasker, *Metaphysics and the Tri-Personal God* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013) & Timothy Pawl, *In Defense of Conciliar Christology: A Philosophical Essay* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016). Some theologians seem to think that endemic to analytic theology is either (a) a rejection of classical doctrines such as divine

In what follows, I begin in §1 with a discussion of the *value* of forgiveness. Then in §2, I turn to constraints on the *nature* of forgiveness derived from philosophical discussions of forgiveness. In the next chapter, I consider the deliverances of scripture concerning the nature of forgiveness, so in preparation for this, I provide a brief overview concerning my epistemic authorities; that is, those authoritative sources of belief that, in my view, confer a significant degree of justification on any proposition that is delivered by them. In brief, I will take reason, experience—henceforth, I will subsume both reason and experience under the category of *reason* alone—and the Christian scriptures[7] as authoritative. Sometimes, however, the deliverances of these epistemic authorities may conflict: (i) perhaps *directly* such that we must simply choose which authority takes priority over the other[8] or (ii) *apparently* such that we must attend carefully to the details of the ostensible conflict to reveal why no true conflict resides there. At the end of the next chapter, we engage in reflective equilibrium to bring the data of philosophical reflection and scripture together to determine how best to understand the nature of forgiveness. Until then, allow us first to consider the question: *Of what value is forgiveness?*

1. On the Value of Forgiveness

In turning to a discussion of value, one might be inclined to think we have entered the moral realm. As I understand value, this is not the case (or at least, not *quite* the case). Rather, value can be much broader in its application and may be rightly ascribed to any

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simplicity or (b) a dangerous temptation towards idolatry, which when fully manifest, has been called onto-theology. Claim (a) is false, as Pawl's book demonstrates (since he is both an extremely able analytic theologian and committed classical theist). Claim (b), on the other hand, would require much more discussion. This is not the place, however, so I refer the reader to the discussion in Marilyn McCord Adams, "What's Wrong with the Ontotheological Error?" *Journal of Analytic Theology* 2.1 (2014): 1-12.

[7] I will not enter into discussions of inerrancy and inspiration directly. I assume broadly, however, that God speaks to and teaches his followers through the scriptures in a way which is different in character from religious experience not tied to interaction with scripture. A huge number of convoluted questions arise from this sort of position. See Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Divine Discourse: Philosophical Reflections on the Claim that God Speaks* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995) for an excellent discussion of the issues.

[8] I understand this 'direct' conflict to primarily involve cases where one's epistemic authorities deliver contradictory propositions; that is, two propositions, 'p' and 'q', such that necessarily, the truth value of p entails the opposite truth value of q (where we assume the only truth values of issue are *true* and *false*).

character traits, persons, objects, actions or states of affairs that we would rightly call 'good'. For instance, a toaster that heats a piece of bread evenly on both sides will be good in virtue of possessing the property *heats-bread-evenly*. This property is clearly not a *morally* good property. It is morally neutral. Rather it is a *practically* good property; that is, good given the practical use to which a toaster is normally put.

So not all value is moral value, yet there are alternative ways of dividing up the evaluative landscape that allow us to provide a picture of the value of forgiveness. One useful way of doing so is to separate value into the following categories: (i) intrinsic value, (ii) instrumental value, and (iii) value as an end.

Something has *intrinsic value* if, and only if, its value is not derived from any other good.[9] Pleasure, for instance, seems like a very plausible example of a thing with intrinsic value. Suppose, for instance, that you were to ask someone why it is that they have chosen mint chocolate chip ice cream over cardamom ice cream. Of course, they may have flipped a coin or followed some silly decision procedure, but let us stipulate that they did not do this. In most cases, they will simply say, "Well, I just preferred mint chocolate chip." And perhaps if you pressed them, they would finally tell you, "Look, the experience of mint chocolate chip is just more pleasurable. There's simply no more to the explanation." In such a case, the point seems to be this: the pleasure brought about by eating the ice cream is good, more pleasure is better than less pleasure, and the value of the pleasure is *in the pleasure itself* and nothing else. If this is true, then the agent under question is explaining that mint chocolate chip gives her something with greater intrinsic value than the pleasure which cardamom ice cream could offer.

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[9] Theologians might take this understanding of intrinsic value to imply that nothing in the created order has intrinsic value since it depends on God for its existence and goodness. In such a case, only God will have intrinsic value. We'll set aside this worry about value for the purposes of this discussion.

Something has *instrumental value* if, and only if, (a) its value derives from the value of an end and (b) it is a means to that end. In the above example, the eating of the ice cream was valuable merely insofar as it brought about the sought sense of pleasure. That is, so long as we stipulate that there were no other ends for which the ice cream was consumed, the only positive reason for consuming it would be that it brought about pleasure. As a result, we can say instrumental values are parasitic on the value of their corresponding ends. In other words, the eating of the ice cream was merely valuable as an instrument (i.e. instrumentally valuable) for the attainment of pleasure.

Something has *value as an end* if, and only if, it is good for the agent to pursue as an end. Pleasure also serves well as an example here. Eating ice cream for the sake of acquiring pleasure is, all things being equal, perfectly appropriate and good for the agent (perhaps with respect to mental health). However, a masochist's pursuit of pleasure by more violent and self-directed means is *not* good for the masochist. That is, given the masochist's status as human, harming themselves to bring about an experience of pleasure is not good. What explains the difference between the ice cream scenario and the masochist scenario is information about what is good for humans and proper function. When pursuit of something as an end countermands proper function, then it is, to some degree, disvaluable as an end. When pursuit of something as an end is either irrelevant to or supports proper function, then it to some degree is valuable as an end.[10]

My use of pleasure in explaining the final two categories of value might raise suspicion insofar as one wants to defend the masochist by claiming that *for them*, certain

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[10] The distinction between a pursuit's *being irrelevant to or supporting proper function* might seem odd at first glance. However, the reason for making the distinction is this: if an agent treats something as an end, there is a degree of subjective value conferred to the object of desire, whether or not there is any non-subjective value that we could rightly ascribe to that object. Thus, even if there is an end that is irrelevant to proper function, so long as it does not countermand proper function, it will accrue a degree of subjective value in virtue of being an end. This is why it will be on-balance valuable.

self-destructive activities which aim at pleasure *are valuable*. After all, why would they naturally aim at pleasure in these circumstances were there no positive value to be had?

This objection is ill-conceived, for although I claim that pleasure has no positive value *as an end* for the masochist, I did not claim that it lacks positive value in any sense. Indeed, it *does* have positive value, but that value derives from the intrinsic value of pleasure that must be considered alongside the disvalue of pleasure as an end if we are to determine the all-things-considered value of the masochist's self-directed harm. Thus, the reason the masochist pursues such activity is that there is positive value to pleasure in such a case; namely, its intrinsic value. However, when pleasure's disvalue as an end in these circumstances is taken into account, the all-things-considered value of masochistic activity may render the activity disvaluable on the whole.[11]

So forgiveness, if it is valuable, will have value that is either instrumental, intrinsic, or in virtue of its pursuit as an agent's end. Let us begin by considering various ends to which forgiveness is connected; that is, ends the values of which transfer to forgiveness whenever forgiveness serves as a means to those ends.

First, forgiveness is clearly a means to reconciliation. By reconciliation, I mean at least the restoration of a relationship between a wrongdoer and that wrongdoer's victim. I do not intend to say that forgiveness is *sufficient* for reconciliation (i.e. that by itself forgiveness guarantees reconciliation), for there may be other conditions necessary to bring about full reconciliation in certain contexts, such as the wrongdoer's capacity to self-forgive. Nor do I intend to say that forgiveness is *necessary* for reconciliation, for there are instances where relationships are broken, partially or fully, where forgiveness is inapt, such as when an alleged wrongdoer has acted excusably. Suppose, for example, that I

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[11] See Linda Trinkaus Zagzebski, *Divine Motivation Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 107-110 for further elaboration on this distinction with the example of pleasure.

miss a meeting with a colleague and my colleague is significantly offended. However, my colleague was unaware that the reason I'd missed our meeting was that I had twisted my ankle severely on my way to our meeting place. In such a case, I, who have in some respect performed poorly by missing a meeting, do not need forgiveness, but rather, excuse. And my excuse will be sufficient for reconciliation with my colleague without any exchange of forgiveness at all. This is why forgiveness is not *necessary* for reconciliation.

However, even if forgiveness is neither necessary nor sufficient to bring about reconciliation in all contexts, there are many contexts—namely, moral ones—in which forgiveness contributes to bringing about reconciliation. In such cases as these, whatever value we ascribe to reconciliation, we can likewise ascribe that value to forgiveness.

Second, forgiveness does, as it seems to me, have a significant degree of intrinsic value.[12] It is an interpersonal state that sows the seeds of gratitude and generosity within both the wrongdoer and the victim. A world with such states of affairs in it seems better than a world without them, all things being equal. And so, even if only slightly, there does seem to be *some* intrinsic value to forgiveness itself.

And this brings us to a third possible value included in forgiveness; namely, any instrumental value it accrues by creating an ongoing connection between individuals, one which is further characterized by an ever-increasing appreciation for the virtuous forgiveness of the wrongdoer by the victim. That is, if, as I suggest above, forgiveness is intrinsically valuable, it is plausible to think that conscious appreciation in remembrance of the act of forgiveness might itself be valuable. And if this is correct, then the

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[12] It is not insignificant to notice that something's having *intrinsic value* does not entail that it is highly valuable. That is, something can be intrinsically valuable without also being all that important. For instance, plausibly having true beliefs is a good thing, all things being equal. However, not all true beliefs are equal in terms of value. For instance, a true belief about which lottery ticket is the winner prior to the lottery drawing would be very valuable indeed, in terms of instrumental value. This is why it would be worth acquiring if possible, whereas a true belief about how many grains of sand exist in Normandy would be wholly unworthy of pursuit. For an able defense of this view against naysayers such as Ernest Sosa, see Jonathan Kvanvig, "Pointless Truth," *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* 22 (2008): 199-212.

instrumental value of a particular act of forgiveness will increase to the extent that it brings about such continued reflection and appreciation from the wrongdoer and victim.[13]

Fourth, one might reasonably think that there is a virtue of forgivingness[14] that in part constitutes what it is to flourish as a human being.[15] If so, then whatever brings about the virtue of forgivingness will itself accrue instrumental value. Now, when one reflects on how to develop a virtue, it is fairly straightforward (in the abstract, at least) that to become, for instance, courageous, one must do courageous things. To become temperate, one must *practice* temperance. How one practices such things well is of course an interesting and important question that we must leave to the side; however, that *doing* such actions is part of developing their corresponding virtues is not highly controversial.[16] Thus, the practice of forgiving will be valuable as a means to the virtue of forgivingness.

Fifth, unique to Judeo-Christian tradition is the idea that humans bear the image of God in some important sense and that insofar as human persons bear a likeness to Jesus Christ, they are becoming (in a sense) *more human*. That is, they are flourishing because identification with Christ (i.e. being εν χριστω) *just is* to flourish qua human. But forgivingness is constitutive of what it is to identify with Christ, and consequently, it

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[13] A suggestion similar to this can be found in Robin Collins, "The Connection-Building Theodicy" in *The Blackwell Companion to the Problem of Evil*, eds. Daniel Howard-Snyder and Justin P. McBrayer (Malden, MA: John Wiley & Sons, 2014), 222-235.

[14] Roberts, Robert C., "Forgivingness," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 32.4 (1995): 289-306.

[15] Indeed, plausibly Christ is suggesting this very thing when in response to a question from his disciples concerning *how many times* we ought to forgive an offender for wronging us, says that we should forgive them seventy times seven times (cf. Matthew 18:22).

[16] That is, not controversial for those unconvinced by the extensive situation psychology literature. See Christian Miller, *Character and Moral Psychology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014) for a discussion of this literature that makes room for virtue theory despite an admission of many difficulties from the situationist's paradigm. See John Doris, *Lack of Character: Personality and Moral Behavior* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002) for a defense of situationism by way of reflection on situationist-type psychological studies (e.g. the Milgram experiment). For an excellent contribution to the literature on virtue theory with suggestions for the development of particular virtues at various places throughout, see this collection: Kevin Timpe and Craig A. Boyd, *Virtues and Their Vices* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

inherits a certain degree of instrumental value insofar as it aids us in approaching that state.[17]

Let us summarize, then, this brief foray into the value of forgiveness. Forgiveness acquires instrumental value due to its connection with (a) reconciliation, (b) the potential for persistent reflection on the intrinsic value of forgiveness and the bond formed between the two parties involved in an instance of forgiveness, (c) the development of the virtue of forgivingness, and (d) the bearing of God's image. It also possesses some degree of intrinsic value, but this is not all, for forgiveness also accrues value as an end.

First, in most cases of forgiveness, it is true that forgiveness either supports or is irrelevant to human flourishing (although the former disjunct is most commonly the case). Whenever either of these things is true of an instance of forgiveness, then that particular instance of forgiveness will have positive subjective value; that is, a value conferred upon it merely in virtue of the fact that it is desired by an agent.[18] Second, insofar as forgiveness is necessary for the development of forgivingness, then in conjunction with the instrumental value forgiveness acquires by this association, it will likewise acquire a degree of objective value as an end given virtue's connection to human flourishing. Thus, it seems quite clear that forgiveness has many possible sources of value and straightforwardly *is* of positive value in many, if not most or even all, cases.

2. Groundwork for Uncovering the Nature of Forgiveness

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[17] Though not an instrumental value consideration, someone might also want to claim the reverse; namely, that our forgiveness flows *out* of our participation with Christ himself. Thanks to Kevin Diller for this suggestion.

[18] See Eleonore Stump, *Wandering in Darkness* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 10-11 & 418-450 for an excellent discussion of the dimensions of this sort of subjective value. One might say that one's desires constitute, in part, what it is to be the *person* that one is, and insofar as being a person is valuable, then having such desires will be constitutively valuable. I won't discuss the notion of constitutive value further, but it is an interesting topic in its own right.

Now that we have established at least a preliminary answer to the question of the value of forgiveness, let us turn to the more elusive question of its nature.

To uncover the *nature* of a thing, x, is to reveal a series of constituents of x, $c_1 \ldots c_n$, that are such that *were any of $c_1 \ldots c_n$ absent, then x would not be the type of thing it is*. For instance, a common understanding of the nature of knowledge tells us that knowledge is *justified true belief*; that is, an instance of knowledge is a belief that corresponds with reality (i.e., is true) and is backed up with adequate evidence (i.e., is justified).[19] Another way of stating this is to simply say that knowledge is *constituted* by three things: truth, belief, and justification. And to say that those three things constitute knowledge implies that were a putative instance of knowledge to lack either truth, justification, or belief-hood, then it would *not* be a genuine instance of knowledge.

Consequently, if we are to determine whether some event counts as a *genuine* instance of forgiveness, then we must first determine the proper constituents of forgiveness. But *how* can we do such a thing? What sources of knowledge or evidence do we have to determine what makes up forgiveness?

2.1 Reflective Equilibrium

To answer these questions, perhaps it will help to think carefully about the development of an ethical theory. Suppose you are trying to select an ethical theory according to which you will order your life, and suppose for simplicity's sake that you are only considering utilitarianism[20] and Kantian deontology, with the second formulation of

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[19] See Richard Feldman, *Epistemology* (NJ: Prentice Hall, 2003). Also, despite this being the "standard" view, it's well-known amongst philosophers that JTB is insufficient for knowledge. I'll assume doxastic justification is necessary for knowledge and simply note that a no-defeat condition and non-Gettiered condition will get us the rest of the way to knowledge.

[20] See John Stuart Mill, "What Utilitarianism Is," in *Utilitarianism and the 1868 Speech on Capital Punishment,* ed. George Sher (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1979), 6-26 & the now indispensable debate: J. J. C. Smart & Bernard Williams, *Utilitarianism: For and against* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973).

the categorical imperative as your primary guide (i.e., to always treat others as ends in themselves, and not merely as means).[21]

I believe the best way to approach such a dilemma is to think of ethical theories as maps; that is, maps of the world of value. Just as normal maps organize information in a way that makes that information more accessible and usable to us, so ethical theories help us to organize the features of various situations in which we find ourselves in a way that allows us to determine what is right, wrong, good or bad in such situations. And just as we would judge the adequacy of a map by looking to see how closely it matched the geography for which it was drawn, so too we can judge the adequacy of an ethical theory by seeing how closely it matches the data of our moral intuitions (i.e., a sort of ethical geography).[22]

In light of this analogy, return again to the thought-experiment of choosing between Kantian deontology and utilitarianism. Now suppose that you consider whether it would be right to frame an innocent person for a crime that would eventuate in their death at your hands. And suppose further that this action would be guaranteed to set the minds of your populace at ease and prevent riots that would themselves, were they to occur, certainly result in at least twenty deaths of innocent persons. The utilitarian theory, on the one hand, tells you that you should surely bring about this state of affairs on the assumption that it results in the greatest overall balance of good for the greatest number. Kantian deontology, on the other hand, would categorically rule out such an action since to murder an innocent person to achieve some end would *surely* be an instance of treating

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[21] "The subject of ends (i.e. the rational being itself) must be made the basis of every maxim of action and thus be treated never as a mere means but as the supreme limiting condition in the use of all means—i.e. also as an end" (Immanuel Kant, *The Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals,* in the version by Jonathan Bennett presented at www.earlymoderntexts.com: 35).

[22] See Linda Trinkaus Zagzebski, "Exemplarist Virtue Theory." *Metaphilosophy* 41.1-2 (2010): 43 for my inspiration for this map analogy. She develops the analogy further in chapter one her recent monograph: Linda Trinkaus Zagzebski, *Exemplarist Moral Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

that person as a mere means and not an end in themselves. But suppose now that after determining the deliverances of utilitarianism and Kantian deontology for this act you consult your own intuitions about the case. The idea of punishing an innocent person seems to you as always morally unjustified, even if it leads to exceedingly positive consequences. Thus, you find yourself with an intuition that conflicts with the truth of utilitarianism. What is the proper procedure from here?

One option is to trust your intuition more than the theory of utilitarianism and become a deontologist. A second option is to consider whether your intuitions are themselves reliable, and modify them (insofar as this is psychologically viable) in favor of the implications of a Utilitarian ethical theory. Either option might be permissible in this instance, and both options characterize how we proceed in our ethical theorizing at different moments of our cognitive development.

This process of weighing one's ethical options and sometimes modifying our ethical intuitions while at other times modifying our ethical theories is part of an attempt to arrive at *reflective equilibrium*; that is, some degree of coherence between one's intuitions and theoretical commitments.[23] Indeed, the direction of influence concerning our intuitions and the ethical theories to which we most closely align ourselves, is not straightforward. We often modify in both directions on different occasions, and plausibly do so regularly both consciously and unconsciously. I propose that this same method be the one by which we arrive at a working understanding of the nature of forgiveness. That is, I propose that we seek a coherent balance, i.e., a reflective equilibrium, between our intuitions of what cases count as genuine cases of forgiveness and the various definitions

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[23] John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice,* 2nd Edition (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999) is the work in which this method of reflective equilibrium was coined. It was originally published in 1971.

of forgiveness we consider. These definitions will break down into constituents often in the form of necessary conditions[24] for something to count as forgiveness.

Prior to looking at these putative necessary conditions for forgiveness, however, we must take into account our Christian theological context.[25] For, as soon as one admits of certain theological premises, grounds appear that threaten our confidence in the deliverances of human cognitive faculties. Indeed, the doctrine of the Fall has been historically interpreted by some theologians in such a way that it seriously threatens to undermine epistemic trust in oneself and others.[26] Let us, then, turn to a discussion of the *imago dei* in Christian theology and the potential cognitive damage to which the *imago dei* is allegedly subject as a result of the Fall.

2.2 The Fall, Original Sin and Our Cognitive Capacities

The creation of humanity in Genesis 1 affirms quite clearly that humanity is made in the image of God:

> [26]Then God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth."

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[24] Logically speaking, *q* is a necessary condition for *p* if *p* entails (or guarantees the truth of) *q*. Further, *q* is a sufficient condition for *p* if *q* entails (or guarantees the truth of) *p*. Thus, if something, NC, is a necessary condition of forgiveness, then if some state of affairs is one of forgiveness, it guarantees that NC is instantiated by that state of affairs. And if something, SC, is a sufficient condition of forgiveness, then if SC is instantiated by some state of affairs, then that state of affairs is also one of forgiveness.

[25] I do not mean here to exclude other methodological starting points altogether, but rather, to simply draw attention to the commitments that will be assumed in my particular project.

[26] I want to add an important caveat concerning the upcoming section 2.2. In Pauline scholarship, there is an important debate concerning how Paul thinks about addressing the problem with which atonement is concerned. The debate is an epistemic one insofar as it concerns our *ability to recognize the plight of sin* prior to *recognizing the solution.* Or put another way, some Paul scholars argue that Paul thinks we can only rightly see the problem with human nature, and our stubborn and continual reposing in sin, after the solution has been enacted; that is, after we have been united to Christ. The epistemic problem that I am addressing is independent of this concern, and I do not intend to imply that the approach this problem takes with respect to the Fall and Original Sin is orthodox or even a requirement of Reformed theology. As far as I am aware it is not. However, the approach articulated here *is* present in common discussions about the Fall, both inside and outside of the academy. As a result, I think it is important to clarify the implications of this slightly different problem. See Douglas A. Campbell, *The Deliverance of God: An Apocalyptic Rereading of Justification in Paul* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009) for the solution-to-problem approach to these issues.

> [27]So God created humankind in his image,
>   in the image of God he created them;
>   male and female he created them.[27]

What constitutes the image of God[28], as it is understood in Genesis, has been fairly controversial historically. Some theologians claim that the image of God in humanity is constituted by certain capacities humans share with the divine[29], capacities which are presumably lacked to some significant degree by other creatures (e.g. rationality, imagination, or an ability to lovingly respond to God[30]). Although it seems unlikely that such a view of the image of God quite reflects the original understanding of the Genesis text[31]; nevertheless, at least the potential for the possession of certain intellectual capacities is, in some important way, related to human possession or implementation of the image of God.

Emphasizing human cognitive capacities as part (or necessary concomitants) of the image of God is especially important if we are to determine the extent to which we can trust those cognitive capacities in our post-lapsarian context.[32] After all, in the biblical

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[27] Unless otherwise indicated, Biblical references will be to the NRSV.

[28] I thank Christa McKirland for her paper presentation, "The Image of God and Intersex Persons," for the *Logos Institute of Analytic and Exegetical Theology* on October 13, 2016. The presentation of her research was extremely helpful for my thinking on this subject matter. See also Oliver D. Crisp, *The Word Enfleshed* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2016), 51-70 (i.e. chapter 4, "The Christological Doctrine of the Image of God") for an excellent discussion of the issues.

[29] Proponents of such a view include: (i) Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* (Beloved Publishing, 2015); (ii) Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* Ia q. 93 a. 4 & 6; (iii) John Calvin, *The Institutes of the Christian Religion,* eds. Tony Lane and Hilary Osborne (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1986), 1.15; (iv) *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* III.I.1, art. 1; & (v) J. P. Moreland, *The Recalcitrant Imago Dei: Human Persons and the Failure of Naturalism* (London: SCM, 2009).

[30] Here I have in mind Emil Brunner, *Dogmatics,* II: *The Christian Doctrine of Creation and Redemption,* trans. Olive Wyon (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1952), 55-61 & 75-8.

[31] That understanding, I take it, would be much closer to understanding humans as representatives of God to creation. That is, humanity exercises dominion as deputized authorities over creation. For variations on this theme, see: (i) Richard J. Plantinga, Thomas R. Thompson and Matthew D. Lundberg, *An Introduction to Christian Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010): 182-5; (ii) John H. Walton, *The Lost World of Adam and Eve* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2015): 190-197; and (iii) N.T. Wright, *Surprised by Hope: Rethinking Heaven, the Resurrection, and the Mission of the Church* (New York, NY: HarperOne, 2008).

[32] It's possible for us to limit the interpretation of the Fall to only affect knowledge (cf. John Owen, *The Holy Spirit* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 1965), 248; referenced in Jason McMartin, "Reason," in *T&T Clark Companion to the Doctrine of Sin*, ed. Keith L. Johnson and David Lauber (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2016), 354), as opposed to other epistemic goods such as rationality or practical wisdom, or only our grasp of godly things rather than practical affairs (cf. B. A. Gerrish, *Grace and Reason: A study in the Theology of Luther*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962), 12; also quoted in McMartin, "Reason," 354). However, for the sake of my argument here, the more extreme views concerning rationality are of the greatest interest.

narrative, it is the *image of God* that is in some sense marred or effaced following the Fall caused by the primal human sin. Consider, then, the following enlightening passage from John Calvin:

> Original sin…may be defined as the hereditary corruption and depravity of our nature. This reaches every part of the soul, makes us abhorrent to God's wrath and produces in us what Scripture calls works of the flesh…Our nature is not only completely empty of goodness, but so full of every kind of wrong that it is always active. Those who call it lust use an apt word, provided it is also stated…that everything which is in man, from the intellect to the will, from the soul to the body, is defiled and imbued with this lust. To put it briefly, the whole man is in himself nothing but lust.[33]

According to Calvin, all humanity has inherited a sort of disease known as original sin. As he describes this malady, every part of the soul, including both the intellect and will is 'defiled' and 'completely empty of goodness'. This language concerning the problem of sin is strong indeed, and it might lead us to wonder whether or not an intellect that fits such a description is worthy of the high epistemic status I have attributed to it. After all, I have claimed that we can consult our intuitions—i.e., the deliverances of our cognitive capacities—and perhaps rely on them in determining what to believe about the nature of forgiveness, even where that might lead to a *prima facie* conflict with our other epistemic authorities. But suppose that Calvin is right and original sin has afflicted our intellect as to make it *in fact* unreliable. What would this imply about the epistemic propriety of trusting the deliverances of our cognitive faculties?

Perhaps contrary to expectations, very little is implied. Or at least, very little is implied for anyone trying to reason through these difficult questions from the inescapable

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[33] Calvin, *Institutes*, 2.1.8, 90–1. As I admit in the text, Calvin is not altogether clear concerning his approach to the image of God post-Fall. On the one hand, in the passage quoted and in some other points of discussion concerning the post-lapsarian image of God, it seems that the image of God has been entirely effaced; that is, nothing good remains. In other places, Calvin offers a less pessimistic position that merely claims the image is severely damaged. I think the latter interpretation is preferable on grounds of interpretive charity. Nevertheless, I assume the extreme view above for the sake of developing a worst-case scenario for the purposes of argument.

first-person perspective (i.e. "the egocentric predicament"[34]) in which human agents find

themselves. To understand why we should not be bothered by the potential implications

of the doctrine of the Fall for our implementation of reflective equilibrium, consider the

following bit of reasoning an agent might discern; that is, an agent who comes to believe

that there is a real possibility that her cognitive faculties are unreliable due to the

debilitating noetic effects of sin:

> Sally has always trusted herself generally when it comes to her intellectual
> activities. That is, she has always considered herself generally (though not
> infallibly) trustworthy concerning the gathering of evidence and the
> evaluation of that evidence. However, upon reading John Calvin's
> *Institutes*, she comes to believe that there is a real possibility that her
> intellectual activities are in some significant way *un*reliable due to the
> corruption of sin. As a result, she acquires a reason to doubt that her
> cognitive faculties are generally reliable. This is an unfortunate thing, for
> now Sally is unsure whether or not she can trust the particular deliverances
> of her intellectual activities in the future. And what's worse, it seems that
> the reason Sally has for *dis*trusting her intellectual self in general is a reason
> she only gains by way of an act of trusting those very cognitive capacities
> being called into question. That is, she gains a reason for ceasing to trust
> her epistemic self with an act of trusting her epistemic self. Puzzled about
> the implications for her cognitive life, Sally wonders how to move
> forward.[35]

Perhaps this thought experiment seems a bit misleading as an interpretation of

Calvin, but let us leave proper interpretation aside. For the interpretation I have suggested

is a worst-case scenario (or at least, a really-bad-case scenario) understanding of the Fall,

and if it can be shown that there is room for Sally to trust her epistemic faculties in a

worst-case scenario, then it will plausibly follow that in any better-case scenario she again

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[34] This label was coined, as far as I am aware, by Richard Foley, *The Theory of Epistemic Rationality* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987).

[35] To engage in a discussion of the importance and justification of epistemic self-trust would take us too far afield in this paper. For those interested to learn more, see (i) Richard Foley, *Trust in Oneself and Others* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001) and (ii) Linda T. Zagzebski, *Epistemic Authority: A Theory of Trust, Authority, and Autonomy in Belief* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

will be within her epistemic rights to trust her intellectual activities. So let us consider the implications of this thought process for Sally.[36]

There are a couple of features of this situation that merit our attention. First, when Sally considers the noetic effects of sin, she acquires a reason to doubt her reliability as an epistemic agent. However, as a matter of practical necessity, she also begins her journey to this realization with a presumption of her epistemic reliability. In other words, Sally begins with a self-given and pre-reflective reason to think that she *is* a reliable epistemic agent. Thus, upon reading Calvin, Sally finds herself with both a reason to affirm and a reason to doubt her reliability as an epistemic agent; that is, there is a clash of reasons concerning her reliability, a clash which must be sorted out.

But now, *who* will be doing the sorting? There is no other party to which Sally might turn to decide which reason, either the one for or the one against her reliability as an epistemic agent, bears the most weight. So obviously, it is *Sally* who must sort out the tension concerning whether to continue trusting her epistemic self, and she must do so egocentrically. But then let us draw out the possible ways of resolving Sally's conundrum.

First, Sally can decide simply to continue trusting the deliverances of her epistemic faculties. Now perhaps contrary to appearances, this continuation of trust need not be one of brazen disregard concerning the effects of sin. Sally has clearly been deeply troubled when reflecting on the reach of original sin after the Fall. However, after long and sober reflection, she may simply find that *it just seems best* to her that she continue to trust herself. Indeed, Sally may even recalibrate the degree of reliability she assigns to her cognitive faculties in hopes that she may adequately account for the presence of sin without giving up trust in her epistemic self on the whole.

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[36] I hope it's obvious that Sally is meant to be *representative* of the epistemic conundrum facing anyone in similar circumstances.

However, it is also possible for Sally to cease trusting her epistemic self, or at least, such a position seems possible in the abstract. But how might this go, exactly? Is there a clear path of reasoning that might coherently lead Sally to this conclusion? Perhaps it is possible for Sally to just adopt such a stance by fiat[37], but suppose instead that she tries to reason her way to distrusting her cognitive faculties. The following argument seems to articulate well the line of reasoning Sally might have in mind:

i.   If Calvin's understanding of original sin is correct, then my epistemic activities are not trustworthy.
ii.   Calvin's understanding of original sin is correct.
iii. My epistemic activities are not trustworthy.

Now, consider whether this string of reasoning, which led Sally to a reason to doubt her rationality, can itself be rationally endorsed. On the one hand, if the answer is *yes* (i.e. that the line of reasoning *can* be endorsed by Sally), then the same line of reasoning will lead to two inconsistent propositions: (a) Sally is epistemically trustworthy, i.e. with respect to following the lines of this argument, and (b) Sally is not epistemically trustworthy. But of course, from this it follows that Sally both is and is not epistemically trustworthy, and no string of reasoning that leads to a contradiction is either trustworthy or rationally endorsable.

Suppose instead that the answer is *no* (i.e. that the line of reasoning above *cannot* be endorsed by Sally). Well, if the reasoning itself cannot be reasonably endorsed, then why would Sally trust the conclusion to which the reasoning leads? Surely that would be foolhardy, for even if the conclusion is true, Sally could have no reason to believe it is true.

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[37] Although, it's hard to imagine how we might truly call such a move *rational*. If one adopts an attitude of distrust towards oneself *by fiat* (i.e., without even considering a reason to adopt the attitude), the move seems *non-rational* at best.

In summary then, the above argument can be clearly seen to be self-undermining. For if the conclusion is true, then no one can rationally endorse the argument, and if the conclusion is false, then no one *should* rationally endorse the argument. Thus, it seems that there is simply no road open to a rational endorsement of the above argument. And as a result, the best way forward for Sally is to continue trusting her epistemic self, even in the face of the worries of original sin.[38]

Thus, despite initial appearances, the doctrine of original sin does not imply anything negative concerning the propriety of trusting our intuitions concerning the nature of Christian forgiveness. So, let us now turn to the question of forgiveness's nature, beginning with some philosophical constraints.

3. The Nature of Forgiveness

Recall from §2 that determining the nature of a thing, x, is a function of identifying a set of constituents, $c_1…c_n$, that are such that were x to lack any of $c_1…c_n$, then x would not be the type of thing it is. Furthermore, identifying such a set of constituents will require that we practice reflective equilibrium, a method whereby one consults one's intuitions and theories. In consulting both intuitions and theories, one also aims to strike a balance between treating one's intuitions and the theories to which one ascribes as more fundamental than the other. The result, if all goes well, will be a balanced set of

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[38] The results here are similar to the results one might expect when dealing with the new evil demon problem: suppose that there are two possible worlds, w_1 and w_2, the first of which is the actual world in which all epistemic agents undergo experiences in normal ways (i.e. by *seeing* chairs and *tasting* ice cream, let's say) and the second of which is an evil demon world (i.e. a world in which all experience is misleading, such that one never sees chairs or tastes ice cream, but rather, is simply given the illusion that one is doing so). Suppose the denizens of w_2 are informed of the possibility that they exist in this elaborate demon world. What should they do epistemically? My view is that this possibility has basically no implications for the denizens of w_2, despite the fact that they *are* systematically deceived and mislead. For discussion of such a case in favor of evidentialism and against reliabilism, see Earl Conee and Richard Feldman, "Evidentialism" in *Evidentialism: Essays in Epistemology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004): 83-100. For a defense of the sort of epistemological framework within which I stand, see Jonathan Kvanvig, *Rationality and Reflection: How to Think About What to Think* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014) and Jonathan Rutledge, "Commonsense, Skeptical Theism, and Different Sorts of Closure of Inquiry Defeat," *Faith and Philosophy* 34.1 (2017): 17-32.

considered judgments that are such that we are "un-inclined to revise [them] any further because they have the highest degree of acceptability or credibility for us."[39]

3.1 Philosophical Constraints

I begin with some philosophical constraints concerning forgiveness. That is, I begin with some reflection on the concept of forgiveness with which we take ourselves to be acquainted. First, I explicate the context in which forgiveness might occur (i.e., a sort of precondition for forgiveness, rather than a constituent of forgiveness, properly speaking). Then I will say something about what forgiveness is *not*. That is, I will draw a conceptual border around forgiveness that prevents us from treating nearby concepts as identical to it. This will help us to better isolate the particular concept with which we will concern ourselves when we approach giving a positive account in the next chapter.

3.1.1 Constructing a Context for Forgiveness

Forgiveness does not hold in a vacuum. Certain conditions must first be in place before a genuine act of forgiveness is to take place. First, I will simply list those conditions followed by some clarificatory remarks on the less transparent features of each.[40]

S can forgive *T* only if…

  (A) *T* wronged *S*[41]
  (B) *S* truly believes that *T* is blameworthy
  (C) *S* remembers *T's* action, that *T* did it, and *S* condemns it
  (D) *S* feels some sort of negative reactive attitude towards *T's* action
  (E) *S* feels some sort of negative reactive attitude towards *T*

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[39] See section 1 of Norman Daniels, "Reflective Equilibrium", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2016 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2016/entries/reflective-equilibrium/>.

[40] Much of this section is indebted to the excellent discussion of forgiveness found in Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Justice in Love* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2011): 165-169.

[41] At this point in my project, I do not want to go into much detail on what constitutes wronging another person. However, it seems *intending* to wrong someone is itself a sort of wrong, even if the intention is not carried out. So the set of ways in which S might wrong T includes more than simply the set of successful attempts at wronging.

Contextual condition (A) might seem indisputable initially. After all, what is there to forgive if there has been no wrongdoing? On reflection, however, one might wonder whether actual wrongdoing is necessary for forgiveness rather than merely *perceived* wrongdoing.

Yet to allow that perceived wrongdoing may be sufficient for a proper act of forgiveness to take place results in absurdities. For example, such a view would allow that my child's understanding of a five minute time-out as morally wrong obligates *me* (or at least, makes it reasonable for me) to ask my child for forgiveness. But surely this is wrong. Of course, if my child is *right*, that is, if my child's belief that I have wronged him is *true*, then seeking his forgiveness would be appropriate. But my child's mere *false belief* that I have wronged him is not enough to make seeking forgiveness appropriate for me. So this objection to condition (A) is not reasonable.

Now, whereas condition (A) is a metaphysical one (i.e., insofar as it requires that a relation of wrongdoing hold between S and T), condition (B) is an epistemological one. That is, it requires that the wronged party (S) has a true *belief* that the *perpetrator* (T) is blameworthy for the wrongdoing.

Someone might question whether $T's$ wronging S guarantees that T is blameworthy for wronging S. After all, perhaps T wronged S but had a reasonable explanation for why she wronged S (i.e. perhaps T stole S's drink because she had good but misleading evidence that the drink had been poisoned). In this case, I suggest we simply stipulate that wronging entails blameworthiness for the sake of simplicity.[42]

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[42] Importantly, it's plausible that there can be degrees of blameworthiness and degrees of wronging, such that an agent might be either fully or partially blameworthy for some bad state of affairs. Examples might be a slight overwatering of one's lawn when a watering ban is in place that, when combined with similar behavior from other members of the community, results in a catastrophic drought. Each instance of overwatering may have itself been relatively minor in terms of disvalue, but it does causally contribute (i.e., as a partial cause) to a much larger social evil. I take it that these citizens, then, has partial blame for the

Condition (C) then requires that S remember three things concerning T's wrongdoing; namely, S must (i) remember the action itself, (ii) remember that T performed the action, and (iii) condemn T's action. The reason that remembrance is required is to reiterate the importance of condition (B), that is, the need for the victim to *maintain* a true belief that she has been wronged. Also, so long as we trust that there is a legitimate distinction between an action and the person who performed the action, then it is right to distinguish conceptually remembering T's action from remembering T's performance of the action as well. Both instances of remembrance are necessary prerequisites to forgiveness.[43]

Lastly, conditions (D) and (E) both emphasize the need for S to possess negative reactive attitudes, although the difference between each condition concerns the *object* of those attitudes: respectively, the action and the person. As I understand the term, a negative reactive attitude is (roughly) a "concern-based construal" of the action or person, a construal constituted by both a cognitive and affective dimension.[44] A very common instance of such a negative reactive attitude concerning forgiveness is resentment, which I will take as the standard emotion with which forgiveness is

result. For the inspiration of this case, see Ted Poston, "Social Evil" *Oxford Studies in Philosophy of Religion, Vol. 5* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014): 211.

[43] There is a bit of ambiguity here, for someone might vaguely recall having been wronged, or one might forget but be informed by someone else that they had been wronged. I think it is reasonable to count these sorts of cases as instances of remembering in the sense relevant for the context of forgiveness.

[44] For an interesting discussion of affective, reactive and retributive attitudes, see Lucy Allais, "Wiping the Slate Clean: The Heart of Forgiveness," *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 36.1 (2008): 54-55. See Robert C. Roberts, *Emotions: An Essay in Aid of Moral Psychology* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003) for an elaboration of the concept of a concern-based construal as an explication of the notion of an emotion.

concerned.[45] Thus, whenever resentment of both an action and the perpetrator of the action is present in the victim, the context is set for the possibility of forgiveness.[46]

It is worth, however, allowing that we relax conditions (D) and (E). By building such conditions into the context of forgiveness, we are presupposing that the only agents who might forgive are those who have, or could have, the relevant negative reactive attitudes. As I discuss below, this assumption is problematic in certain specific cases, but nevertheless, both conditions ought to be seen as *typical* even if not binding for a context of forgiveness to be set.

3.1.2   Nearby Concepts

Despite the clearly delineated context set above, not just any action in such a context will be one of forgiveness. Nor will just any context that *apparently* satisfies the above conditions *actually* satisfy them. When either of these deviations from forgiveness occur, we may have something which looks very much *like* forgiveness, but is not an instance of true forgiveness. Examining what forgiveness is *not* will help us to obtain a much clearer picture of our target concept, so in what follows, we begin by distinguishing forgiveness from nearby concepts that are deviations in one or both of the two ways described above.

3.1.2.1 Excuse

Suppose Caroline is a student in primary school, and the teacher has just distributed lollipops to the entire class. However, the teacher withholds a lollipop from

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[45] I state the requirement as concerning negative reactive attitudes because I believe that the range of appropriate negative concern-based construals (i.e. emotions) that are overcome or set aside in forgiveness includes more than merely resentment. For an emphasis on resentment as the only emotion of concern, see Joseph Butler, *Fifteen Sermons Preached at Rolls Chapel, in The Works of the Right Reverend Father in God, Joseph Butler, D.C.L., Late Bishop of Durham*, Ed. Samuel Halifax (New York: Carter, 1846).

[46] Someone might distinguish further between resenting the person and resenting the failure of character in that person that permitted them to perform an action. I intend the latter understanding as the primary target of evaluation in certain understandings of forgiveness, especially, for instance, divine forgiveness.

Caroline, and Caroline is hurt by the action. In such a case, Caroline believes that her teacher is blameworthy for this action, Caroline has a negative reactive attitude to both the action and her teacher, and she is easily able to recall the history surrounding the action. In other words, conditions (B)-(E) of the context of forgiveness are all clearly satisfied.

Now further suppose that the teacher's reason for withholding a lollipop from Caroline was that Caroline is, potentially, lethally allergic to the lollipop. Of course, the teacher told Caroline why she wasn't getting a lollipop and that the teacher would be back with an alternative treat of equal value, but Caroline, in her dismay, entirely missed all of this. In such a scenario, it seems clear that Caroline's teacher hasn't actually wronged Caroline, and thus, condition (A) of the context is not satisfied. This is an instance in which we might say that the teacher does not need to be forgiven, but rather, excused.

But this is not the only sense of 'excuse' that might be distinguished from forgiveness. It is well known that the formation of a given person's character is not entirely up to them.[47] Indeed, it's likely that much of a person's character is such that, given their personal history and upbringing, it is unsurprising that they have committed some crime.[48] Consider Jean Valjean from Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables*, who, after suffering at the hands of the criminal justice system and being released, attempts to steal silver from a priest who has offered him a place to stay. The priest is given an opportunity to turn Jean Valjean in for stealing, but in a moment of incomparable grace towards Jean Valjean, the priest instead tells Valjean's accuser that the silver was a gift. While I think that there is undoubtedly a degree of forgiveness present in the original story, it is also

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[47] Two classic papers tying this sort of luck to the moral judgments people make, which is relevant to our discussion, are these: (i) Bernard Williams, *Moral Luck* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981) and (ii) chapter 3 of Thomas Nagel, *Mortal Questions* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979).

[48] Cf. Jeffrie G. Murphy, *Getting Even: Forgiveness and Its Limits* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003): 28-30.

clear that insofar as Valjean's thievery is an act of desperation, his actions can be excused to some degree. This is a case again where condition (A) has not been satisfied, at least not fully satisfied, and thus, merits a different response than forgiveness.

3.1.2.2 Pardon

Another nearby concept is that of *pardon*. Often, phrases such as 'forgive me', 'pardon me' or 'excuse me' function as synonyms, but the robust concepts corresponding to each of these words are nevertheless quite distinct.

An important context in which this is most easily seen is in legal contexts, such as when a legal authority issues a pardon to a criminal for something they have done. In such scenarios, the legal authority need not satisfy any of the conditions (B)-(E); that is, the legal authority might believe that the criminal is innocent and harbor no negative feelings whatsoever toward the criminal. Indeed, given that legal norms do not necessarily track moral norms, it is even possible that the criminal has not wronged anyone, and thus, does not satisfy condition (A) either. In this case, then, to pardon someone is simply to remove whatever legal sentence they deserve according to the law, something which is hardly sufficient for an instance of forgiveness as we understand it.

3.1.2.3 Mercy

Yet another concept that is often confused with an act of forgiveness is mercy.[49] In this instance, there is a deviation from forgiveness of the second sort above; namely,

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[49] Cf. Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Justice in Love*, chapter 16 for an interesting discussion of the views of Aristotle and Seneca on forgiveness and mercy. He argues that there is no concept of forgiveness in the Greeks akin to that which we find in early Christianity. However, he does argue that there is something near to it. Suppose I realize that I've acted in my life in such a way as to fall short of maximizing some eudaimonistic goods, and thus, to the extent to which I've fallen short, I form regret concerning my life. Suppose some of those actions also include actions done to others by which those others were harmed. Although there may not be a moral dimension to Greek ethics of the sort described by G.E.M. Anscombe, "Modern Moral Philosophy," *Philosophy* 33.124 (1958): 1-19, there is a dimension of evaluation concerned with practical wisdom. And so, insofar as a victim refrains from attributing a perpetrator's actions to his or her practical-wisdom history, but rather, personal history, then there is something akin to forgiveness going on (Wolterstorff, 185-187).

in the *response* to a context in which forgiveness can occur. Fundamentally, to have *mercy* on someone is to lessen their deserved punishment.[50] The punishment may be either legally or morally deserved, and so may vary with respect to the satisfaction of condition (A), but where there is no restriction in punishment, there is no mercy.

Importantly, however, as forgiveness will be understood later, it is consistent with no reduction in the punishment given to a criminal. That is, a criminal's sentence can be carried out, even if they have been truly forgiven by their victim. The brief reason for this is that punishment may occur for different reasons: retribution, reprobation, protection, deterrence, or even restoration. Suppose that a criminal has wronged me and is given a sentence of 10 years, but I then subsequently forgive him after he has repented. Suppose further that the penalty of 10 years is assigned in order to deter other criminals from engaging in that sort of behavior in the future. It would be odd were the government to allow for a reduction in the 10-year sentence after this criminal has repented, for if they always allowed for such a reduction given repentance, then, presumably, the reason for setting the initial sentence at 10 years would be undermined. The explanation for why it would be undermined is found in some simple practical reasoning on the behalf of the criminal:

> Should I commit crime x? Well, I'll get 10 years for it initially, but as a matter of policy, if I repent, then the sentence will be reduced to 10 *days*. So really, there's no chance that I'll get a 10-year sentence since all I have to do is express repentance. After all, no one will really know whether I have legitimately repented or not.

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[50] Undoubtedly the description of mercy described above points at a legitimate sense of the term. Of course, we also have things, such as the 'mercy rule' in sports where no moral wrongdoing need take place. Rather, one team acts charitably by stopping a game at a predetermined point differential to permit the losing team to head home with their chins up, so to speak. See Alex Arnold, "What is Mercy?" (*unpublished manuscript*) for a discussion of such cases. The concept here, then, is primarily the juridical concept.

Thus, in such a case, there is good reason for legal authorities to leave a criminal's sentence alone, even after the criminal has been forgiven. Thus, we have a case of forgiveness with no mercy.

The opposite is clearly possible as well; that is, it is straightforward to conceive of an instance of mercy without forgiveness. Suppose *S* wrongs *T* and is given a sentence of 3 years, and suppose further that *T* is incapable of forgiving *S* due to a strange solar flare from Alpha Centauri that messes up *T's* brain function. However, *S* is good friends with the legal authorities and is given an immediate sentence reduction from 3 years in prison to nothing. Then we have an instance of mercy without forgiveness. Thus, forgiveness and mercy cannot be identical.

3.1.2.4 Condonation

The next nearby concept is *condonation*, and its consideration spawns from a common argument sometimes made against the moral permissibility of forgiveness.[51] Here is the worry: if I forgive someone for wronging me, then I seem to be ignoring the importance of justice. This is because one might view forgiveness as a waiving of one's rights to punishment, and insofar as justice *demands* that there be such punishment, then my forgiveness of the wrongdoer flouts the demands of justice. In other words, on this understanding, forgiveness is not a way of putting the world to rights or restoring something which was lost, but rather, an endorsement or condoning of the wrong done.

This argument is not compelling. First, the notion of justice on which it rests is primarily retributive (i.e. requiring that one balance the scales of good and evil by carrying out a punishment of the wrongdoer), and such an understanding of punishment is both

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[51] See, for instance, Aurel Kolnai, "Forgiveness," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* (1973-74): 91-106.

extremely controversial and probably false (or so, I say).[52] Second, and more importantly, forgiveness begins by acknowledging that there was wrongdoing and ends while still maintaining that the past deed was wrong. What changes is not an attitude directed at the moral permissibility of the past *action*, but rather, the attitude directed at the *person* responsible for that action and their *relationship* to that action. Thus, it is safe to say that to forgive is *not* thereby to condone.[53]

3.1.3 Further Desiderata Concerning Forgiveness

Now that we have thought carefully about what forgiveness is *not*, we turn instead to thinking about some things which *are* constitutive of the nature of forgiveness, or at least, some desiderata that seem like reasonable components of a definition of forgiveness at which to aim. It could turn out that some of these desiderata or proposed components of forgiveness are inconsistent with one another, and thus, not all simultaneously satisfiable. If so, then by the demands of the method of reflective equilibrium, we will be forced, on pain of coherence, to sort out which desiderata take precedence in our theory. The point of laying out such desiderata, however, is that insofar as the desiderata we outline are valuable, then seeking an understanding of forgiveness that can satisfy those desiderata will likewise be valuable.

First, someone might ask whether forgiveness is proper in all contexts. For instance, sometimes when an abuse victim offers forgiveness to a perpetrator, the forgiveness itself promotes a cycle of abuse. But we should not prescribe actions that

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[52] Alan J. Torrance, "The Theological Grounds for Advocating Forgiveness and Reconciliation in the Sociopolitical Realm," in *The Politics of Past Evil: Religion, Reconciliation, and the Dilemmas of Transitional Justice,* ed. Daniel Philpott (South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006): 61-63. See chapter 3 for my own defense of this claim.

[53] For a brief discussion of condonation and pardon, see Paul M. Hughes and Brandon Warmke, "Forgiveness", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (2017 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = < https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/forgiveness/>.

lead to the perpetuation of abusive behaviors. Therefore, forgiveness should not be prescribed in such contexts.

> *Desideratum 1* (D1) – A good definition of forgiveness should not force us to prescribe forgiveness in such a way that it encourages the perpetuation of bad behavior.

Second, someone might worry that being too quick to forgive is, in a sense, a betrayal of oneself. Indeed, a common complaint against the propriety of forgiveness itself is that such an action is a failing to take seriously human dignity; namely, the dignity of the victim. Thus, it is important that forgiveness not be an impediment to maintaining a proper degree of respect for the victim.

> *Desideratum 2* (D2) – Necessarily, and for all persons *S* and *T,* it is not the case that if *S* forgives *T*, then *S* fails to exhibit a sufficient degree of appropriate self-respect.

Third, a definition of forgiveness should be consistent with the wrongdoer seeing themselves as not the same person before and after forgiveness. This is an important point that should not be misunderstood as a metaphysically loaded claim about personal identity. This is not a constraint on what metaphysical conditions should be met in order for a person at some time in the past, *t1*, to be the same person at some later time, *t2*. Rather, it is simply a more psychological sense of person that is being invoked, such that someone's change in character, attitudes, or ways of viewing past wrongdoing may suffice to allow them to truly say, "I am no longer, in some sense, the person who is responsible for that past wrongdoing."

> *Desideratum 3* (D3) – Possibly, for any persons *S* and *T* and any morally wrong action A, if *S* forgives *T* for *A*, then *T* is no longer responsible for *A*.

Fourth, it is an important question whether or not forgiveness for the dead is a coherent possibility. On certain entirely subjective accounts of forgiveness (i.e., accounts that reduce forgiveness to a mere change in the affective and other mental states of the

victim), dead people can be forgiven. In one sense, this seems reasonable. But insofar as forgiveness aims at *reconciling individuals*, the idea that forgiveness can take place after someone has died seems absurd. For there is no reconciliation to be had with a dead person. Nevertheless, there is a puzzle here that, if untangled, would result in a more worthwhile understanding of forgiveness.

> *Desideratum 4* (D4) – A definition of forgiveness that satisfactorily addresses the conflicting intuitions of being both able to and not able to forgive the dead will accrue significant value.

Fifth, forgiveness is not merely something of which humans are capable. Surely we should at least allow that other agents, sentient non-human animals, aliens, angels, gods or God should be able to forgive those who have wronged them.[54] And so, a definition of forgiveness should be consistent with the natures of such agents.

> *Desideratum 5* (D5) – It should be the case that for any agent[55], possibly, she can forgive (including, what is important in our case, God).

This concludes the portion of our study concerning, primarily, philosophical reflections on the nature of forgiveness. We began the chapter with some preliminaries concerning the way this study would proceed, including an emphasis on analytic modes of theology, an employment of reflective equilibrium as our fundamental methodology, and a justification for such epistemic maneuvers in light of worries from a doctrine of

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[54] Some readers might doubt the relevance of including 'sentient non-human animals' in my list of those parties capable of forgiveness. The possibility that such animals could have their mental capacities elevated to a level of rationality on par with humans is not without any previous discussion. See Trent Dougherty, *The Problem of Animal Pain: A Theodicy for All Creatures Great and Small* (New York, NY: Palgrave MacMillan, 2014).

[55] When I say that God is an agent, undoubtedly, classical theists will rightly begin to worry that what I'm offering is not compatible with such a view. Let me flag, then, that such language can and perhaps should be understood analogically throughout. God is not an agent in the straightforward sense that humans are agents, but there is nevertheless something right and proper of ascribing agency to God. Discussing my views on the doctrine of analogy and the ever-present understanding of God as divinely simple would take us too far afield, however, so I simply refer the reader to discussions of such topics: (i) Eleonore Stump, *The God of the Bible and the God of the Philosophers* (*Aquinas Lecture*) (Milwaukee, WI: Marquette University Press, 2016); (ii) Ryan T. Mullins, *The End of the Timeless God (Oxford Studies in Analytic Theology)* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016); (iii) Gregory Fowler, "Simplicity or Priority," in *Oxford Studies in Philosophy of Religion Vol. 6* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015): 114-138; and (iv) Jonathan Jacobs, "The Ineffable, Inconceivable, and Incomprehensible God: Fundamentality and Apophatic Theology" In *Oxford Studies in Philosophy of Religion Vol. 6* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015): 158-176.

the Fall. We then, after outlining the components of the proper context for forgiveness, delineated five desiderata for a definition of forgiveness that drew primarily from philosophical literature. However, no *Christian* account of forgiveness can hope to maintain respectability without taking into account the data constitutive of the witness of Christian scripture concerning forgiveness. This is where we shall begin with the next chapter.

Chapter 2

Scripture and Forgiveness: A Christian Account

Having now explicitly set aside five desiderata from philosophical reflection by which we can assess the adequacy of a given definition of forgiveness, let us turn to the data with which we must wrestle in order to develop a definition of forgiveness that is informed by the Christian tradition. We will divide the texts of interest as follows: (i) the synoptic gospels and Acts, (ii) Johannine literature, (iii) the writings of Paul and (iv) other New Testament biblical texts. Explicit discussion of the nature of forgiveness is not found extensively in the Hebrew Bible, and so, we will not set aside an additional section dedicated to it. In the discussion which follows, however, reference to texts falling outside the lines delineated will arise wherever relevant.

1. Constraints from the Biblical Witness

1.1 The Synoptic Gospels and Acts

If forgiveness is not the fundamental theme of the synoptic gospels, it is certainly a major component of the underlying theology of the gospel writers. Three Greek words in the New Testament can be reasonably translated as 'forgiveness' (supposing we allow for a broad enough semantic field)— 'παραδίδωμι', 'χαρίζομαι', and 'ἄφεσις'—and their meaning can vary from concerning *either* the annulling of financial debts *or* the re-establishment of personal relationships disrupted by wrongdoing.[1] This double use can be seen quite starkly in the difference between the Matthean and Lukan forms of the Lord's Prayer, both of which invoke a verb form of αφεσις.[2]

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[1] Metzger and Coogan, *The Oxford Companion to the Bible*, 1993: 232. Technically, 'απολυω' should also be included in this list. At its root, it means "to set free" and it is only used in a way that might be reasonably translated as 'forgive' in Lk. 6:37. It is in being set free from sin that we find this sense of 'απολυω' reasonably applied to forgiveness, and our definition of forgiveness accommodates such a reading. See Anthony Bash, *Forgiveness: A Theology* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2015), 25-29.

[2] Cf. Matt 6:12 and Luke 11:4.

Language, however, is not as strict as the above paragraph might suggest. We can use one word to refer to a number of different concepts or even vague concepts (i.e., concepts without precise boundaries for determining whether or not they apply in certain cases). As an example of ambiguity, the word 'bank' can be used to refer to either the financial institution or a river bank, such that if someone says, "meet me at the bank," I might rightly be confused as to their meaning. As an example of vagueness in language, consider the concept of baldness and ask whether it would be accurate[3] to describe someone with one hair on their head as 'bald'. It is not clear that they would count as bald, for they have a hair. But suppose you think it is incorrect to ascribe baldness to them. Then, at what point would adding *just one more hair* shift this person from the non-bald category to the bald category? Reasonably, any answer to this question would be arbitrary, and if so, then there is a degree of vagueness in language.[4]

If ambiguity and vagueness permeate language as we use it normally, then we must be ready to account for such ambiguity and vagueness when considering uses of 'forgiveness' in Scriptural contexts. Not only this, but we must also allow that linguistic usage is slippery. Sometimes, in our less reflective moments, we say that we were watching a movie despite the fact that we were actually watching a television show. Such an utterance would be, strictly speaking, false, but such accuracy would have been beside the point. We were watching *something or other*, and that was all that mattered for discussion! However, even in our reflective moments we find ourselves conflating concepts which, when scrutinized sufficiently, should come apart. Confusion concerning *facts* versus *opinions*, for instance, results largely from conflating the concept of opinion

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[3] Notice I'm not asking whether it would be socially permissible or generally kind to simply call someone 'bald' without any context in which it would be reasonable. I'm just asking whether or not it would be accurate (or true, if you like).

[4] For anyone interested in this sort of Sorites' paradox exercise, see Timothy Williamson, *Vagueness* (New York, NY: Routledge Publishing, 2002) for a defense of an epistemicist perspective.

with that of baseless conjecture. My opinions (or beliefs) are, hopefully, based *not* on conjecture but evidence, and moreover, they can be true. A more helpful distinction, then, would be one between justified and unjustified beliefs.[5]

In any case, both the word 'forgiveness' and the concept of forgiveness arise throughout the New Testament texts, and we must be diligent to understand such passages in light of the potential for ambiguity, vagueness and loose talk. So, without further ado, let us turn to the biblical data found in the Synoptic gospels, beginning with portions of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5-7):

> "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, 'Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same?[6]

This radical call to *love* one's enemies[7]—which for Jesus' audience was a class composed not only of those who had committed some moral wrong but also of Romans, Samaritans, and Gentiles—does not explicitly mention forgiveness. But suppose a member of Jesus' audience were to pose the following question to Jesus:

> Master, I have a son whom I love. But a few years ago, he severely wronged me by shaming me in front of my entire household and going off on his own. I thought he was gone for good, but just last week he returned and has since repented of his evil, made complete reparation to

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my honor and even offered additional gifts of apology to me. Of course, I love my son, but I will not forgive him.

Surely were Jesus confronted with such a person, he would point out the obvious. There is no love without a willingness to forgive. So, contrary to the father's claim, he does not truly love his son.

If this is correct, then to love someone is at least to be willing to forgive them. But Jesus says that we should love our enemies. From this it follows that we should at least be willing to forgive our enemies. Or to put it differently, love is a sufficient condition for willingness to forgive.

> *Biblical Constraint 1* (BC1) – if S loves T, then S is at least willing to forgive T (i.e., where there's a context for forgiveness).

As we continue on in Matthew's text we find the following passage dealing explicitly with forgiveness just on the heels of the Lord's Prayer:

> For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.[8]

The sentential meaning[9] of this passage seems to be this: If A forgives B, then God will forgive A, and if A does not forgive B, then God will not forgive A. That is, each person's forgiveness of others is biconditionally related to God's forgiveness of them. When we reach this passage, however, such a surface level reading runs immediately into a problem. By assumption of the biblical text, God loves everyone. But if God loves everyone and BC1 is correct, then God is at least *willing* to forgive everyone, even those who are in some sense enemies of God.

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[8] Matt 6:14-15.
[9] For the distinction between sentential meaning and speaker meaning, see H.P. Grice, "Meaning." *The Philosophical Review* 66.3 (July 1957): 377-388.

When considering Matt 6:14-15 in light of this, then, we would do well to notice that whether or not God successfully forgives someone (i.e. whether or not God forgives someone in a way which, say, successfully brings about some degree of reconciliation with that person) need not constrain God's *willingness* to forgive. Thus, a consistent and charitable way of understanding this Matthean passage (in light of the previous one) with the goal of establishing its biconditional claim would be as follows:

> If we forgive those who have wronged us, then we will be in the appropriate psychic state (or relational state) to be *successfully forgiven* by God. But God is always *willing* to forgive us (cf. Matt 5:43-47). Therefore, if we forgive those who have wronged us, God will forgive us.[10]

On the other hand, if we do *not* forgive those who have wronged us, then we will *not* be in the appropriate psychic state (or relational state) to receive *successful forgiveness* from God. Consequently, despite God's willingness to forgive in this instance, God will not successfully forgive us.

As a result of this reading, then, the problem of fitting together both Jesus' teaching concerning love for enemies and his warning about God's forgiveness of us being conditional on our forgiveness of others is resolved. However, a theological worry still lurks in the background, for if God's forgiveness is conditional on *our* forgiveness of others, then it seems as if we are responsible for, or perhaps we even *merit*, forgiveness from God. Let us, then, allow ourselves a brief digression to attend to this concern.

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[10] It was suggested to me in conversation with Alan Torrance that perhaps we should understand Christ as our representative here, and thus, simply claim that *because* Christ forgives those who have wronged us and is our representative, so too will God forgive us for our sins. Such a strategy perhaps has merit in light of some strands of Reformed theology. However, I worry about the sufficiency of such a view in two ways: (i) it avoids the worrisome implication of half the biconditional (i.e. that God does not forgive those who do not forgive others) by allowing that were Christ not our representative, then God would not forgive those persons; but if BC1 is correct, this would imply that God is not perfectly loving; (ii) such an explanation does not do enough to explain *why* God does not forgive those who do not forgive others. My way of reading this text makes it such that God remains *willing* to forgive because the reason God does not forgive is due to something in *human persons* and not God's lack of love. Despite these reservations, there is something right about this way of thinking about Christ's vicarious humanity. Indeed, I endorse a version of such a view on my *expanded sacrificial model* of atonement, found in chapter 4.

Pelagianism, in the Christian theological tradition, is partly the claim that post-lapsarian human beings are capable of choosing the good in the absence of divine aid.[11] That is, on such a position, it is possible for human persons to be ultimately responsible for the actualization of some good state of affairs independent of God's grace. Given its status as heretical in the tradition, then, it would be helpful to see how the above interpretation of Matthew 6:14-15 is not committed to Pelagianism. Let us state the anti-Pelagian Constraint as follows:

> (*APC*) – No fallen human individual is able to cause or will any good, including the will of her coming to saving faith, apart from the grace of God.[12]

If we are to satisfy this constraint, the key is to identify what is meant by the phrase 'apart from the grace of God'. Someone could reasonably interpret this *grace* as merely necessary for a post-lapsarian human person to will the good or as both necessary *and* sufficient.[13] Theological determinists[14] would likely fall into the latter camp (i.e., those who claim that the grace involved is both necessary and sufficient for willing the good) while proponents of libertarian freedom will restrict themselves to the mere necessary condition claim. In what follows, I assume the libertarian approach.[15]

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[11] Pelagianism was deemed heretical by the Council of Carthage in 418 AD and the Council of Ephesus in 431 AD. For an interesting discussion of the some issues concerning philosophy of action and Pelagianism, see Kevin Timpe, *Free Will in Philosophical Theology* (New York, NY: Bloomsbury Press, 2013). For an overview of the history of the early creeds, see J.N.D. Kelly, *Early Christian Creeds, 3rd Edition* (New York, NY: Continuum International Publishing Group, 1972).

[12] Quoted from Timpe, *Free Will*, 13. In the discussion of this constraint that follows, I am moving very closely with Timpe's discussion in chapter 4. I depart slightly in the wording here from Timpe where I substitute 'the grace of God' for 'a unique grace' to avoid some scholastic overtones.

[13] There are other options, of course, but the two I've listed are the only two of real interest theologically.

[14] Among the names falling into the theological determinist camp are of course, Augustine (at least some of the time), Martin Luther, John Calvin, Jonathan Edwards, Sr., and so on. Thomas Aquinas could arguably be included here as well, although Eleonore Stump, *Aquinas* (New York, NY: Routledge Publishing, 2003) argues very carefully for a libertarian reading of Aquinas' views. See also, Oliver D. Crisp, "Libertarian Calvinism." In *Deviant Calvinism: Broadening the Reformed Tradition* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2014): 71-96, for a Calvinist strain that would affirm the necessary and sufficient condition for acts of salvation but only the necessary condition for many other sorts of good acts.

[15] Regrettably, I do not have sufficient space to discuss adequately the vexing perennial issues surrounding debates between compatibilists and libertarians. For a brief *Brave New World*-inspired thought experiment that displays forcibly my reasons for rejecting a compatibilist understanding of freedom, see Peter van Inwagen, *The Problem of Evil* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006): 76-78; for a discussion concerning

Let us begin by noting that Pelagius assumed that God's continually giving to us human nature was itself a type of grace, and thus, in a broad understanding of grace, Pelagius held that God's grace was necessary for any willing of the good on the part of a human. However, this was not the sort of grace at issue, for as Augustine claimed *contra* Pelagius, God's gracious gift of human existence was insufficient for willing the good.[16] Rather, an additional grace to overcome the effects of the Fall was necessary, a grace that on the view presented here was in a sense *cooperative*.

But it would be a mistake to immediately claim that such a view denies that God's grace is *monergistic*.[17] To say that grace is monergistic is to claim that there is only *one* active agent involved in instances of good works. Such a view is consistent with the claim above that there is a *sense* in which the grace given by God to human persons to will the good is cooperative. To see why, consider the following.

Suppose I am teaching my son, Caspian, algebra. My teaching is very *active* insofar as I am bringing about the state of learning in my son. However, the state of learning in Caspian is not active, but rather, *passive*.[18] That is, he is not (let us suppose) contributing positively to the state of affairs at which I aim; namely, his mastery of algebra. Nevertheless, Caspian *could* disrupt my brilliant pedagogical exercise. He could get up and leave to practice his pitching stance, tap dance, begin singing anthems from *The Sound of Music*, etc. All of these actions are ways in which he could interrupt the success of my teaching endeavors. But let us suppose that he does not do this, but rather, he remains

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reasons to think that biblical data underdetermines the issue of compatibilism versus libertarianism (i.e. for those who take scripture as a potential source for such metaphysical theses), see Kenneth Keathley, *Salvation and Sovereignty: A Molinist Approach* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing, 2010): 16-41. For an excellent collection of cutting edge research on how free will dovetails with concerns central to theism, see Kevin Timpe and Daniel Speak, *Free Will & Theism: Connections, Contingencies, and Concerns* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

[16] Timpe, *Free Will,* 54.

[17] For similar thoughts, see chapter 4 of Keathley, *Salvation and Sovereignty*.

[18] Let us stipulate that what I've said is accurate for there are other models that make precise the case. However, I think that the teaching model above helps us see clearly what is happening so long as we let our imaginations do a bit of work.

passive. In such a case, I am the only one working and thus, the activity of learning as described is a *monergistic* one. Of course, it is also cooperative insofar as my son *could* prevent learning from occurring. However, it depends on the *lack* of any contribution from him, and so, is cooperative in a very weak sense; that is, a sense consistent with the exercise remaining monergistic.

And with this, we bring our theological digression to a close. We embarked upon it in order to demonstrate that the interpretation offered above of Matt 6:14-15 does not commit us to either Pelagianism or any robust sense in which humans are ultimately due approbation for any good they bring about. Having shown this, then, let us turn to further texts that shed light on the biblical understanding of forgiveness.

The next significant passage of interest is Matt 18:21-35 where we find Jesus telling his disciples to forgive "Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times," followed by the parable of the unforgiving servant. It's worth noting that Jesus' utterance of 'seventy-seven times' plausibly echoes the words of Lamech in Gen 4:23b-24:

> I have killed a man for wounding me, a young man for striking me. If Cain is avenged sevenfold, truly Lamech seventy-sevenfold.

The effect of the echo is to highlight a contrast.[19] The disciple of Jesus is to be characterized by forgiveness rather than by vengeance, as exemplified by Lamech. Thus, handing over of the unforgiving servant to be tortured in the subsequent parable illustrates starkly the seriousness with which forgiveness, mercy and love are taken in Matthew's gospel. Forgiveness is not a mere peripheral subject, but rather, at the heart of what it is to be a disciple.

Next, consider the particularly interesting case of Judas Iscariot, of whom it is prophesied, "It would have been better for that one not to have been born" (Matt 26:24).

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[19] Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2016): 124-125.

The scene in which Christ is depicted as uttering this concerning Judas is, of course, the Lord's Supper. Interestingly, in this same passage, Christ claims, "I tell you, I will never again drink of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom" (Matt 26:29). It is worth asking whether the referent of 'you' in Christ's words is intended to include Judas, who is presumably still present, or not. For there are two additional points of note in Matthew's gospel that render the answer to such a question less straightforward.

First, Christ's claim that it would have been better for Judas not to have been born leaves unspecified the *sense* in which it would have been better. For instance, we could understand that as a claim about *all-things-being-equal* value or *all-things-considered* value. Although the passage is most often read as Jesus making a claim about the latter sort of value, it is difficult to see what sort of argument might be offered in favor of an *all-things-considered* interpretation over the logically weaker alternative interpretation.

Second, in Matt 27:3-4 we find Judas returning to the high priests and repenting of his betrayal of Jesus (μεταμελομαι). Although someone might argue that this form of repentance is not genuine (perhaps reserving 'μετανοεω' for that purpose[20]), such a claim would need to explain why Jesus criticizes the chief priests and elders for not repenting with 'μεταμελομαι' in Matthew 21:32.[21] Was Jesus' criticizing the chief priests for failing to disingenuously repent? Surely not. Jesus was criticizing the chief priests for failing to *actually* repent, and so, it would be reasonable to take Judas' repentance as genuine as well. And if such speculation is indeed textually permissible, one might wonder whether forgiveness might be offered to one such as Judas.

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[20] (1) D.R.A. Hare, *Matthew: Interpretation* (Louisville: John Knox, 1993): 314; (2) Anthony Bash, *Forgiveness and Christian Ethics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007): 82-83.

[21] Dorothy Jean Weaver, "'What is that to us? See to it yourself' (Mt 27:4): Making atonement and the Matthean portrait of the Jewish chief priests," *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 70.1 Art. #2703, 8 pages. http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/hts.v70i1.2703: 7fn54.

Let us now turn to the gospel of Mark, where we encounter almost immediately the notion that John the Baptist's "baptism of repentance [is] for the forgiveness (ἄφεσιν) of sins" (Mk 1:4). What is significant in this passage is the link forged between baptism and forgiveness of sins. This link, upon reflection, seems to be contingent, both on philosophical grounds as well as theological ones. Philosophically speaking, most instances of forgiveness just do take place without any sort of baptismal rite. Theologically speaking, if we are to take seriously the idea that there was forgiveness of sins through the Levitical priesthood, then there were clear instances of forgiveness *sans* baptism as well.[22] So why then do we have this link in the synoptic gospels?

The first thing to notice in Mark is the quotation of Isaiah 40:3, which is extended in the Lukan parallel to include verses 4-5 as well. This quotation serves to communicate the *prophetic* significance of John's ministry and connects his baptism with a proclamation that those who would undergo it are the true Israel. In the minds of John's audience, forgiveness of sins would normally come through the work of Temple. And so, John presents his baptism as an alternative source of the benefits usually available to the people elsewhere.[23] On this way of thinking, then, the connection between baptism and forgiveness of sins is indeed contingent, but some rite or other seems needed for some sort of purpose connected with forgiveness. In other words, such passages provide the following constraint:

> *Biblical Constraint 2* (BC2) – forgiveness must be consistent with the need for some sort of cleansing rite or practice (e.g. baptism or cultic sacrifice).

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[22] To be fair, we would not have forgiveness *sans* washing with water since priests and various other participants in sacrificial rituals would wash themselves in baths. However, the mode of John's baptism and these sort of purifying rituals are clearly different. For a discussion of the washing ritual see Roy Gane, *Cult and Character: Purification Offerings, Day of Atonement, and Theodicy* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2005), 181-185.

[23] For an interesting discussion of this prophetic model, see (i) N.T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996): 160-162 and (ii) Robert L. Webb, *John the Baptizer and Prophet: A Socio-Historical Study*. JSNTSS vol. 62 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991).

A brief remark on BC2: someone might think that requiring a truly repentant person to engage in some sort of further rite would be to make forgiveness *conditional* on something the person does. This is mistaken, for whether or not such rites make forgiveness conditional depends on the purpose of the rite. If the rite were, for instance, a way for the wrongdoer to offer a gift of gratitude, let's say, to the one forgiving them, then the rite would not thereby render forgiveness conditional. Only if forgiveness could not be given *until* the rite had been carried out would it be rightly called conditional. Moreover, if the sacrifice were to provide something *other than* forgiveness for moral wrong, like an opportunity for ritual purity or cleansing, then no worry about consistency would even arise.

Next, in Mark 2:5, we find a paralytic who is taken by (at least) four friends to Jesus for healing. In response to this, Jesus, on account of *their* faith, tells the paralytic that his sins are forgiven.[24] Thus, we have another constraint from the biblical witness:

> *Biblical Constraint 3* (BC3) – Possibly, *S* can be forgiven by *T* on account of the faith of persons *U, V, W…none of which are the same person as S or T.*

Within the same scene, we next find the scribes and Pharisees complaining that Jesus has committed blasphemy by declaring that the paralytic's sins are forgiven rather than, say, praying to God for such forgiveness. After all, "Who can forgive sins but God alone?" (Mk 2:7b - translated more literally, 'the one God' calling to mind the Shema).[25] The rhetorical question, of course, invites an answer of "No one, including this man, Jesus". Without digressing into a lengthy Christology or defense of Jesus's divinity, let us

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[24] It's worth pointing out that this passage is ambiguous due to the referent of 'their'. However, as the sentence is constructed, the paralytic seems to be set apart from the referent of 'their'. So although it is possible that Mark is teaching that the paralytic's sins are forgiven on account of his faith *as well as* the faith of his friends, the more natural reading is one that allows for forgiveness through the faith of his friends.
[25] Cf. Richard Bauckham, "Markan Christology according to Richard Hays: Some Addenda" *Journal of Theological Interpretation (forthcoming).*

just say that this passage and others strongly suggest that there is a sense in which fundamentally it is God who offers forgiveness and not any given human being.[26]

> *Biblical Constraint 4* (BC4) – Fundamentally, God (i.e. not humans) forgives sin.

Before proceeding further, it is worth pausing to ask what it means to say that God forgives sins[27], for when describing the context for forgiveness, we suggested that it was *wrongdoing* and *wrongdoers* that served as the objects of forgiveness. Are we to take such terms (i.e. 'wrongdoing' and 'sin') as synonymous, or should we keep them separate?

For what it is worth, this seems clear at least: moral wrongdoing is sin. However, moral wrongdoing that results in a need for forgiveness, in cases not characterized by blameworthy negligence, involves some sort of intentionality to commit the wrong. Thus, if someone named Andrew, for instance, steals a piece of fruit unintentionally (e.g., because someone slips it into his pocket without him knowing on the way out of the market), then Andrew does not need to be forgiven. He has a good explanation for why he is not blameworthy; namely, that he was manipulated by someone. Yet clearly, Levitical law includes under the category of *sin* excusable (i.e., not morally blameworthy) wrongdoings or transgressions of the Law:

> The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, Speak to the people of Israel, saying: When anyone sins unintentionally in any of the LORD's commandments about things not to be done, and does any one of them…[28]

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[26] See Daniel Kirk, *A Man Attested By God: The Human Jesus of the Synoptic Gospels* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm.B. Eerdmans Publishing Co, 2016) for someone who would dispute that the above passage has the implications for divinity normally attributed to it. For my purposes, however, his understanding of such passages has no implication that we should reject the idea that God is fundamentally the granter of forgiveness, something with which he could, for all he has written, agree as far as I know.

[27] Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God*, 268-274, claims that the notion of forgiveness of sins has "tended to focus on the piety…or the abstract theology…of Jesus' hearers and/or the early church" (268). He then goes on to claim that "*Forgiveness of sins is another way of saying 'return from exile'*" (*ibid., italics in original*). This may be right as far as it goes, but even if talk of forgiveness of sins was to bring to mind return from exile in the minds of second-temple Jewish readers, it hardly follows that the *action of forgiving sins* is identical to the action of leading Israel out of exile.

[28] Lev 4:1-2. See also 4:13, 22, 27.

Thus, the categories of sin and moral wrongdoing are not coextensive. So how are we to explain this divergence? One way to do so is to think of moral and non-moral forgiveness instances as analogous to legal contexts of *strict liability* and *mens rea* conditions.[29] When someone intentionally violates a law (i.e., they satisfy a *mens rea* condition), they can incur a greater penalty than they would in cases of strict liability. The reason is that in cases of strict liability, the guilty party simply owes a debt no matter their intentions in the case. For example, if Karen were to damage her neighbor's property, then assuming a strict liability law is in place, Karen would owe some form of payment to her neighbor whether or not she damaged the property intentionally. Forgiveness in strict liability cases is possible, of course, but the type of forgiveness involved is that of the forgiveness of debts. Plausibly the forgiveness of sins will involve strict liability conditions that are created on the basis of the *covenant* established between the people of Israel and their God. And, of course, the only person who could forgive Israel for upholding its part of the covenant would be the other party involved in that covenantal arrangement; namely, YHWH. Thus,

> *Biblical Constraint 5* (BC5) – Forgiveness is in some sense appropriate *outside of* moral contexts.[30]

As a second implication of the Leviticus passages mentioned above, it is clear that corporate bodies, such as the people of Israel or Fallen Humanity[31], can be forgiven. Indeed, such a concept is not entirely foreign to our modern context in which business

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[29] See Jonathan Kvanvig, *Rationality and Reflection,* chapter 3 on excusability and variations on these sorts of legal distinctions.

[30] This biblical constraint is especially difficult for bringing together contemporary accounts of forgiveness in philosophy and the biblical texts since such a claim seems straightforwardly false. I believe we can make sense of the consistency of these views, however, once we begin to reflect on the relationship between forgiveness, atonement, and original sin's effect on human nature. See chapters 3 and 4 of this thesis.

[31] See Oliver D. Crisp, "Original Sin and Atonement." In *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophical Theology,* Eds. Thomas P. Flint and Michael C. Rea (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009): 430-451.

corporations can be forgiven for various offenses. Thus, it is unproblematic to allow the following,

> *Biblical Constraint 6* (BC6) – at least one of the relata involved in forgiveness may be a corporate body.[32]

Now, let us turn to one of the most fascinating discussions of forgiveness in the New Testament concerning blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. Following the accusation of the scribes that he was casting out demons by the power of Beelzebub, Jesus says,

> Truly I tell you, people [i.e. translating 'τοισ υιοισ των ανθρωπων'] will be forgiven for their sins and whatever blasphemies they utter; but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit can never have forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin.[33]

Prima facie, this series of verses is self-defeating, for the claims seem to be (put in logical form):

(1) $\forall x \forall y (\text{Blasphemes}(x, y) \rightarrow \Diamond \text{Forgiven}(x))$; and

(2) $\forall x (\text{Blasphemes}(x, \text{HS}) \rightarrow \neg \Diamond \text{Forgiven}(x))$[34]

Of course, we must assume that such a reading would be mistaken on grounds of charity. The most obvious way of avoiding the worry of contradiction, then, is to simply assume that blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is an exception to the rule. Yet, in light of our earlier reflections in Matthew 6, we must further ask, for what *reason* forgiveness is not possible for those who blaspheme against the Holy Spirit? Is the reason that God is unwilling, or is there something intrinsic to that sort of blasphemy which prevents forgiveness from achieving its aim of full reconciliation between persons?

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[32] This biblical constraint does not commit us to any particular ontology of groups. Forgiveness of a corporate body might just reduce to forgiveness of all the individuals that make up that body. For an interesting paper on atonement concerning corporate forgiveness, see Joshua Thurow, "Communal Substitutionary Atonement," *Journal of Analytic Theology* 3 (2015): 47-69.

[33] Mk 3:28-30.

[34] Pretty quickly, you can derive the contradiction. Instantiate the variable 'x' with '*c*', where this names Caiaphas, and let 'HS' instantiate the variable 'y'. Then suppose Blasphemes(c, HS) is true. Then by employing *modus ponens* on a universal instantiation of (1) and (2), we get *both* $\Diamond$Forgiven(c) & $\neg\Diamond$Forgiven(c); that is, an explicit contradiction.

First, it is important to understand that the Holy Spirit is the sign of membership in the New Covenant. Paul, for instance, tells us in Ephesians that the Christians in Ephesus "were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit," which "is the pledge of [their] inheritance toward redemption as God's own people" (Eph 1:13-14). Thus, a rejection of the Holy Spirit is a rejection of an invitation to be grafted into God's people. To understand such a passage as teaching that forgiveness is conditional will be accurate, but only in the way outlined earlier with regard to the distinction between synergistic and monergistic grace. Willingness to forgive is present for all manner of sins in God who loves all persons unilaterally. However, it is possible for those such as the scribes to *prevent* forgiveness from successfully bringing about reconciliation. What is implied on that model, then, is not so much a deficiency in the God who forgives, but a deficiency in the lives of those whom he aims to forgive. Thus, this passage in Mark does not present an insurmountable difficulty for our understanding of forgiveness in the biblical text.

We next encounter Mark 4:11-12 in which Christ, while explaining to the disciples his reason for teaching in parables, offers the following befuddling allusion to Isaiah 6:

> And he said to them, "To you has been given the secret of the kingdom of God, but for those outside, everything comes in parables; in order that
> 'they may indeed look, but not perceive,
>   and may indeed listen, but not understand;
> so that they may not turn again and be forgiven.'"

If we follow the partial quotation from Isaiah 6 and pull in the fuller context of this passage, we find Isaiah's call as a prophet to Israel, where he is told to:

> Make the mind of this people dull,
>   and stop their ears,
>   and shut their eyes,
> so that they may not look with their eyes,
>   and listen with their ears,
> and comprehend with their minds,
>   and turn and be healed.[35]

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[35] Isaiah 6:10.

Following this strange command to dull the minds of the people of Israel to prevent healing, Isaiah then asks the Lord *how long* he is to do this. In other words, Isaiah did not assume that healing would be withdrawn forever from Israel, and sure enough, the Lord responds that Isaiah will continue this occluded prophetic function until all that remains is 'the holy seed' (vs.13). It is at this point, then, that restoration would come to Israel.

Given the wider context of Isaiah 6, then, we can assume some parallels between Isaiah and Jesus's use of this passage.[36] The most important of these parallels is that just as healing would not be withdrawn forever, neither would forgiveness be withdrawn forever from the house of Israel.[37] Thus, the passage is not teaching that God is unwilling to forgive many in Israel, but rather, that other considerations provide reason to push forgiveness later on in the timeline. Second, as the LXX brings out, Isaiah uses the word 'healed' (ιασομαι), which parallels Mark's 'forgiven' (αφεθη). Healing, however, is the result of forgiveness rather than forgiveness *strictly speaking*. Thus, it seems reasonable to take the meaning of this use of the word 'forgiveness' as referring to forgiveness which successfully brings about reconciliation rather than forgiveness that alone falls short of its aim.

Let us now turn our attention to the gospel of Luke, where Simon, a Pharisee having Jesus over as a guest in his house, internally questions the propriety of Jesus' willingness to let a sinner touch him. With supernatural perception, Jesus sees and responds to Simon's uncharitable thought with the following parable:

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[36] It is also worth pointing out that Mark's gospel begins with a quotation from Isaiah 40 (perhaps intentionally intertwined with the connected verse of Malachi 3:1) that should signal to the reader of the gospel that Isaiah and many other texts from the Hebrew Bible will have informed the writing of the gospel of Mark. Thus, to find several themes of Isaiah strewn throughout Mark should be unsurprising.

[37] Cf. Isaiah 14 and 49-50 for passages concerning the restoration of Israel with which the gospel writer is familiar. This understanding is also consistent, in my view, with how Paul understands the predicament of the Jews as he tackles the issue in the letter to the Romans. I discuss this at greater length in chapter 3.

> A certain creditor had two debtors; one owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. When they could not pay, he canceled the debts for both of them. Now which of them will love him more?" Simon answered, "I suppose the one for whom he canceled the greater debt." And Jesus said to him, "You have judged rightly." Then turning toward the woman, he said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave me no water for my feet, but she has bathed my feet with her tears and dried them with her hair. You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not stopped kissing my feet. You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. Therefore, I tell you, her sins, which were many, have been forgiven; hence she has shown great love. But the one to whom little is forgiven, loves little.[38]

This moving interaction with Christ tells us something not so much about the *nature* of forgiveness, but rather, something about its profound effects in the lives of those forgiven. When combined with the call in Lk 6:27-36 to love one's enemies, we see that in offering forgiveness to this "sinner" Jesus is enacting his own command. In other words, love for enemies is exemplified in Christ's reaching out to the marginalized by forgiveness in such a way that they are redeemed to greater love, which corresponds to the degree of sin from which they have been delivered.

Much later in Luke, we find another very interesting passage in which Jesus commands his disciples:

> Be on your guard! If another disciple sins, you must rebuke the offender, and if there is repentance, you must forgive. And if the same person sins against you seven times a day, and turns back to you seven times and says, 'I repent,' you must forgive.[39]

A couple of clarifying remarks concerning this passage. First, Jesus is careful to avoid putting an epistemic condition on when it is appropriate for his disciples to forgive. That is, Jesus does not say, "if the same person sins against you seven times a day, and you *have good reason to think* they have repented, you must forgive," but rather, he conditions forgiveness merely on the alleged penitent's *claim* to repent. Second, although this passage seems to be teaching that forgiveness is obligatory given repentance, notice

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[38] Lk 7:41-47; we see a similar scene (perhaps historically the same scene) in John's gospel (Jn. 12) followed in the next chapter (i.e. 13) by Jesus' washing the disciple's feet in an act of love for them. I take this to indicate that Mary of Bethany was an inspiration for Christ's choice of how to best model love to his disciples.
[39] Lk 17:3-4.

that Christ teaches this to his disciples in particular. It is of course consistent with this that Jesus intended this teaching to apply to anyone, whether or not they were one of his disciples, but it is not explicitly part of the teaching. Thus, we can offer the following constraint from the biblical witness:

> *Biblical Constraint 7* (BC7) – if someone is a disciple of Jesus, then they have an obligation[40] to forgive someone who expresses repentance.

Let us now turn to the final passage I wish to consider from the synoptic gospels; namely, the story of Zacchaeus in Lk 19:1-10. According to this passage, Jesus spots Zacchaeus in a tree and calls to him, saying he "must stay at [his] house" (Lk 19:5). Those who observed the scene complained of Jesus' association with a sinner such as Zacchaeus, but what is interesting to note is Zacchaeus's response to Jesus' publicly proclaimed intention to stay with him:

> Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, "Look, half of my possessions, Lord, I will give to the poor; and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will pay back four times as much." Then Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost."[41]

Zacchaeus's response to Jesus was a sign of repentance, i.e., the changing of his mind from carrying out thievery as a tax collector to giving to the poor and returning fourfold anything he had stolen. In seeing this response, we should ask which came first in the scene: forgiveness or repentance? It appears, on this reading of the passage, that Jesus exhibited forgiveness *first*, which then, as an effect, brought about Zacchaeus's repentance.

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[40] I do not wish to get into a discussion of the nature of the obligation involved. It is reasonable to take the obligation as a moral one, and I will simply assume that to be the case. It is worth emphasizing that the obligation to forgive does *not*, on my view, entail a correlating right for the wrongdoer to demand forgiveness. See Eleonore Stump, "God's Obligations," *Philosophical Perspectives* 6 (1992): 475-491 for a discussion of whether or not God might have obligations, and for a discussion of divine obligations and their relationship to correlative human rights see Wolterstorff, *Divine Discourse*, 95-129.
[41] Lk 19:8-10.

Although this reading of the Zacchaeus story represents a common one[42], the passage is not altogether unambiguous. For the verb (διδωμι: to give) in the present tense can indicate that one is presently *giving*, that is, in the habit of doing so. If the verb is taken this way, then Zacchaeus's response to Jesus is not one of repentance, but rather, one of explaining *why* he has been misrepresented as a "sinner" by those who grumbled at him in the streets. Jesus's claim to have brought salvation to Zacchaeus's house, then, means merely that Jesus is bringing back into the fold of the people of God someone who should never have been excluded in the first place.[43]

Clearly, the text permits both readings in this context. However, even if the correct reading is as depicted in the former interpretation, it is not clear that Jesus' forgiveness actually precedes Zacchaeus's repentance. And this is true simply for the fact that we are not told what has been going on in Zacchaeus's mind to motivate him to seek out Jesus. It is possible that Zacchaeus had already undergone a change of heart constitutive of repentance before Jesus recognized him in front of the crowds, and if so, then the text would not be rightly interpreted as teaching that forgiveness sometimes precedes repentance, (i.e., even if Zacchaeus' actions in verse 8 were a sign of his repentance). Thus, this text should not, I think, be used to formulate any constraints on our understanding of forgiveness that would be found in other less ambiguous texts.

As we turn to Acts, we see a number of ways of construing forgiveness and its relationship to repentance. Very early in the book, for instance, we find Peter telling the crowds at Pentecost to "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit"

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[42] E.g. Alan J. Torrance, "The Theological Grounds for Advocating Forgiveness", 56.
[43] See, for instance, Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God,* 257-258.

(Acts 2:38). How are we to understand the relationship between repentance, baptism, forgiveness and the baptism of the Holy Spirit here?

First, it is worth emphasizing that repentance is not often coupled with baptism as a condition of forgiveness in Acts. For instance, in Acts 3:19 we find Peter leaving out the call for baptism entirely, and in Acts 10:34-48, the Holy Spirit descends on the Gentiles who, upon hearing Peter's message, come to believe in Jesus. Given that the baptism of the Holy Spirit in Acts is a sign of membership in the New Covenant, then this passage strikingly reverses the order of baptism and forgiveness found in the earlier passage of Acts 2:38. Instead of having water baptism as a precursor to forgiveness, it becomes something which expresses the entrance of these Gentiles into the covenant.

Moreover, in Acts 26:20, we find Paul who, while preaching to King Agrippa, seems to make a distinction between genuinely repenting, on the one hand, and performing works *worthy* or expected of such genuine repentance, on the other hand. This distinction is particularly interesting because, in terms of the logic, it implies that, *in principle,* repentance and the works characteristic of a repentant individual can come apart. This allows us to see why baptism could be treated so closely alongside repentance as a means to the forgiveness of sins without, strictly speaking, being necessary for forgiveness. Baptism is one of these works *worthy* of genuine repentance which is not necessary, strictly speaking, for forgiveness to be achieved.

But then, how should we treat the relationship between repentance and forgiveness of sin? It seems that we should understand repentance, though not baptism, as sufficient for the forgiveness of sins.[44] The passages just surveyed above help us to see

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[44] Properly speaking, we should understand it as sufficient when conjoined with other claims constitutive of our background assumptions: (i) Jesus' sacrifice atoned in some sense for human sin, (ii) God is willing to forgive all sin and sinners; (iii) this repentance is genuine, and so on…Moreover, as we see in Acts 10:43 and 16:30-34, belief *in* Jesus is sufficient for forgiveness as well; that is, both repentance and belief-in are sufficient conditions for forgiveness. As I understand πιστεύω, it consists not in propositional belief at its

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why we should not take *both* baptism and repentance as jointly necessary for forgiveness, for they are not both everywhere present where forgiveness is evidenced in Acts. Moreover, we should not take forgiveness to be an *expression* of the forgiveness received from God as we have taken baptism, for the forgiveness we have in mind is forgiveness which successfully achieves in part its aim of reconciliation. And insofar as an individual's own rejection of God hinders full reconciliation, it is only repentance—i.e., the cessation of that rejection by a change of mind—which allows for forgiveness to have its effect.

1.2 Johannine Literature

As we turn to the writings of the apostle John, we will not often find forgiveness as an explicit theme, although it undoubtedly subsists in the background constantly. The theme of *love* as a new commandment for Christ's followers, for instance, is brought forward as the core of Christ's teaching, something which, as we saw earlier in the discussion of Matthew, plausibly entails an imperative of forgiveness.

One particularly significant passage from John's gospel is found near its end when Christ appears to the disciples after his resurrection and appearance to Mary Magdalene in order to give them the Holy Spirit. Immediately following this, Christ says: "If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained" (Jn 20:23). This passage exhibits a parallel structure to that seen in Matthew 6:14-15, and a similar treatment may be given to truly understand the verse.

First, it is a safe assumption that if someone has repented of sin, then the failure of an apostle to forgive that sin would be in conflict with love for the repentant one. But

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core, but rather, a settled disposition and orientation around a project or goal. In the case of Christian faith, the goal in question is imitation of and incorporation into Christ and his body. The relationship between faith or belief-in and repentance (*metanoia*) on this construal would be *very closely* tied together. For discussion of this notion of faith, see Jonathan L. Kvanvig, "Affective Theism and People of Faith," *Midwest Studies in Philosophy*, Volume 37, Ed. Howard Wettstein (2013): 109-128. Also see Jonathan L. Kvanvig, *Faith and Humility* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, *forthcoming*).

it is contrary to BC7 for an apostle in proper standing to fail to forgive a repentant sinner. Thus, the scope of this utterance includes, presumably, only those sinners who have not repented, for God would not uphold a pronouncement of unforgiven upon any person who had truly repented of sin.[45] And such a verdict is in keeping with First John 1:8-9:

> If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Now interestingly, as we continue reading in First John, the emphasis in passages concerning sin shifts from a focus on forgiveness to a focus on atoning sacrifices (i.e. *hilasterion*). For instance, we see this explicitly in the following passages:

> …and [Christ] is the atoning sacrifice ['ἰλαμός'] for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.[46]

> In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice ['ἰλαμὸν'] for our sins.[47]

What we see implicitly in these texts, then, is that atoning sacrifices aim to do away with sin alongside forgiveness. This does not alone tell us the exact relationship between forgiveness, atoning sacrifice, and sin; however, it provides sufficient reason to think that a non-trivial relationship exists. We will explore this relationship more in the discussion of the logic of reconciliation to be found in the next chapter.

1.3 Pauline Texts

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[45] Traditionally, the Roman Catholic teaching on this verse is that it is an allusion to the sacrament of penance. Cf. Bruce Vawter, "The Johannine Sacramentary," *Theological Studies* 17 (1956): 151-166. Bash, *Forgiveness: A Theology*, 118 claims regarding this verse, at this point in John's Gospel, it appears that God will not forgive those whom the apostles do not forgive. *We cannot square this circle*." The above interpretation I offer demonstrates that Bash's characterization of this passage as contradicting the fundamental teachings of scripture on forgiveness, however, is mistaken. Granted, to stick with Bash's metaphor, my interpretation does not square the circle. It merely connects the dots to complete the circle.
[46] 1 John 2:2.
[47] 1 John 4:10.

So now we turn to the Pauline texts where interpersonal forgiveness between human agents is not a recurring theme.[48] Paul does, however, have much to say about *divine*-human interpersonal forgiveness under the guise of justification, which will be evident as we proceed. Let us begin, then with his letter to the Romans.

> Or do you despise the riches of [God's] kindness and forbearance and patience? Do you not realize that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?[49]

In this context, Paul is talking with a hypothetical interlocutor, i.e. a hypocrite of sorts, who judges those who indulge in sinfulness, all the while practicing such things himself. Paul offers a warning to such a person that God's kindness is not a sign of divine favor, but rather, a grace that is supposed to lead the sinner to repentance.

Some authors take this to indicate that divine forgiveness precedes repentance since they assume divine forgiveness is expressed by God's kindness and forbearance. However, such an interpretation seems a bit strained at best since there are many ways in which God might be kind to us and forbear our sins, ways that do not involve forgiveness. Indeed, as we saw in our discussion of mercy in chapter 1, withholding punishment is neither necessary nor sufficient for forgiveness; and thus, God's withholding punishment (or the manifestation of God's wrath) is not necessarily an instance of God's forgiveness leading one to repentance.[50]

A few additional notes on Romans before moving to other Pauline texts. First, Romans is much more relevant to questions concerning the work of Christ on the cross and the scope of divine forgiveness's distribution than it is relevant to questions about the definition of forgiveness. As a result, a fuller treatment of Romans will be found in

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[48] Paul tends to use the word 'χαρίζομαι' when talking of forgiveness and thereby emphasizes the construal of forgiveness as a *gift*. He only discusses interpersonal forgiveness between human agents in 2 Cor. 2:7, 10, and 12:13. Elsewhere the focus is on divine forgiveness.

[49] Rom. 2:4.

[50] Cf. Bash, *Forgiveness: A Theology,* 129. I will concede that the full *expression* of repentance might be subsequent to forgiveness since the intention and initiation of the implementation of repentance is probably all that is needed to enable forgiveness.

chapter 3, where I discuss in detail whether there might be a biblically responsible understanding of divine justice as retributive.[51] Second, a common theme of Romans is the directing of God's wrath toward sinners (e.g. Rm. 12:19-21). Given what we have seen in the gospels and other parts of Romans[52], God's wrath must be understood as fundamentally motivated by love for creation rather than at odds with that love. Thus, whatever the explanation or object of God's wrath, God's having wrath must be consistent with God's willingness to forgive and desire for the *good* of sinners.

As we turn to the letters to the Corinthians, we are quickly met with a situation causing Paul extreme distress:

> [1]It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that is not found even among pagans…[3b]I have already pronounced judgment [4]in the name of the Lord Jesus on the man who has done such a thing. When you are assembled, and my spirit is present with the power of our Lord Jesus, [5]you are to hand this man over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord.[53]

Here we find Paul prescribing a particularly harsh sentence for a man engaged in sexual immorality; namely, to push that man out of the community to allow Satan to potentially destroy him. Whatever one thinks of the prescribed punishment, it is worth noting Paul's justification for this action: Paul aims that the man would be *saved* in the day of the Lord; that is, Paul hopes that implementing this punishment will be *good for* the man in the end.

If we turn to look at 2 Corinthians 2:5-11, we find Paul reflecting on the proper response to someone who had been expelled from the Corinthian community and had subsequently repented. Paul writes,

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[51] I argue that the answer is a clear 'no' and that penal substitution models of atonement must, consequently be construed as non-retributivist if they are to be plausible.

[52] E.g. Romans 1:16-17, which echoes Habakkuk 2:4 & Isaiah 50:7-8, both of which emphasize the *mercy* of God in hopes of bringing about restoration. Wrath, thus, seems (e.g. in Romans 1:18) directed at wrong*doing* rather than wrong*doers*, *per se*. But again, more on this in chapter 3.

[53] 1. Corinthians 5:1-5.

⁵But if anyone has caused pain, he has caused it not to me but to some extent—not to exaggerate it—to all of you. ⁶This punishment by the majority is enough for such a person; ⁷so now instead you should forgive and console him, so that he may not be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. ⁸So I urge you to reaffirm your love for him. ⁹I wrote for this reason: to test you and to know whether you are obedient in everything. ¹⁰Anyone whom you forgive, I also forgive. What I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, has been for your sake in the presence of Christ. ¹¹And we do this so that we may not be outwitted by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his designs.

There is no way for us to know with extreme confidence if the man spoken of in this passage is the same as the one to which Paul referred in First Corinthians 5; however, it is unnecessary to bother with that question for our purposes.[54] Rather, what is significant in this passage is that Paul assumes that forgiveness is compatible with someone who has received punishment. Someone might think, on the contrary, that to punish someone is to refrain from forgiving them. Perhaps this might sometimes be correct, but this passage indicates that such a view is not always the case. Thus, we have another biblical constraint:

> *Biblical Constraint 8* (BC8) – it is possible to punish someone for wrongdoing but subsequently forgive them for that same wrong.

More than one understanding of forgiveness is consistent with this constraint. For instance, someone might think that one way to satisfy the above constraint is to only punish a wrongdoer *in part* for their sinful behavior. Then, whatever punishment would normally remain due, that part could then be forgiven. Or alternatively, someone might think that forgiveness is not fundamentally about the foregoing of punishment. Nevertheless, making this constraint explicit forces us, when defining forgiveness, to explain under what circumstances it can be true.

As we move onto the letter of Ephesians[55] we find Paul connecting forgiveness of sin to Christ's atonement—"In him we have redemption through his blood, the

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forgiveness of our trespasses" (Eph. 1:7-8). Indeed, this shift from 'justification' to 'forgiveness' is jarring and might serve as a reason that some have questioned Pauline authorship of the letter.[56] In any case, however, it is significant that the author references a cultic background to forgiveness of sins.

Not only does Paul see forgiveness as the end of atonement in the letter to the Ephesians, but he also recognizes that the forgiveness of Christ is to be a *model* for our own moments of forgiveness. As he writes in Ephesians 4:32, "and be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving [χαριζόμενοι] one another, as God in Christ has forgiven [ἐχαρίσατο] you. This further emphasizes the centrality of forgiveness to living well under Christian precepts.

> *Biblical Constraint 9* (BC9) – No understanding of the forgiveness on Jesus' part is adequate if it does not permit us to take that forgiveness as a model for our own.

Although no explicit reference to forgiveness is to be found in the letter to the Philippians, there is one passage worth discussing in more detail; namely, Philippians 2. Here we find Paul exhorting the recipients of the letter:

> [3]Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves…Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, [6]who, though he was in the form of God,
>
> > did not regard equality with God
> > as something to be exploited [αρπαγμὸν],
>
> [7]but emptied himself,
>
> > taking the form of a slave,
> > being born in human likeness.

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the entire law might be summed up in "love your neighbor as yourself" as witnessed in many places (e.g. Romans 13:8, Galatians 5:14, 1 Corinthians 13, Ephesians 4:1-6, Philippians 2, Colossians 3:14, etc).

[56] For my purposes, I ignore the question of authorship and simply assume the authority of the remaining letters found in the Protestant canon. I assume this without argument since I write from a Protestant perspective. I'm aware of the complications of which canon is authoritative. However, I do not think there is a real problem for assuming the Protestant canon as authoritative since it is a modest collection of the texts, which leaves off, for example, 1 Enoch and the Apocrypha.

In this passage, Paul writes that Christians ought to "in humility regard others as better than" themselves and follows this normative claim with an example of how Christ embodied that humility. Christ did not exploit, or use for his own advantage, his equality with God, but rather, he acted as if he were not of equality with God by taking on the form [μορφήν] of a slave. The exegetical debate concerning both (1) how we should construe the 'form of God' and 'form of a slave' locutions[57] and (2) the nature of Christ's equality with God takes us further than is necessary for our purposes.[58] Instead, what is important for us to take away from this is that forgiveness of others should be consistent with humility, that is, with regarding others as better than ourselves.

Preserving this relationship between forgiveness and humility is not as easy as it might seem at first glance. Sometimes it is suggested, for instance, that forgiveness is a way in which victims might display their own superiority over their perpetrators, thereby re-establishing the dignity which had been taken away from them by their wrongdoers. In other words, on such an account of forgiveness, the act of forgiveness is important specifically because it overtly *exalts* the importance of the forgiver.[59]

Such an account of forgiveness, it seems, cannot fit with the appropriate sense of what it means to regard others as better than ourselves. Subsequent victimization must, of course, not be permitted by our understanding of forgiveness. However, the motivation for impeding such victimization must be consistent with humility and love, and therefore, we find an additional biblical constraint:

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[57] For interesting discussions on this, see Marcus Bockmuehl, "'The Form of God' (Phil. 2.6): Variations on a Theme of Jewish Mysticism." *Journal of Theoloogical Studies* n.s. 48 (1997): 1-23.

[58] For interesting discussions on this, see (i) Richard Bauckham, "The Worship of Jesus in Philippians 2:9-11" In *Where Christology Began*, Eds. R. P. Martin and B. Dodd (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1998): 128-139 & (ii) F. F. Bruce, *Philippians: A Good News Commentary* (San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row Publishers, 1983): 44-55.

[59] E.g. see Jean Hampton's contributions to the collaborative work, Jeffrie G. Murphy and Jean Hampton, *Forgiveness and Mercy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

Biblical Constraint 10 (BC10) – if *S* forgives *T*, *S* does not regard *T* as worse than *S*'s self.[60]

With this constraint, we come to the end of our discussion of the Pauline texts. Despite the paucity of explicit discussion regarding forgiveness in Paul's letters, we have identified a few elements of Paul's theological development. First, it is clear that love serves as the fundamental motivation for forgiveness of others as Paul sees it. Moreover, it is essential that we recognize Christ's life—i.e. his earthly ministry, death by crucifixion, burial, and resurrection—as a model for how we understand our own acts of forgiveness.[61] And lastly, forgiveness cannot be the sort of action that, by way of illocution (i.e. *in* the act of forgiving), communicates the superiority of the forgiver in a way that is inconsistent with Philippians 2. Thus, for Paul forgiveness is simultaneously loving, humble, and Christ-like.

1.4 The Remaining New Testament Texts

As we turn to the remaining portions of the New Testament[62], we are left without many texts with which to wrestle concerning forgiveness. Here we will only consider two, and those only briefly.

First, in James 5:13-20 we find an exceedingly interesting but simultaneously difficult passage concerning prayer, confession, and forgiveness of sins (among other things).

> [15]The prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise them up; and anyone who has committed sins will be forgiven. [16]Therefore confess your sins to one another and

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[60] I state the condition in the negative here because it is not clear to me that one must in the act of forgiving be regarding the wrongdoer as better. It might be that one's act of forgiveness is not regarding the wrongdoer as either better or worse because no comparative judgment is in mind at all. Nevertheless, I take it that the purest forms of forgiveness will issue from love and a realization that *all of us* need forgiveness; that is, a thought that surely encourages us to see each other in humility.

[61] See Richard B. Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ: The Narrative Substructure of Galatians 3:1-4:11, Second Edition* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2002) for a discussion of this aspect of Paul's thought.

[62] Although we won't look at them all, they are Hebrews, James, 1 Peter, 2 Peter & Jude.

pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective.

Despite the difficulty of the broader context, it seems straightforwardly clear that at the very least, the author of James is claiming that one way to deal with sin is to confess your past sins with others and to pray for one another. Thus, this passage, it seems, deals most straightforwardly with the practical outworking of salvation; i.e., sanctification in the church community. From this we can form yet another biblical constraint:

> *Biblical Constraint 11* (BC11) – forgiveness contributes to sanctification (i.e. spiritual healing).

Now, BC11 does not say anything about the *nature* of forgiveness, *per se*, but it does emphasize an important consideration. Forgiveness, when received, needs to be something which might inspire growth in Christ-likeness and virtue. Thus, whatever account of forgiveness we give must be able to explain, at least to some extent, how forgiveness motivates human agents to do good works.

When we turn to the letter of the Hebrews, we are confronted with a richly complex text, a text whose author aims to carefully analyze the work of Christ by way of the concepts of the Jewish worldview. This network of concepts includes deftly intertwined themes from the Psalms, Levitical priesthood, rituals of *yom kippur*, notions of a heavenly temple, interpretations of faith, and many other theologically dense themes. Thus, we find here further attestation of BC2 (i.e. the importance of consistency with the Levitical sacrificial system for understanding forgiveness) and the need for a more clearly understood concept of sin (i.e. as BC4 and BC5 indicate). What I have to say about forgiveness in the next section is consistent with the text of Hebrews, but due to its reliance on explicating Christ's atoning work, further discussion of Hebrews is reserved for chapters 3 and 4, which concern atonement.

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This brings us to the close of our survey of constraints from the biblical witness concerning the nature and definition of forgiveness. Thus, it is time we turn to some possible candidates for a definition of forgiveness and utilize our philosophical desiderata and biblical constraints as tools for the evaluation of the various candidates.

2. The Nature of Forgiveness

Let us begin our search for an adequate definition of forgiveness by recalling all of the desiderata and biblical constraints in summary form.

2.1 Philosophical and Biblical Constraints on Forgiveness: Summary

<u>Philosophical Desiderata</u>:

> D1) – A good definition of forgiveness should not force us to prescribe forgiveness in such a way that it encourages the perpetuation of bad behavior.
>
> D2) – Necessarily, and for all persons S and T, it is not the case that if S forgives T, then S fails to exhibit a sufficient degree of appropriate self-respect.
>
> D3) – Possibly, for any persons S and T and any morally wrong action A, if S forgives T for A, then T is no longer responsible for A.
>
> D4) – A definition of forgiveness that satisfactorily addresses the conflicting intuitions of being both able to and not able to forgive the dead will accrue significant value.
>
> D5) – It should be the case that for any agent, possibly, she can forgive (including, what is important in our case, God).

<u>Biblical Constraints</u>:

> BC1) – if S loves T, then S is at least willing to forgive T (i.e., where there's a context for forgiveness).
>
> BC2) – forgiveness must be consistent with the need for some sort of cleansing rite or practice (e.g. baptism or cultic sacrifice).
>
> BC3) – Possibly, S can be forgiven by T on account of the faith of persons $U, V, W…$*none of which are the same person as S or T.*
>
> BC4) – Fundamentally, God (i.e. not humans) forgives sin.

BC5) – Forgiveness is in some sense appropriate *outside of* moral contexts.

BC6) – at least one of the relata involved in forgiveness may be a corporate body.

BC7) – if someone is a disciple of Jesus, then they have an obligation to forgive someone who expresses repentance.

BC8) – it is possible to punish someone for wrongdoing but subsequently forgive them for that same wrong.

BC9) – No understanding of the forgiveness on Jesus' part is adequate if it does not permit us to take that forgiveness as a model for our own.

BC10) – if S forgives T, S does not regard T as worse than S's self.

BC11) – forgiveness contributes to sanctification (i.e. spiritual healing).

Allow me to briefly resolve some initial tension between two pairs of desiderata and constraints: (i) D2 and BC10 and (ii) D3 and BC2.

First, D2 and BC10 concern the following three concepts: (i) regard of self, (ii) regard of others, and (iii) self-respect. The tension between D2 and BC10 arises in part because self-respect seems to simply be a positive regard of self, and thus, it might appear as if D2 prescribes forgiveness precisely to elevate oneself such that the perpetrator is regarded as *worse* than oneself. And this is something BC10 indicates is not permissible on the Christian understanding.

There is one fundamental miss-step in this way of thinking, however, for to hold oneself in positive regard (i.e. to have some self-respect) does *not* entail that one fails to have similar respect for another. In other words, the judgment of self-respect need not be comparative, even in the act of forgiveness. Consequently, a good definition of forgiveness can allow that the forgiver maintains self-respect without additionally requiring that the forgiver regard the wrongdoer as worse than herself. Therefore, the tension between D2 and BC10 is merely apparent.

Next, consider D3 and BC2. D3 tells us that forgiveness is sufficient for the removal of moral responsibility, but BC2 tells us that forgiveness is *not* sufficient to rule out the need for some form of cleansing ritual.

This tension is also artificial. This is easy to see if we reflect on *what* is cleansed by the rituals in question (e.g. sacrifice). As becomes clear in our discussion of forgiveness and atonement together (i.e. in chapter 4), sacrifice does not deal with the problem of moral responsibility. Rather, it deals with ritual impurity, and thus, it is consistent for someone to hold to a definition of forgiveness that affirms the sufficiency of forgiveness to remove moral responsibility without thereby removing the need for some sort of cleansing rite to deal with the consequences of sin (i.e. in accordance with BC2). So let us turn to a few putative definitions of forgiveness.

2.2 Assessing Candidates for a Definition of Forgiveness

In this section, I consider three different models of forgiveness; namely, the foreswearing of resentment model[63], the forbearing of punishment model[64], and a Wolterstorffian model. After raising objections to the first two models, I defend the Wolterstorffian model and reflect on how it might satisfy *all* the above desiderata and biblical constraints.

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[63] Proponents of such a view include: (a) P.F. Strawson, "Freedom and Resentment," In *Perspectives on Moral Responsibility*, Eds. John Martin Fischer and Mark Ravizza (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1962); (b) P. Twambley, "Mercy and Forgiveness," *Analysis* 36.2 (1976): 84-90; (c) P. Lauritzen, "Forgiveness: Moral Prerogative or Religious Duty?" *The Journal of Religious Ethics* 15.2 (1987); (d) M. Holmgren, "Forgiveness and the Intrinsic Value of Persons," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 30.4 (1993); (e) Paul Hughes, "What is Involved in Forgiving?" *The Journal of Value Inquiry* 27 (1993): 331-340; (f) E. Garrard and D. McNaughton, "In Defence of Unconditional Forgiveness," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* (2003); (g) Murphy, *Getting Even*; (h) Stephen Darwall, *The Second-Person Standpoint: Morality, Respect, and Accountability* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006); and (i) Charles L. Griswold, *Forgiveness: A Philosophical Exploration* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

[64] Twambley, "Mercy and Forgiveness," presents a hybrid version of the resentment and waiving of a right to punish model by treating resentment as a type of punishment and suggesting that Butler's position is the waiving of one's rights to resentment. I keep the models separate in the above presentation, but of course, logical space permits many variations on what I delineate. Other proponents of this model are: (a) Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (Menston, England: The Scholar Press Limited (originally published in 1651), 1969); (b) Leo Zaibert, "The Paradox of Forgiveness," *Journal of Moral Philosophy* 6 (2009): 365-393

2.2.1 Foreswearing of Resentment

According to this model, *S* forgives *T* if, and only if, *S* foreswears resentment of *T* (and *S* and *T* satisfy the relevant constituents of a context of forgiveness in chapter 1, §3.1.1) for a *moral* reason.[65] That is, to forgive it is essential that the person forgiving, *S*, give up their ill feelings directed at *T* in a way that is morally intelligible. Before we can assess such a model, however, it is important to clarify a few more aspects of the view.

First, it is best to allow that resentment functions as a placeholder for any appropriate negative reactive attitude consistent with forgiveness.[66] Attempts to taxonomize emotions have been remarkably feeble at best, and as a result, theorists engaged in the study of emotion tend to prefer a family-resemblance model of emotions in order to engage in other areas of the study of emotion worthy of their attention.[67] Thus, we should allow that the emotion the foreswearing of which is, by hypothesis, necessary and sufficient for forgiveness might be identified as a range of a number of emotions.

Second, there is potential ambiguity in the idea that resentment 'is directed at *T*'. In the context of forgiveness, I allow that there are two objects of negative reactive attitudes, such as resentment: the action and the person. However, are we to understand *S'*s resentment of *T* to be directed at *all* of *T*? Perhaps it is not directed at *T*, *per se*, but

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[65] This tradition of models of forgiveness springs from Butler, *Fifteen Sermons*. For a nice summary of how the position has developed since Butler's sermons, see Ernesto V. Garcia, "Bishop Butler on Forgiveness and Resentment," *Philosophers' Imprint 11.10* (2011): 1-19. See Jeffrie G. Murphy and Jean Hampton, *Forgiveness and Mercy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988): 14-19 for some reasons for the "for a moral reason" qualification. For a quick argument: anyone could overcome resentment by being hit hard enough in the head that they become incapable of resentment. This chance occurrence should not suffice for forgiveness. The "moral reason" qualifier brackets out such strange examples.

[66] Cf. Macalester Bell, "Forgiving Someone for Who They Are (And Not Just What They've Done)," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 77.3 (2008): 625-658. Paul Hughes, "What is Involved in Forgiving?" argues that *moral anger* is an umbrella category of which resentment is a paradigmatic instance.

[67] For instance, various affections, like hunger, might be included in a definition of emotion on certain construals of what an emotion is. We need not be derailed by this issue, but for further study, see: (i) Annette Baier, "What Emotions Are About," *Philosophical Perspectives 4* (1990): 1-29 and (ii) Robert C. Roberts, *Emotions*.

rather, that part of *T* that is morally deficient. That is, perhaps resentment is directed at the vicious portions of *T's* character that led *T* to perform an immoral action. We must allow a range of responses to this question if we are to charitably assess the foreswearing resentment model.

With this in mind, then, let us begin assessing the model. The best way to see whether forswearing resentment might be definitionally adequate is to determine first, whether or not forswearing resentment is *sufficient* for forgiveness and second, whether or not forswearing resentment is *necessary* for forgiveness.

If forswearing resentment is sufficient for forgiveness, then it is impossible for us to describe a coherent model according to which someone might have forsworn resentment (for an adequate moral reason) towards a wrongdoer while *not* simultaneously forgiving that wrongdoer. Here is such a model.

> Suppose my colleague, Mitch, has taken to using my coffee without asking. He knows I would not approve, and so, I resent his minor theft when I find out about it. But then, Mitch repents to me and promises to start brewing his own coffee, and as a result, I give up my resentment in whole. Nevertheless, for the next few weeks, I continue to search my coffee stash, weighing the precise number of grams of coffee at the beginning and end of each day and carefully check the drawers of his desk just to make sure he has not taken some without my knowing.

In this case, have I forgiven Mitch? Although the forswearing of resentment seems to be a step in the right direction, the actions I subsequently take with respect to Mitch and my coffee seem intuitively in conflict with forgiveness. Thus, the case seems to demonstrate the insufficiency of the forswearing of resentment for forgiveness.

In response, someone might suggest that the sorts of actions I take in the example that are, by hypothesis, claimed to *not* flow from continued resentment are not psychologically plausible. Indeed, they might reply, such actions are strong evidence that

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I *do* continue to resent Mitch for his crimes. Perhaps no other emotion might account for such behavior.

This objection seems mistaken, however, since our definition of forgiveness should not depend on human psychology alone. Perhaps there are possible creatures that would engage in this sort of behavior without resentment present, and if they are possible, their behavior seems indicative, to me, of their *lack* of forgiveness.

 Whether or not the above counterexample is persuasive, it seems clear that forswearing of resentment is not *necessary* for forgiveness, for if it were necessary, then it would be impossible for there to be an instance of forgiveness *without* the forswearing of resentment. This condition, however, is inconsistent with D5 (i.e. It should be the case that for any agent, possibly, she can forgive), for D5 entails that if there is an agent who essentially lacks emotions of the relevant sort, they should still be able to forgive. Thus, we have a strong reason to deny that the forswearing of resentment is constitutive of forgiveness.

So forswearing resentment for an adequate moral reason is neither necessary nor sufficient for forgiveness. Nevertheless, forswearing resentment is characteristic of forgiveness as it is found in most cases. For any agent that normally responds to being wronged by developing resentment toward a wrongdoer or an immoral action, that person will probably *not* forgive without forswearing resentment. Thus, I suggest that forswearing resentment is necessary for forgiveness *on the condition that* the agent who is supposed to forgive in a given case has *formed* resentment in response to the wrongdoing and is capable of overcoming that resentment. I still maintain that forswearing resentment is insufficient for forgiveness, however, even with such agents.

2.2.2 Forbearing Punishment Model

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According to this model, *S* forgives *T* if, and only if, *S* forbears punishing *T* for wronging *S*. In other words, choosing *not* to punish someone for a wrong is necessary and sufficient for forgiveness. Again, let us clarify a few things before evaluating this position.

First, it is worth clarifying the nature of punishment on this model. Generally, punishment for this model of forgiveness is a technical term of sorts. Sometimes we loosely use the term 'punishment' to refer to suffering that a wrongdoer undergoes which is simply the natural outworking of their wrongdoing. For instance, someone might say that vicious actions are their own punishment since to indulge in vice is to further inculcate that vice in oneself. This notion of punishment is *not* what is meant here because the punishment involved in the forbearing punishment model is suffering imposed from outside of the wrongdoer.

Second, we should allow that the forbearing punishment model presupposes that the source of punishment is an authoritative source, but we should also bear in mind that there may be multiple authoritative punishers. For instance, a parent might authoritatively punish a child or a state might authoritatively punish a convicted felon. As long as *some* punishment is not implemented by *an* authority on the model, it might count as a putative case of forgiveness, even if a *different* authority does implement punishment in a given case. In other words, I might forgive you for wronging me and forbear punishment of the wrong that I otherwise would have implemented, despite the fact that the courts have sentenced you with some sort of punishment.

Next, whatever punishment is, it should involve some sort of harsh treatment imposed as a result of the perceived moral wrongdoing.[68] The harsh treatment might be

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[68] I say 'perceived moral wrongdoing' since I might actually punish someone but do so mistakenly. Punishment dished out on the basis of a false accusation still counts as punishment, rather than something else misleadingly called 'punishment'.

physical pain, but other sources of harm would suffice as well (e.g. solitary confinement). Additionally, however, we should not only require that someone who forgives refrains from *successfully* punishing a wrongdoer, and there are at least two qualifications for the model in light of this. First, plausibly a victim who *tries but fails* to punish a wrongdoer should not count as having forgiven the wrongdoer. Rather, someone has only forgiven on this model if they have chosen to forbear even an attempt to punish. Second, a victim might have a false belief about what would harm the perpetrator. For instance, a masochist might enjoy receiving ten lashes even though the lashes are believed to be *painful* (and therefore an appropriate punishment) by the authority implementing the punishment. But no one should count as forgiving a wrongdoer by unwittingly satisfying a wrongdoer's deviant desire for what would be painful for most other people. Indeed, this would constitute a special case in which someone tries but fails to punish, and again, this scenario should not count as one of forgiveness.

With those caveats in mind, we can demonstrate that the forbearing of punishment is neither necessary nor sufficient for forgiveness.[69] First, it is not sufficient. Given that punishment involves an attempt to *harm* the perpetrator, someone might easily refrain from punishing the perpetrator. For instance, they may merely resent the individual in question without allowing that resentment to overtly manifest in their behavior toward the perpetrator. Moreover, they might choose not to punish the perpetrator for any number of reasons. Yet it seems clear that such resentment is sometimes inconsistent with having forgiven a wrongdoer, and so, even if punishment is not implemented, forgiveness may not have occurred.

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[69] See Brandon Warmke, "Two Arguments Against the Punishment-Forbearance Account of Forgiveness," *Philosophical Studies* 165 (2013): 915-920 to whom my critique above is due.

Second, the forbearance of punishment is not necessary for forgiveness. This is most easily seen by the fact that punishment might be implemented for a number of reasons.[70] A common case with which we are all quite familiar would be whenever a child wrongs their parent, is forgiven by the parent, but for the good of the child[71] punishment is implemented. Most parents have had such an experience and would agree that they had forgiven their child despite implementing punishment. Therefore, punishment forbearance is not necessary for forgiveness.

So, punishment forbearance is neither necessary nor sufficient for forgiveness. Sometimes, however, punishment forbearance is a natural expression of forgiveness. When we see that someone is truly repentant, we might offer forgiveness and refrain from punishing them because we see that the punishment is unnecessary for bringing about moral reform (i.e. perhaps because they have reformed already in repenting). However, context seems to dictate when refraining from punishment might or might not follow from forgiveness.

It is also worth noting that the forbearing punishment model does not allow us to make good sense of how we might forgive the dead. We are forced to forbear punishment once a wrongdoer has died, but surely that would not be sufficient for forgiveness. Thus, D4 does not seem to be adequately addressed. Additionally, sometimes punishment should be utilized to prevent the perpetuation of bad behavior (e.g. implementing a sentence of five minutes in time out). Thus, the forbearing punishment model seems to conflict with D1 as well. And of course, BC8 (i.e. it is possible to punish someone for wrongdoing but subsequently forgive them for that same wrong) is in direct tension with the forbearing punishment model. Thus, it seems clear

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[70] See chapter 3 for a more thorough discussion of the justification of punishment.
[71] Or to be neutral with respect to a theory of the justification of punishment, we might think the parent still implements punishment on the child for retributive reasons.

that, given our various constraints on the adequacy of a definition of forgiveness, the forbearing punishment model falls well short.

2.2.3 Wolterstorffian Model

In *Justice in Love*, however, we find a very promising definition of forgiveness developed by Nicholas Wolterstorff. To understand the definition, however, it is important to recall the nature of an excuse. Suppose Nikabrik steals a glass of water from Trufflehunter, an action which is morally wrong under normal circumstances, but that Nikabrik steals the glass in order to prevent Trufflehunter from being poisoned (a fact of which Trufflehunter was initially unaware). When Trufflehunter subsequently becomes aware of Nikabrik's reason for the theft, Trufflehunter understands that the reason *for* Nikabrik (i.e. from Nikabrik's perspective) morally justified the action. As a result, Trufflehunter does not come to see the act of theft as indicative that Nikabrik's character is morally flawed in some way. Nikabrik did not harm Trufflehunter, but rather, Nikabrik rescued Trufflehunter from harm. Thus, Trufflehunter does not forgive Nikabrik but rather, excuses Nikabrik (and presumably goes on to thank Nikabrik) for the salvific act that had the appearance of being theft.

How, then, do we treat the action of someone who needs to be excused rather than forgiven? We treat that action as distant from them in the following sense. Initially, we mistakenly view their action as wronging us. When we see someone's action as wronging us, we take it as evidence that they have a morally debased character in some relevant respect. But when we learn that we misconstrued the situation, our evidence for their character as morally debased is undermined. Thus, we cease to treat that action as evidence that they have a morally debased character and instead treat the action as reasonable.

An alternative way of explaining what is happening in an excuse is to say that when we excuse someone, we cease to treat their action as a part of their moral history and instead treat it as part of their personal history.[72] A personal history is (at least) the set of all true atomic propositions about a person.[73] A moral history is a subset of someone's personal history that contains "that ensemble of things […which determine their] moral condition."[74]

Now, Wolterstorff's definition cannot be *quite* right if the case of Nikabrik and Trufflehunter counts as a case of excuse, for technically the action to which Trufflehunter initially took offense did not cease, for Trufflehunter, to inform Nikabrik's moral history after being excused. Instead, it informed Nikabrik's moral history *positively* rather than negatively. That is, instead of functioning as evidence that Nikabrik was morally bad in some way it functioned as evidence that Nikabrik was morally good in some way. Thus, Wolterstorff's description of an excuse offered in the previous paragraph should be modified.

To modify Wolterstorff's account, we can distinguish two subsets of a moral history: (i) *bad* moral history and (ii) *good* moral history, where (roughly) the members of each subset will be either propositional evidence that a person is morally bad or propositional evidence that a person is morally good. Once we do this, to excuse someone is better construed as *ceasing to take an action as part of an agent's bad moral history*,

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[72] Wolterstorff, *Justice,* 170-171.

[73] I say 'at least' since I have not wish to commit to the view that a personal history is *merely* propositional. That may very well be false. But it is surely *partly* propositional. I say all true *'atomic'* propositions since that qualifier allows us to exclude from the personal history, propositions such as <Jonathan was typing on January 15, 2018 OR the sky is blue>. An atomic proposition is just a proposition that cannot be broken down into further components with their own respective truth values.

[74] Ibid., 170

and we leave open whether or not an agent subsequently takes that action as merely constitutive of the excused agent's personal history or good moral history.[75]

We are now in a position to understand a Wolterstorffian definition of forgiveness. As Wolterstorff construes forgiveness, then, it *resembles* excusing someone. Given his definition of excuse, however, this does not identify quite what Wolterstorff is getting at. I think what he means to say is, rather, that forgiveness resembles those cases of excuse where we move from treating a deed as part of someone's bad moral history to treating it as part of their merely personal history.

There is one further feature to this understanding of forgiveness worth explicating. Forgiveness only *resembles* excuse in the special cases described. They are *not* the same thing, and thus, they are different in at least one important respect. That respect is this: In excusing someone you do not only *treat* an action as part of someone's personal history. You also *believe* that the action belongs to the personal history. When forgiving, however, we do not cease to believe that the action belongs to the moral history of the wrongdoer. Rather, we merely *treat* the action as belonging to the personal history. In other words, in the case of excuse, *both* belief and treatment are altered. In the case of forgiveness, *only* treatment changes.[76] With this caveat, we have the Wolterstorffian definition of forgiveness.

> *Wolterstorffian Definition of Forgiveness* – *S* forgives *T* if, and only if, (i) *S* treats *T's* wrongful deed as not belonging to *T's* bad moral history, but rather, as belonging to *T's* merely personal history, with the exception that (ii) *S* continues to believe that *T's* action is a part of *T's* moral history.

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[75] Wolterstorff, it seems to me, has not clarified sufficiently what he thinks a moral history is since he makes comments that seem to indicate that a moral history is the same thing as what I have called a bad moral history. For instance, on page 170 of *Justice in Love* he says: "To excuse him is to view the deed as not part of his moral history. It is part of his personal history; he did it. But it's not part of his *moral* history; it does not put a blot on his moral condition." The implicature here is cancelable, but until it has been canceled, the definition of moral history is puzzling.

[76] Wolterstorff, *Justice,* 170.

There is one significant advantage of the Wolterstorffian account (henceforth, 'WA') over the *forswearing resentment model*. In cases where the forswearing resentment model predicts the data well (i.e. the data concerning what manifestations we expect true forgiveness to take), the WA predicts the same response. Since beliefs and emotions can come apart to some extent, where the forswearing of resentment is possible, the WA predicts that resentment will be forsworn. And this is because it is not appropriate to resent someone for an action that one treats as excusable in the sense delineated above. However, the WA also allows that where the forswearing of resentment is impossible (e.g. because an agent is incapable of emotions), then whatever way is fitting for that agent to *treat the wrongdoing as part of merely personal history* is what will be expected. Thus, the definition allows for some flexibility concerning the powers of the agent involved in forgiveness, and as result, it permits us to count as instances of forgiveness those cases where the forswearing of resentment is impossible (i.e. it satisfies D5).

Let us consider how WA might accommodate each of the various constraints and desiderata developed over the course of these two chapters. First, whether or not WA satisfies D1 and D2 depends on what conditions are necessary to justify forgiveness on our account. Other constraints might provide such conditions. BC7 indicates that repentance creates an obligation to forgive, and thus, repentance might very well function as a necessary precondition for justified forgiveness.[77] BC8 entails that the implementation of punishment does not prevent forgiveness. And given that BC9 requires us to take Jesus as a model of forgiveness, then surely love for the wrongdoer must inform the appropriateness or inappropriateness of forgiveness at a time. For this

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[77] It is worth pointing out that these texts, while constraining our account of forgiveness to some extent, do not fully determine the content of the account. Like most concepts or series of related concepts in scripture, their nature or definition is underdetermined by scripture. Thus, the model I offer above is only one model among many. In particular, there will be fully unilateral models of forgiveness that are consistent with these passages. My choice for a model that requires some sort of repentance as a precondition, then, involves an interpretive, textually underdetermined, move. Despite the underdetermination, I do think my account is a better way of understanding the texts than alternative wholly unilateral approaches.

model, then, I suggest that repentance is required before an agent is justified in forgiving and, moreover, that repentance provides new morally relevant information about a wrongdoer (i.e. information that is a part of their *good* moral history).[78]

We might wonder whether requiring repentance before forgiveness is offered can be a loving requirement. I think it can be, and to see this, it is worth determining if it can ever be *un*loving to forgive someone without first requiring repentance.[79] Consider, for instance, domestic abuse cases in marriage. If the victim in such cases were to forgive the perpetrator—i.e. if the victim were to treat the abuse as a merely unfortunate part of the perpetrator's personal history—then the victim would not report the abuse to anyone. Suppose this cycle of abuse and forgiveness continues. In such a case, the perpetrator is harming himself or herself with each subsequent act of abuse, acts which are made possible by the forgiveness. Thus, insofar as love requires that we seek the good of our beloved, if the victim loves the perpetrator (as is often the case) and forgiveness as understood on the WA would plausibly be foreseen to bring about the cycle of abuse articulated here, then forgiving the perpetrator *sans* repentance is demonstrably *un*loving.[80]

As a result of the above case, it seems clear that awaiting repentance before offering forgiveness can be loving, and thus, is consistent with BC7, BC8, and BC9.

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[78] I do not want to enter into the complexities of either (i) when someone has succeeded in repenting or (ii) when someone has sufficient epistemic justification for taking a wrongdoer to have repented. It might be that someone's being disposed to repent under the right circumstances might be fleshed out in a way to illuminate what is going on, but the conditional fallacy will inevitably introduce seemingly insurmountable difficulties into such an account.

[79] Again, it does need to be reasonable for the victim to believe that sincere repentance is in place, and practical stakes may come into play depending on the nature and degree of harm involved with the wrongdoing being forgive. Thus, more evidence (e.g. reparation) may be necessary for non-omniscient beings to count an apparent act of repentance as actual repentance.

[80] Importantly, it might be loving to forswear one's resentment of the perpetrator, and this is perhaps something required even if full-fledged forgiveness is *not* yet permitted. Remember that forswearing resentment is not sufficient for forgiveness on WA. Thus, my claim that it would be impermissible in this instance to withhold forgiveness does not entail that it would be wrong to alter one's actions or reactive attitudes in a way that might be loving but fall short of treating the wrongdoing as a part of the perpetrator's merely personal history.

Moreover, the requirement of repentance also provides a condition that allows that forgiveness, properly distributed, is both self-respecting (i.e. D2) and need not perpetuate bad behavior (i.e. D1).

According to D3, there is a sense in which once someone has been forgiven, they are no longer responsible for their action. If conditional on repentance, our definition of forgiveness can satisfy D3 as well, for in repenting an agent provides new evidence concerning their moral condition. Indeed, they communicate that they *regret* their past action, regret which includes a desire to not have done it. That new desire amounts to a change in the perpetrator, even if only minimally so. And as a result of the new desire, there is a psychological sense in which this person is no longer the same person who committed the wrongful deed. Thus, in appropriate cases of forgiveness, D3 is satisfied by our definition.[81]

What are we to make of the conflicting intuitions we have about forgiving the dead on WA (i.e. D4)? First, on this account it is possible to forgive the dead since forgiveness *simpliciter* does not require anything of the wrongdoer. Thus, if either the wrongdoer has died or cannot be identified, we can still forgive (i.e. count their action as a part of their merely personal history); however, our forgiveness will be primarily therapeutic in such cases.[82] Second, however, since we are explicating a Christian understanding of forgiveness, it is worth considering the possibility of forgiving a perpetrator in the afterlife. Thus, even if an opportunity in this life to forgive in response to repentance is missed, it is not strictly speaking clear that forgiveness of this sort will

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[81] Of course, even if *S* forgives *T*, *T* is still causally responsible for the wrong to *S*. Even in cases of accidental injury (i.e. where moral blame is not at issue), those causally involved often feel a strong impulse to repair the damage they have caused, despite the fact that the damage was accidental. Thus, forgiveness need not render inappropriate the wrongdoer's goal of paying back damages done.

[82] I assume that such therapeutic forgiveness not in response to repentance is morally unproblematic. Repentance is not a necessary condition for *all* forgiveness to be morally justified, then, but only in the normal cases where both parties can feasibly interact with one another.

never take place. For perhaps there will be an opportunity in the eschaton, in some sort of final judgment, for us to forgive those who have wronged us in many ways both big and small. This is consistent with Christian teachings, and thus, it is possible to forgive the dead even in the more demanding sense requiring repentance. But of course, if the eschatological possibility of forgiveness is actual, there remains a sense in which the more demanding sort of forgiveness of the dead is not possible *in this life*. Thus, there seems to be a way of accommodating much of the conflicting intuitions concerning the possibility and value of forgiveness of the dead on this model as a Christian model of forgiveness.

Concerning the remaining constraints on forgiveness from the biblical witness, BC1 (i.e. love entails willingness to forgive) seems clearly consistent with WA, as does BC11 (i.e. forgiveness contributes to sanctification). Moreover, if *S* comes to treat *T*'s sins as a part of *T*'s personal history, this need not imply that *S* regards *T* as worse than *S*, for this construal of forgiveness is in no way comparative. Thus, BC10 is also satisfied.

BC2-BC6 all concern aspects of forgiveness that do not immediately mesh with the way we think of forgiveness on our current worldview. The idea of forgiving a corporate body (i.e. BC6), however, is less strange since we might reduce forgiveness of a corporate body to forgiveness of its relevant parts. The remaining constraints, however, concern either forgiveness outside of a *moral* context or forgiveness by or on account of a third party. First with respect to the non-moral understanding of forgiveness[83], the Hebrew scriptures make clear that moral wrongdoing results not only in moral impurity but in ritual impurity as well.[84] Thus, so long as the account of forgiveness on offer does not explicitly rule out non-moral consequences of moral wrongdoing—i.e. non-moral consequences that nevertheless might be addressed—it is consistent with BC2 and BC5,

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[83] This will be spelled out much more fully in chapter 4, where we discuss a sacrificial theory of atonement.
[84] Jonathan Klawans, *Purity, Sacrifice, and the Temple: Symbolism and Supersessionism in the Study of Ancient Judaism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006): 51-56.

which commit us to forgiveness as *in some sense* appropriate outside of moral contexts, perhaps connected with some sort of cleansing rite or practice.

BC4 claims that God fundamentally forgives sin. Although this might seem inconsistent with the above account of forgiveness, which presupposes the appropriateness of interpersonal forgiveness between human agents, this appearance is misleading. Whether or not there is a problem depends on the meaning of 'fundamentally'. On my eventual account, the non-moral consequences of moral wrongdoing *can only be addressed* by atonement, and moreover, original sin can only be forgiven by God since God is, on this account, the one who was wronged by this sin. Additionally, since God can rightly be said to be a caretaker of sorts over all creation (humanity included), wrongdoing of any kind offends God in a way analogous to the way in which any poor use of our lives, given to us by our parents, is an offense to them.[85] Consequently, every instance of wrongdoing is an offense to God and so there is a clear sense in which the prerogative to forgive sin belongs fundamentally to God alone.

And lastly, BC3 requires that, on account of the faith of another, my sins might be forgiven by God. One way in which this constraint might be satisfied, even if it would be objectionable to deal with consequent moral impurity of wrongdoing on the basis of the faith of others, is if the non-moral consequences of sin were dealt with on the basis of another's faith. Indeed, the account that inspired this constraint (cf. Mk. 2:5; Lk. 5:18-25) might be seen to have just such consequences in mind since the crippled man was *healed*. Whichever way one sorts out the mechanics of this constraint, however, nothing about our definition precludes its truth. Thus, we can affirm BC3 without unraveling all

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[85] There is a disanalogy here since parents can give up their right to be offended if they refuse to perform or properly performs their parental obligations. God does neither of these things, and so, retains the right to be offended by our wrongdoing, insofar as talk of divine rights is sensible.

the complexity of such a passage. And thus ends my defense of the Wolterstorffian Definition of Forgiveness.

3. Conclusion

In this chapter, I began by locating eleven different adequacy constraints on a definition of forgiveness found in the Christian scriptures, and I combined those constraints to five philosophical desiderata uncovered in the previous chapter. Next, I considered two significantly influential models of the nature of forgiveness: the *forswearing resentment model* and the *forbearing punishment model*. I demonstrated that neither model was necessary or sufficient for forgiveness and presented some worries about how well those models fit with the various adequacy constraints and desiderata I had identified. Lastly, I presented and defended a *Wolterstorffian Definition of Forgiveness* by arguing that it is superior to the *forswearing resentment model* in some crucial respects and by carefully detailing how it satisfies each of my adequacy constraints and desiderata.

This concludes our exploration into the nature of forgiveness, although our findings will be crucial for the final account of divine human reconciliation developed in chapter 4. In the next chapters, then, we turn to the atonement; that is, explications of the doctrine that Christ died for our sins. In chapter 3 we consider whether scripture teaches that justice is fundamentally *retributive*—I claim that it is not—and whether there is any biblically defensible construal of penal substitution consistent with our findings. Although I develop a model of *restorative penal substitution* that I believe to be reasonably employable by a biblically faithful Christian theologian, I suspect there are alternative models with greater theoretical utility. In chapter 4, I develop such a model, which expands the metaphors of sacrifice found in *yom kippur* and Passover into an explanation of *why Christ had to die*. I then combine that sacrificial explanation of atonement with my Wolterstorffian account of forgiveness to develop an *expanded sacrificial model* of

atonement and explain how the expanded model addresses various elements of the problem of sin.

Chapter 3
Atonement: Penal Substitution & Retributivism in Scripture

In the previous chapters, I have defended a Wolterstorffian construal of the concept of forgiveness, one that I think is central to understanding what the Christian scriptures teach about reconciliation between God and humanity. As such, this construal of forgiveness must have a considerable part to play if we are to understand the work that Christ's atonement does to bring about that reconciliation.

Yet the Christian tradition is riddled with a huge number of difficulties when it comes to considering the atonement. First, there is no conciliar statement that tells us anything about the *mechanism* of atonement; that is, the means through which Christ's atonement becomes efficacious. There are, of course, many models that may compete with one another for explanatory prominence when it comes to the atonement—e.g. penal substitution[1], vicarious punishment[2], satisfaction theories[3], *Christus Victor*[4], kaleidoscopic views[5], participation views[6], patristic ransom models[7]—but each of these models come with variations and the possibility of combination with several of the other

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[1] See Daniel J. Hill and Joseph Jedwab, "Atonement and the Concept of Punishment" in *Locating Atonement: Explorations in Constructive Dogmatics (Los Angeles Theology Series),* Eds. Oliver D. Crisp and Fred Sanders (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015): 139-153 and William Lane Craig, "Is Penal Substitution Incoherent? An Examination of Mark Murphy's Criticisms," *Religious Studies* (2017): doi:10.1017/S003441251700018X, for a fascinating discussion of how the literature on punishment might be helpful in finding different instances of the general *penal substitution* view in logical space.

[2] Mark C. Murphy, "Not Penal Substitution, but Vicarious Punishment," *Faith and Philosophy* 26.3 (2009): 253-273.

[3] The *locus classicus* for most of theology on this view is of course: St Anselm, *Cur Deus Homo*, trans. John Grant (Edinburgh, 1909).

[4] Gustaf Aulén, *Christus Victor: An Historical Study of the Three Main Types of the Idea of the Atonement,* Tr. A. G. Herbert (New York, NY: Macmillan, 1931).

[5] Joel Green, "Kaleidoscopic View," In *The Nature of the Atonement*, Eds. James Beilby and Paul R. Eddy (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press Academic, 2006): 157-185.

[6] Tim Bayne and Greg Restall, "A Participatory Model of the Atonement," In *New Waves in Philosophy of Religion*, Eds. Yujin Nagasawa and Erik Wielenberg (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009): 150-166.

[7] Benjamin Myers, "The Patristic Atonement Model" In *Locating Atonement: Explorations in Constructive Dogmatics (Los Angeles Theology Series),* Eds. Oliver D. Crisp and Fred Sanders (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015): 71-88.

models on offer. And once again, there is no conciliatory statement by which these models might be more easily guided.[8]

Second, there is not yet settled agreement concerning the end at which the chosen mechanism aims.[9] That is, it is not yet clear what the *solution* is to the problem which needs to be solved by Christ's incarnation, life, death, resurrection, ascension and exaltation. Indeed, the tendency is to identify a solution (e.g. union) that is too abstract to be fully helpful in identifying the atonement. More must be said about these difficulties, and they will be addressed presently.

Third, the word 'atonement' is a recent term in English, and it was coined to express what the coiner[10] saw as the end of the act of the atonement; namely, making humanity and God *at one* with each other. But this is in and of itself very abstract. Indeed, at the extreme, the most *at one* two objects could be is captured by numerical identity (e.g. A is maximally *at one* with B iff A = B). So, without qualification, taking the end of the atonement to be *at-one-ment* would entail pantheism (or something near to it).[11] So in dealing with the atonement, we simply must clarify the end further by way of specifying the *scope* of atonement. Does the atonement only deal with the theological issue of justification? Or does it include as a part the process of sanctification? Who are the

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[8] This is categorically *not* to say that there are no *scriptural* statements that will be of use to us. Indeed, everything I provide in my first chapter concerning the analytic methodology is assumed here. We will allow ourselves to be guided by the deliverances of scripture, moral intuitions, reasonable historical theological reflections, and arrive at reflective equilibrium concerning the understanding of atonement found here.

[9] See Michael J. Gorman, *The Death of the Messiah and the Birth of the New Covenant* (Cambridge: James Clark & Co, 2014): 2 where he finds the reason for a lack of consensus to be the focus on mechanisms rather than ends of the atonement: "…I would suggest that most interpretations of the atonement concentrate on the *penultimate* rather than the *ultimate* purpose of Jesus' death."

[10] As attested by Graham A. Cole, *God the Peacemaker: How Atonement Brings Shalom* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2009): 20: "William Tyndale (1494-1536) used it to translate Leviticus 23:28 (the Day of Atonement) and 2 Corinthians 5:18-19."

[11] Here's a quick proof: (i) God wants to be maximally at one with creation. (ii) Maximal at-one-ment is numerical identity. Therefore, (iii) God wants to be numerically identical with creation. And (iii) is, of course, just a thesis of pantheism (or something near to that anyway). More could undoubtedly be said and unpacked (e.g. whether God wants atonement with humanity rather than creation), but any way you go, there would be obvious and serious theological (and philosophical) complications.

primary actors involved in atonement? Humans and the Second Person of the Trinity? Is there a place for the Father and the Spirit? Is the atonement not also about non-human parts of creation? These are difficult and thorny issues.

Fourth, it is not possible to entirely isolate serious discussions of the atonement from the concepts of *punishment* and *justice*, as well as the possible moral justifications of different notions of punishment and justice. Suppose, contrary to what I argue in previous chapters, that forgiveness is simply the foregoing of punishment and that justice *requires* the implementation of punishment. If this were correct, then it would be impossible for a perfectly just God to forgive sinners, for in doing so God would be refraining to implement the very punishment which, by hypothesis, would be required of him were he perfectly just. But surely we want to say that God really forgives sinners and is undeniably perfectly just. Thus, we will be required to clarify the nature of punishment, its moral justifications, and refine it in light of our earlier reflections on the nature of forgiveness.

In this chapter, I develop a model of the atonement[12] that, to my mind at least, fits within the received category of penal substitution. The particular version of penal substitution presented here is sensitive to the above difficulties and is consistent with the Wolterstorffian account of forgiveness which I advocate.

I proceed as follows. I begin in §1 with some prolegomena by providing a brief account of how forgiveness functions as a constraint on the adequacy of a model of the atonement. Indeed, compatibility with my understanding of forgiveness will be a

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[12] There are some authors who resist the project with which I am engaged here; namely, a project that identifies a particular model of atonement as superior to alternatives. For instance, Colin Gunton, *The Actuality of Atonement: A Study of Metaphor, Rationality, and the Christian Tradition* (New York, NY: T&T Clark, 1988) seems to resist this sort of project, as does Joel Green, "Kaleidoscopic View". Though see Andrew Picard, "Colin Gunton," In *T&T Clark Companion to the Atonement* (New York, NY: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2017): 527-532 for a nuanced understanding of Gunton's position and overall development.

fundamental determinant of whether a model of atonement can be considered adequate. Then in §2 I discuss the logic and process of constructing a model of atonement. I first discuss the *problem* of the atonement, which might simply be called the problem of sin, and then turn to three proposals concerning the *solution*.[13] Once I have identified both the problem and solution that fits best with the scriptural data, I turn in §3 to the question of adequate *mechanisms* of atonement, beginning first with Anselm's early satisfaction account of the atonement. I have neither the space nor the desire (at this point) to cover *all* the various proposed mechanisms throughout the history of Christianity. However, the Anselmian theory is especially helpful because it gives us a clear discussion of the atonement in relationship to questions of justice, punishment, and forgiveness. Thus, it allows us to easily transition into some necessary clarifications concerning those concepts before delving into our development of restorative penal substitution. Briefly, I argue that Anselm's construal of justice as *retributive* prevents him from satisfying the theoretical adequacy constraint of forgiveness since retributive justice is antithetical to the character of a loving God.

This claim concerning retribution and God's character is not without its detractors. Indeed, retribution is often thought to be at the very heart of the New Testament witness concerning God's punishment of the wicked (e.g. Romans 2) or the Old Testament's understanding of the *lex talionis* (i.e. an eye for an eye).[14] Thus, I advance

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[13] There are some who might suggest that it is best to start with the *solution* (i.e. Christ) before assessing the *problem* it is meant to solve. I confess that I do not understand such a position. It may or may not be the case that everything Christ does in his life contributes to solving whatever problem it is that the atonement is thought to solve, and it seems that if we are to start by identifying the solution instead of to start by identifying the problem, we would need to know more about which aspects of the life of Christ indisputably constitute the solution. For my part, then, I agree with Scot McKnight, *A Community Called Atonement* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2007) who suggests, as I do, that we begin first with the problem and then turn to identifying the solution, perhaps with the qualification that some degree of influence from our beliefs and values as formed by our knowledge of the Christian story inescapably penetrate our analysis of the problem itself.

[14] William Lane Craig, at a presentation criticizing Eleonore Stump's recent work on the atonement, responded to a question I posed during Q&A that retribution is undoubtedly taught or assumed throughout scripture. This motivates him to defend penal substitution as traditionally developed by the reformers. Obviously I disagree, but for a brief sketch of his views, see the chapter on atonement in William Lane

a reading of such passages, both New Testament and Old Testament, as concerned with something other than retributive justice (i.e. something nearer to *restorative justice*), and I close my biblical case with an analysis of Jesus' own wrestling with the *lex talionis* in the gospels.

Having completed my defense of a non-retributive reading of the biblical texts, I turn at last in §4 to contemporary debates surrounding *penal substitution* views of the atonement. Although it is often assumed that penal substitution is inseparable from an understanding of justice as *retributive*, such a claim seems mistaken. After all, there is nothing immediately conceptually wayward about describing the atonement as an event in which Christ bears our punishment for sin, a punishment with a *non-retributive* rationale (e.g. a restorative, protection, or deterrence rationale). In light of this apparent conceptual possibility of a non-retributive penal substitution theory, an argument is needed to articulate more clearly the plausibility, or implausibility, of positing such non-retributive models. In developing this argument, various difficulties concerning the definition of penal substitution emerge (e.g. the definition of punishment, the ambiguous referent of 'punishment' in substitution, penal versus pecuniary cases, *etcetera*). Once these difficulties are overcome, it is revealed that all the non-retributive penal substitution models, with the exception of one, are implausible due to factors other than sheer conceptual consistency.[15] At the end of this section, then, I argue that, given my earlier scripturally-based rejection of retributivism, the only reasonable biblical model of penal substitution is accompanied by a restorative rationale for punishment.

Craig and J. P. Moreland, *Philosophical Foundations of a Christian Worldview, 2nd Edition* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press Academic, 2017).

[15] As an example or spoiler of the sort of argument I will advance: even if it is coherent to think that a restorative punishment of A can be taken instead by B without undermining the aim of restoring the character of A, it is hard to see how it is that the restoration of A is *brought about by* B's punishment. That is, it is hard to see unless we go on to say that B's punishment *is also* a punishment of A. But to do this is to introduce vicarious punishment into the model (i.e. the idea that B's undergoing hard treatment constitutes A's punishment) rather than maintaining a pure penal substitution model. Yet, this remains a penal substitution model of sorts.

1. Forgiveness as a Constraint on the Adequacy of Theories of Atonement

An adequacy constraint is a condition that must be met in order for a theory to be deemed *adequate*. In our context, then, it is at least a necessary condition for any theory of atonement that it be compatible with the account of forgiveness given in previous chapters.

In those chapters, we have seen that forgiveness of the sort offered by God is available to all people. It is there, so to speak, simply waiting to be taken. This is because God is always willing to forgive, always desiring to be reconciled with, his fallen creatures. We have also seen that forgiveness entails no longer counting moral wrongdoing against the wrongdoer; that is, counting another's past immoral actions as a part of their merely *personal* history rather than their *moral* history. And we have seen that the Christian account of forgiveness requires the possibility that those who have departed from earth might still receive forgiveness in some sense postmortem. This by no means entails that all persons will be forgiven. Rather, it entails that God is lovingly offering forgiveness to all who do not actively refuse to accept it. This is the account of forgiveness, in succinct summary, with which any theory of atonement must be consistent.

2. The Logic of Reconciliation

We have also seen in earlier chapters that there is a logic which holds between reconciliation, atonement, love, and forgiveness. First, forgiveness is not *the same thing* as reconciliation (although 'forgiveness' can be and sometimes is confusingly used as a synonym for 'reconciliation'). Instead, forgiveness as we are using it here is merely a necessary condition for reconciliation.

Second, forgiveness is, *in a sense*, bilateral.[16] One side of this bilateral act is entailed by love; that is, love *requires* that all persons are *willing to forgive* any wrongdoer.[17] The other side of the act requires that the one to be forgiven be such that forgiveness is *good for* them. There are a number of reasons that forgiveness might fail to be good for a person. Perhaps they do not see that they have committed a wrong, and so they are unable to recognize and fix that part of themselves that falls short in some important respect. Or perhaps they are simply too ashamed to seek the restoration of relationship that forgiveness, when coupled with the right sort of atoning acts, brings about. That is, perhaps the wrongdoer's knowledge that they have been forgiven compels them to retreat even further from relationships with people that are necessary for their ultimate flourishing. In that case, the forgiveness has made things worse rather than made them better. Whatever the particular obstacle to forgiving lovingly, it must be overcome before forgiveness, and the reconciliation at which it aims, can become a reality.

Third, as I understand atonement, it includes that which overcomes whatever underlies a wrongdoer's resistance to (or disposition to resist) the intended benefits of loving forgiveness. And this construal is significant, for many accounts of atonement, as we will see when considering the view of St Anselm, take atonement to be removing an obstacle concerning the character of God rather than an obstacle located in particular humans or humanity. Such a view seems to me utterly mistaken, and so, although it is true that forgiveness and atonement together entail reconciliation where atonement may,

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[16] Strictly speaking, the act of forgiveness is a unilateral act. Loving forgiveness is bilateral, however, because if S loves T, then S will ensure that forgiving T is *good for* T prior to forgiving T. On some conceptions of the definition of forgiveness (ones we rejected in previous chapters), this claim is confusing at best. However, if we keep the Wolterstorffian Account in mind, then the claim becomes much clearer.

[17] And, of course, this is a radical claim. Given that God tells us to love our enemies and our neighbors, without exception, this means all persons must be, if loving, willing to forgive any perpetrator of evil. Even with such a radical claim concerning the obligations of human persons, we can admit the uncomfortableness of such an expectation. Someone may be unwilling to forgive for a number of reasons, including, for instance, severe religious trauma in their background. The complexity of such cases requires theoretically careful and nuanced handling (see Michelle Panchuk, "The Shattered Spiritual Self: A Philosophical Exploration of Religious Trauma," *Res Philosophica* (*forthcoming*)).

when dealing with morally imperfect human beings, bring *either* party (i.e. the wronged or the wrongdoer) to a point of reconciliation, God's perfect love entails that God is always willing to forgive the wrongdoer.[18] Consequently, in cases of divine forgiveness, atonement never serves the purpose of bringing God to a place in which he is consequently willing to forgive. Rather, only the sinner is moved towards the point of no longer refusing, or being ready to receive the benefits of, God's offer of forgiveness.

We can summarize these conditions more formally as follows:

> (1) *A* is reconciled with *B* only if *A* has lovingly forgiven *B*.
> (2) *A* loves *B* only if *A* is willing to forgive *B*.[19]
> (3) *A* lovingly forgives *B* at *t* iff (i) at the moment immediately preceding time *t*, *A* is willing to forgive *B* and (ii) at *t*, *B* is ready to receive the intended benefits of forgiveness from *A*.
> (4) *B* is ready to receive the intended benefits of forgiveness from *A* only if atonement has been made for *B*'s moral deficiencies.

With these conditions in mind, then, we are ready to begin thinking about the *problem* atonement is thought to solve. While on the Christian story, this is obviously the problem of *sin*, we must carefully specify how sin can best be understood.

A brief note, however, on a problem we will not consider. Some authors argue that the fundamental problem dealt with by the atonement is the need for rescue from the powers of sin, death, and the devil.[20] Indeed, such a view of the goal of atonement

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[18] As Gregory Boyd, "Christus Victor View," In *The Nature of the Atonement: Four Views,* Eds. James Beilby and Paul R. Eddy (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006): 43, aptly states: in passages such as 2 Cor. 5:19 and Col. 1:20, we see that "[the] cross reconciles the world to God, not God to the world". By this, he intends to stress the biblical picture of locating the need for reconciliation *in us*. Of course, such a prooftext *only* establishes the point that we needed to be reconciled. It nowhere claims that God did not need to be reconciled to us. So although I agree with the spirit of his point, I disagree that these scriptures actually contribute to it in any obvious way.

[19] Condition (2) is probably unnecessary since we are discussing *loving* forgiveness as opposed to forgiveness simpliciter. I include it, however, for completeness.

[20] E.g. see (i) Boyd, "Christus Victor View"; (ii) Gustav Aulén, *Christus Victor;* (iii) Thomas Finger, *Christian Theology: An Eschatological Approach,* vol. 1 (Scottdale, PA: Herlad Press, 1985); and (iv) Gregory A. Boyd, *The Crucifixion of the Warrior God: Interpreting the Old Testament's Violent Portraits of God in Light of the Cross, Vols. 1 & 2* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2017).

arguably dominated the first millennium of the church's reflections on atonement.[21]

However, if we take this to indeed be the goal of atonement, there are commonly

acknowledged worries with such a view: (i) there is no intelligible *mechanism* offered[22]; (ii)

there are theological worries about attributing too much authority and unrestrained

influence to the powers of this world, especially if we extend such speculation to the idea

that they possess a legal right over humanity; and (iii) *bondage* to evil forces rather than

guilt for *sin* becomes the fundamental problem. These objections are not in and of

themselves decisive. Nevertheless, I assume in what follows that whatever we say about

the atonement can subsume the important insights found within the *Christus Victor*

paradigm.

Let us, then, turn to our identification of the *problem* which the atonement is

meant to solve; namely, the problem of *disunion*. On this construal of the issues, the

fundamental difficulty to be overcome by the atonement is the breaking down of the

relationship between humanity and Yahweh consequent on the Fall and original sin.[23]

As the story often goes, God is a perfectly loving being, and perfect love always

maximally desires (i) the good of the beloved and (ii) union with the beloved.[24] However,

human sin introduces disunion between humanity and the divine, a disunion that is an

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[21] See Nicholas Lombardo, *The Father's Will* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014) for an attempt to take very seriously the early articulations of the patristic ransom theory that *Christus Victor* attempts to charitably reconstruct.

[22] See Oliver D. Crisp, "Is Ransom Enough?" *Journal of Analytic Theology* 3 (2015): 1-16. Someone might think that *disarming* the powers is such a mechanism; however, we need a better understanding of the arms the powers of darkness are thought to wield and whether such arms can intelligibly be explained on a Christian worldview.

[23] This model is most interestingly and explicitly developed in Eleonore Stump, "Atonement and the Problem of Shame," *Journal of Philosophical Research* 41 (2016): 111-129. Her model is increasingly sophisticated and endlessly surprising. The obstacles to union she identifies are three: (i) proneness to moral wrongdoing; (ii) guilt, both in (a) its impairments in the psyche of the wrongdoer and (b) the ill-effects of the wrongdoing in the world, and (iii) shame. In many ways, her account of the atonement deserves an entirely separate treatment than the one I give here.

[24] My presentation of this account follows Eleonore Stump, *Wandering in Darkness* very closely in her Thomistic account of love. Of course, this account of love might be rejected for a better alternative. I use it here simply for ease of explicating the union model.

obstacle that God must lovingly overcome. It is in discerning the nature of this disunion, along with its various facets, that we can discover its underlying cause; that is, sin.

So how does sin introduce disunion? First, because of sin, humanity is guilty for having done wrong. Thus, we hear Paul in Romans 3 claiming that "there are none who are righteous" (v. 10)[25] given that "all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God" (v. 23). Second, this guilt has multiple dimensions.[26] On the one hand, the immoral actions of human persons have bad *consequences* that detrimentally affect the overall value of the world. Thus, we are responsible for harming the world through these actions. But there is also an internal problem of guilt, for after all, the overall value of an action cannot be adequately determined by merely taking account of the action's consequences.[27] One must also assess the heart, i.e. the motives, of the agent involved,[28] and *both* the external and internal elements of actions that are often constitutive of sin.[29]

Now, given that God desires that we, as his beloved, flourish, the guilt we acquire as a result of sin introduces disunion into our relationship. The reason for this is that there is a degree of dissatisfaction in the relationship, where the realization of God's desire for our flourishing is inhibited by *both* the initial act of sin, spawning from an

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[25] Here Paul is quoting either Psalm 14:3 or Psalm 53:3, both of which go on to emphasize the hope for a "salvation for Israel" (v. 6). Clearly he is building his argument in Romans to see the inclusion of Gentiles into the new covenant as a very old plan indeed, one for which we, both Jews and Greeks, should rejoice.

[26] For an accessible discussion of these and related issues concerning justification, see Thomas H. McCall, *Forsaken: The Trinity and the Cross, and Why it Matters* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2012): 125-128.

[27] Unless, of course, one just is a consequentialist. I'm going to assume that consequentialism is not compatible with a Christian worldview; at least, not when it comes to providing justification for the acts of human agents. Whether or not an omniscient God might justifiably reason consequentially is a topic that cannot be addressed in the space available to us here.

[28] Indeed, in evaluating an action, the following ordering provides a schema for determining the comparative value of an action. If it spawns from *both* virtuous motives and has good consequences, it is of the highest sort of value. If it spawns from virtuous motives but has bad consequences, it is of a lesser sort of value. Of lesser value still is an action with good consequences spawning from *vicious* motives. And of course the worst action is one with bad consequences spawning from vicious motives. Within each of these four categories, there's further room for both coarse-grained and fine-grained division.

[29] This is why we are not very impressed with a person who gives to charity in order to garner influence and power in a community. The best mode of charity proceeds from a heart of generosity, not one with ulterior motives.

imperfect moral agent, and the fact that we will always rightly be said to have committed that action.[30] Thus, something must be done about this guilt if the relationship between God and his creation is to be restored.

Another dimension of disunion between us and God is introduced by sin; one which is parasitic on the disunion we experience with other *human* persons.[31] Indeed, humans are quite creative when imagining new ways to describe the deficiencies they perceive in others. They might segregate themselves from others on the basis of a supposed superiority of their race, economic or social class, educational strata, ethnic or religious group, gender identity, appearance, sound of voice, etc. Specifically addressed within the New Testament, and prominently so in Paul's letter to the Romans, is the division between Jews and Gentiles.[32] This division is of theological interest given, in particular, the centrality it attaches to God's supposed plans for restoration.

What is more, concerning this sort of disunion, insofar as we lack union with other human beings for the sorts of reasons suggested above, we will additionally lack some amount of union with God as well. Indeed, the situation is analogous to a parent's attempts to be fully united with his or her child when that child refuses to foreswear animosity towards her sibling for some inadequate reason, such as jealousy over not getting to play with her sibling's toy. Intuitively, the resentment of the parent's child, when wrongfully directed at her sibling, inhibits union not only between the two children but also, to some extent, union between the parent who is trying to reach or reason with

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[30] I stated the problem this way quite intentionally since forgiveness includes the idea that we no longer have an action counted as part of our moral history, but rather, merely our personal history. This distinction is, I think, necessary if we are to make sense of an omniscient God no longer "counting our sins against us".

[31] Cf. Cole, *God the Peacemaker,* 78-80.

[32] As emphasized in Christopher D. Marshall, *Beyond Retribution: A New Testament Vision for Justice, Crime, and Punishment* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing, 2001): 91, the Jewish desire to avoid intermingling with Gentiles was perceived by some to be a form of hatred usually reserved for enemies. Marshall quotes Tacitus, *The Histories,* Trans. K. Wellesley (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1964): 5.4, 5: Jews show "their stubborn loyalty and ready benevolence towards brother Jews, but the rest of the world they confront with the hatred reserved for enemies."

his or her child. Thus, insofar as there is systemic injustice and hostility between persons as described above, union between God and human persons suffers.

Thirdly, it is striking as one reads Paul, especially in his letter to the Romans, the degree to which he sees humankind's relationship to Christ in what appears to be more than merely forensic terms.[33] For example, in Romans 5:19, he writes:

> For just as by the one man's disobedience the many were *made* sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be *made* righteous.[34]

Or again, in the second letter to the Corinthians:

> So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new![35]

These passages suggest that there was some more-than-forensic change in human nature. We were not "by the one man's disobedience…made" *as if* we were sinners. Rather, we were *made* sinners. So too, we were not "by the one man's obedience" made *as if* we were righteous. Rather, we were *made* righteous.[36] Thus, it seems clear that whatever we say about the atonement, there must be some ontologically robust account of what transpires when humankind and Christ are united.

And although someone might be inclined to think that humankind simply acquires new moral properties due to the atonement (i.e. rather than merely forensic ones), certain other New Testament passages appear to imply that something even more

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[33] See Mark Garcia, "Union with Christ" in *T&T Clark Handbook to Atonement*, Ed. Adam J. Johnson (New York, NY: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2017): 781-786.
[34] My emphasis.
[35] 2 Corinthians 5:17.
[36] Suppose we understand righteousness as a purely forensic property in the passage quoted above. There would be a difficulty structurally in interpreting the verse given that humanity is *made righteous* through Christ in a parallel way to its being *made sinful* through Adam. Given the Christian tradition's adherence to a concept of original sin, it would be odd to say that humankind was made *forensically* sinful through Adam. Yet, if we appreciate the parallelism of Paul's claim here, this is precisely what we *should* say if we think of the human righteousness acquired through Christ as forensic. In other words, the text seems to imply that the two properties in question—i.e. *being a sinner* and *being righteous*—ought to both be interpreted as either *forensic* together or *ontological* together.

robust occurs. Humankind does not merely acquire a new moral status, but additionally, becomes *one* with Christ (cf. Jn 17:11).

Indeed, the phases of Christ's salvific act are in some sense our own. Paul and other Christians "have been crucified with Christ" (Gal 2:20; see also, 5:24) and are called to "clothe [themselves] with Christ" (Rm 13:14). They have been buried with Christ and raised to new life with him (Rm 6); they come together as the *body* of Christ, with Christ as the head (Rm 12:3-7).

Such metaphors can be interpreted in different ways. Someone might understand them as moving claims that are merely intended to inspire devotion from Christians rather than indicate some more fundamental truth about reality. But read in this way, Paul's purpose in writing these various treatises has little to do with teaching any robust theology.[37] And to claim that Paul has no worked-out theological position in this area is implausible.

Alternatively, someone might see these word pictures as collectively reinforcing the relationship of oneness that Christ prays for in John's narrative. Then, they could go on to explain that in which oneness with Christ consists. Perhaps, on the one hand, oneness is merely *oneness in will*, but of course, such oneness is hardly a reasonable analogue to the oneness had between Christ and the Father. And insofar as oneness is being interpreted in light of John 17[38], then *oneness in will* seems to falter theologically. Or perhaps, on the other hand, oneness between Christ and humanity is this: for the person of Christ and humanity to together constitute a metaphysical whole that is not reducible to its parts.[39] Whatever one's choice among the above alternatives in understanding the

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[37] That's not to say that devotional inspiration is less important than searching for theological truth.
[38] i.e. in which Christ asks the Father to make those that the Father has given him one as he and the Father are one.
[39] Cf. Crisp, *The Word Enfleshed*, ch. 7. An account and defense of a particular mereology is beyond the scope of this project. That's not to say that I have nothing to say about it, however. Roughly, I incline

Johannine and Pauline language concerning the church's relationship to Christ, that ontologically robust sort of union must be grounded in one's account of the work of Christ. And this means that any account of the problem of sin, and its consequent disunion, must include as an element a correlating ontological deficiency in the nature of humankind that is corrected by Christ's atoning work.

So, to summarize the problem of sin as we have defined it, the following elements should be addressed:

1. Human guilt, including both (i) internal and external components of sinful actions and (ii) our initial and ongoing relationships to those actions.
2. Human divisions, including (i) generally those divisions we use to justify disunion between each other and (ii) specifically the division between Jews and Gentiles as used for God's purposes of redemption.
3. Human nature as ontologically deficient. What is the nature of this deficiency (i.e. a disease inherited from Adam or original guilt?) and what is the nature of union with Christ, which, by hypothesis, is meant to address it?

It is now time to consider more fully the nature of the *solution* to the problem of sin. We will consider three different ways to conceive of the solution: (i) the *union* model; (ii) the New Covenant model; & (iii) the sacrificial model.

Now, in articulating the problem of sin, we allowed ourselves to look at various forms of disunion in order to determine the problem at the heart of the human predicament. So one might naturally be content to simply identify the fixing of that disunion (i.e. the restoration of human and divine union) as the solution to the problem

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towards a van Inwagen material constitution view with a bit of Stump's causal power qualification for what constitutes a whole mixed in: (i) Peter van Inwagen, *Material Beings* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990) and (ii) Eleonore Stump, "Emergence, Causal Powers, and Aristotelianism in Metaphysics," In *Powers and Capacities in Philosophy: The New Aristotelianism,* Eds. Ruth Groff and John Greco (New York, NY: Routledge Publishing, 2013): 48-68. I am currently, however, intrigued by the hylemorphic animalist account that seems promising for dissolving a few worries I have for the relationship between properties and the objects which bear them. See Patrick Toner, "Hylemorphic Animalism," *Philosophical Studies* 155.1 (2011): 65-81.

of sin. While such a thought is certainly a natural one, there are some methodological worries that ought to give us pause.

First, if we identify the solution as merely *union*, this leaves too much room for speculation concerning the proper means to restoring that union. After all, it might be the case that there are many ways in which the union we are concerned with could be restored, perhaps all of which are mutually exclusive. But if there are many different means (i.e. A, B, and C, let us say) to the same end (i.e. the restoration of union), then more information will be needed to have a fully *Christian* account of the atonement.[40]

By way of analogy, suppose that two superpowered friends, Hal Jordan the Green Lantern and Barry Allen the Flash, are located on two separate sides of the world. Barry is in Auckland, New Zealand, having just completed his training regimen for the day, while Hal is enjoying a vacation in Madrid, Spain. While chatting about their days over the phone, they agree that they should meet up in person since their reception is particularly poor. Given that they currently lack geographical union (i.e. the problem), they must decide the best form of transportation and the best place in which to meet (i.e. their preferred solution). Without knowing more about the situation, i.e. the nature of the powers of Hal and Barry in particular, someone might suggest they meet up in the middle (i.e. on the east coast of India). But as it turns out, Barry is the fastest man alive and can be anywhere on earth in less than a minute with minimal effort. If someone knows this fact, then an alternative solution—namely, that Barry simply find Hal where he sits in Madrid—emerges. What this teaches us, then, is that ignoring the particularities of Hal and Barry's situation causes us to ignore the most practical, and most likely,

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[40] It is widely acknowledged, for instance, that Aquinas thought God could have forgiven all of humanity without demanding satisfaction for sin and nevertheless remain perfectly just. So, on his account, the sort of situation described is actually true. Nevertheless, he thinks that we can determine a sufficient reason for why the atonement takes the form of Christ's sacrifice if we allow that it might be the "most fitting" response to human sin.

solution to their problem. And as in this fictional case, so too in the biblical case. We cannot hope to identify the proper means to the restoration of union between God and humanity unless we attend to the particularities of that relationship as it has developed in biblical history.

This worry leads us immediately to a second concern; namely, that there seems to be something quite significant about the specific *history* behind Christ's life, death, burial, resurrection, ascension and exaltation[41]. After all, when Christ tells his disciples, "that he *must* go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised,"[42] the question of what Christ *means* in saying this immediately comes to the fore. Does Christ mean that there is no metaphysically possible world in which sin exists without the death of the messiah at the hands of the religious leaders in Jerusalem? Surely not! But merely positing the *restoration of union* as the solution to the problem of sin will not help us in solving this problem. Thus, it is necessary that we say something more about the nature of the solution at which a model of atonement aims.

A promising attempt to say something more about the nature of the solution with which we are concerned can be found in Michael Gorman's *The Death of the Messiah and the Birth of the New Covenant*. The following is his summary of the new-covenant understanding[43] of atonement:

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[41] In order to avoid this repetition, I will opt for the shorter summary statement of "Christ's life, death and resurrection" with the additional phases of his life being understood as implied.

[42] Matt 16:21 ESV (emphasis mine).

[43] Gorman actually calls this a *model* rather than the more generic 'understanding' language I provide. I intentionally part ways with him in his description, however, since as he explicitly claims, he doesn't do much by way of providing a sufficient description of the mechanism by which the inauguration of the new covenant is achieved. He talks about various characteristic behaviors we might engage in as members of the new covenant community, but doesn't talk enough about how this makes sense given the problem of sin hovering in the background. For an account of atonement to amount to the status of a model, it has to provide some semblance of a mechanism that illuminates our understanding of *why* things had to be this way (rather than some other way). Penal substitution, for instance, clearly counts as a model since it identifies a clear obstacle to union caused by sin and explains how that obstacle is overcome. I think penal

> *The purpose of Jesus' death was to effect, or give birth to, the new covenant, the covenant of peace; that is, to create a new-covenant community of Spirit-filled disciples of Jesus who would fulfill the inseparable covenantal requirements of faithfulness to God and love for others through participation in the death of Jesus, expressed in such practices as faithful witness and suffering (cruciform faith), hospitality to the weak and servant-love for all (cruciform love), and peacemaking (cruciform hope).[44]*

As stated in this summary, there is much to appreciate about Gorman's new-covenant model. It emphasizes the importance of Jesus's death as a *precursor* of or *inauguration* for the new covenant that would in some sense enable members of the new covenant community to fulfill the great commandments of love of God (including faithfulness) and love of neighbor. Moreover, talk of the new covenant can be found abounding in the old and new testaments in various forms, such as when one reads about the restoration of *shalom* and Christ as the Davidic prince of peace.[45]

Among the many merits of Gorman's discussion is the hope of identifying a plausible *mechanism* of atonement. If we attend carefully to the texts concerning the new covenant, such as Exodus 24:8 that is undoubtedly echoed in Luke's narration of the upper room, the possibility of construing Christ's death as a *Paschal* sacrifice immediately emerges.

Understanding how to construe the necessity of Jesus's death as a type of sacrifice that inaugurates the new covenant, however, is significantly problematized when one turns to contemporary work on the book of Hebrews. For instance, David Moffitt has, to my mind convincingly, argued that the author of Hebrews saw one of the fundamental goals of Christ's death to be a necessary step in the process of a sacrifice in the style of the *yom kippur* sacrifice.[46] If the goal of Christ's life, death, and resurrection is understood

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substitution on the traditional retributivist construal is inadequate for other reasons, but it certainly counts as a model of atonement nevertheless.

[44] Gorman, *Death of the Messiah,* 203.

[45] Gorman, *Death of the Messiah*, 148.

[46] For an increasingly fuller articulation of Moffitt's views, see (i) David M. Moffitt, *Atonement and the Logic of Resurrection in the Epistle to the Hebrews.* Supplements to Novum Testamentum 14 (Leiden: Brill, 2011); (ii) David M. Moffit, "Blood, Life, and Atonement: Reassessing Hebrews' Christological Appropriation of Yom Kippur," In *The Day of Atonement: Its Interpretations in Early Jewish and Christian Literature*, Eds. Thomas Hieke and Tobias Nicklas (Leiden: Brill, 2012): 211-224; and his recent paper identifying similar themes in

as to offer a sacrifice of *this sort* to God, we have to wonder whether Jesus is offering *two* sacrifices—i.e. one paschal sacrifice and another *yom kippur* sacrifice—or if there is room to understand the notion of sacrifice here as a mere metaphor. After all, one might wonder, *how* can we understand Christ as offering two sacrifices given that he can only die once?[47] Let us, then, explore this sacrificial proposal a bit further.

First, there is the question concerning what the author of Hebrews thought he or she was doing when expounding on the *yom kippur* sacrifice model of Jesus' atonement. Suppose they thought that the *yom kippur* sacrifice model was merely a helpful metaphor for thinking about Jesus' atonement. If that were true, we would not expect the author of Hebrews to make much of a fuss defending the literal truth of the minute details of such an account. Yet, in Hebrews 7:12-16, we find the author of Hebrews considering an objection to Jesus standing in the role of priest. For after all, it was necessary under Jewish law that if anyone was a priest, then they would have to be descended from the tribe of Levi. But Jesus descended from the tribe of Judah, and thus, was disqualified from the priesthood. And as a result, so the objection claims, Jesus could not offer atonement as a Jewish priest.[48]

This objection to the account offered by the author of Hebrews simply misses the point *if* the *yom kippur* sacrifice model is merely metaphorical, and we would expect the author of Hebrews to say as much. However, this is *not* what happens. Instead, we see the author of Hebrews offering an inspired exegesis of Genesis and Psalms where he identifies a different priesthood, the Melchizedek priesthood, to which Christ belongs on

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the early church fathers: (iii) David M. Moffitt, "Jesus' Heavenly Sacrifice in Early Christian Reception of Hebrews: A Survey," *The Journal of Theological Studies,* NS 68.1 (2017): 46-71.

[47] It's worth emphasizing that Hebrews 6 denies that we can again send Jesus to his death on the cross. It does *not* claim that we cannot sacrifice the son of God again. If one denies that an additional *death* is necessary to make sense of multiple sacrifices, then the problem disappears. Additionally, there is no reason to think it impossible that God could rightly appropriate the cross and subsequent ascension and exaltation of Christ to count as more than one sort of sacrifice. So, in truth, I do not find the above worry very concerning.

[48] See Moffitt, "Blood, Life, and Atonement," 217.

account of his indestructible life. Thus, rather than dismiss the objection as misguided, the author of Hebrews implicitly acknowledges the objection as a serious theological difficulty, and as a result, argues against the assumption that the Levitical priesthood was the only priesthood to which Christ could belong. Such a response reveals that the author to the Hebrews understood Christ's atonement as a literal sacrifice that brought about atonement.

Given my commitment to the inspiration of scripture, I take it as a strong reason in favor of the meaning of a particular text that the meaning in question was intended by the author.[49] Thus, given the argument of the above two paragraphs, I have a strong reason to adopt the sacrificial model as part of a solution to the problem of sin. Moreover, the new covenant texts explored in Gorman's work give us further reason to think that the sacrificial motif found in scripture is more than a mere motif. Consequently, as we consider the various mechanisms of atonement in §3, I take these refinements of the general union solution to the problem of sin as part of my own model of atonement. I save further explicit reflection on the nature of the sacrificial system for chapter 4, for it is best now to turn our attention to some leading possible mechanisms of atonement.

3. Mechanisms of Atonement: Anselmianism & Retributive Punishment

At the beginning of the previous section, I laid out four rules for the logic of forgiveness and reconciliation. The last of those rules was:

> (4) *B* is ready to receive the intended benefits of forgiveness from *A* only if atonement has been made for *B*'s moral deficiencies.

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[49] This is *not* to say that identifying what the human author intended to teach in a text is sufficient or necessary for identifying what the divine author intends to teach. Indeed, I'm convinced that the most fundamental aim of the canon has less to do with teaching as it has to do with bringing its readers into worship. Proper teaching certainly contributes to this, but teaching does not in itself guarantee that proper worship has been achieved. I'm indebted to (i) William J. Abraham, *Canon and Criterion in Christian Theology: From the Fathers to Feminism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998) and (ii) William J. Abraham, *Crossing the Threshold of Divine Revelation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing, 2006) for his helpful and provocative reflections on these issues.

This condition is one that is specific to the class of contexts for forgiveness involving a wronged party that possesses perfect love, and God's forgiveness of humanity belongs to this class. Thus, on the assumption that God is willing to forgive humanity, the only obstacle to reconciliation between God and humanity is humanity itself.

The history of purported mechanisms of atonement involves different methods of categorization. Gustav Aulén thought that there were three main theories: (i) *Christus Victor* (ii) *subjective theories*, of which moral exemplarism is a paradigm instance, and (iii) *objective theories*, such as satisfaction or penal substitution. Although the pattern of categorization Aulén suggests is popular, it tends to obfuscate significant differences that hold between particular atonement models otherwise belonging to the same family.[50] Moreover, space does not permit us to assess all the models of atonement on offer, and thus, we limit ourselves in this section to one of the best developed models of the Medieval period, Anselm's satisfaction model.

3.1 Anselmian Satisfaction

According to Anselm, the fundamental problem of sin does not, strictly speaking, have to do with human guilt, relationships, or some deficiency introduced into the nature of humanity, as I suggested above. Such difficulties might, of course, be derivatively at issue, but for Anselm the fundamental problem has to do with humanity's besmirching of God's *honor*.[51] Thus, Anselm writes to his interlocutor Boso:

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[50] In other words, I agree whole-heartedly with Oliver D. Crisp, "Methodological Issues in Approaching the Atonement," In *T&T Clark Companion to Atonement*, Ed. Adam J. Johnson (New York, NY: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2017): 333.

[51] Indeed, the emphasis on honor in particular enables us to distinguish the Anselmian view from *penal substitution*, where the focus shifts from God's honor to his justice. And as a matter of precision, what is most important for a satisfaction account is not *merely* that the moral scales are balanced, but rather, that some sort of supererogatory offering is additionally given to God. For a brief and helpful general discussion of the historical positions, see Kevin Vanhoozer, "Atonement," In *Mapping Modern Theology: A Thematic and Historical Introduction*, Eds. Kelly M. Kapic and Bruce L. McCormack (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2012): 175-202. For the most in-depth development of a satisfaction and sacrificial account of atonement to date, see Richard Swinburne, *Responsibility and Atonement* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).

A. Let us go back, and see whether by mercy alone, no atonement being made to His honour, it may be fitting for God to forgive sins.[52]

The entire question about atonement *begins*, for Anselm, with an assumption that God's honor is the fundamental obstacle to forgiveness. And by 'mercy' in *Cur Deus Homo* and elsewhere, there can be no reasonable doubt that Anselm means *the foregoing of punishment*.[53] So the general idea is that God has two logically possible options when it comes to forgiving humanity (by hypothesis). He can either have *mercy* on humanity (i.e. forego the punishment of humanity) and then forgive or he can forego mercy (i.e. implement punishment) and subsequently forgive. For Anselm, however, God's honor *must* be restored, for it is unfitting for such an offense to remain unfixed. Indeed, it is bad *for humanity* to have offended God's honor without having offered satisfaction for that dishonor. As a result, Anselm opts for the latter logically possible option in constructing his model of atonement, seeing the implementation of punishment for sin as flowing out of the need to restore God's honor.

Now this way of framing the problem of Anselmian atonement would appear puzzling to many commentators who have failed to see that forgiveness is something *other* than the foregoing of punishment for Anselm[54]. Consider the following passage from Nicholas Wolterstorff (beginning first with a passage from the *Proslogion* on which he is commenting):

> How do you spare the wicked if You are all-just and supremely just? For how does the all-just and supremely just One do something that is unjust? Or what kind of justice is it to give everlasting life to him who merits eternal death? How then, O good God, good to the good and to the wicked, how do You save the wicked if this is not just and You

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[52] St Anselm, *Cur Deus Homo*, Bk. I, Ch 12.

[53] Indeed, given the way the sentence is structured, it is clear that Anselm does not think mercy is *the same thing* as forgiveness, contrary to the mistaken reading one finds in Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Justice,* 163 & 191.

[54] Importantly, Anselm does drive to the conclusion that the only permissible form of *divine* forgiveness involves the implementation of some sort of punishment, so one might be forgiven (pun intended) for making the mistake of conflating Anselm's account of divine forgiveness with an account of forgiveness simpliciter.

do not do anything which is not just? Or, since your goodness is beyond comprehension, is this hidden in the inaccessible light in which You dwell?[55]

Anselm assumes that forgiveness requires foregoing punishment. But justice requires that the wrongdoer be punished. The ancient formula for justice was "rendering to each what is due him or her." What's due the wrongdoer is punishment. Hence to forgive him is to violate justice.[56]

The above is a nice summary of the issues as Wolterstorff sees them. Forgiveness requires that punishment be foregone and justice requires that punishment be meted out. Thus, no one can both forgive and act justly for doing both these things would require that it be possible to simultaneously bring about and refrain from bringing about punishment.

The problem with this interpretation of Anselm, however, can be immediately seen when we notice three things: (i) the emboldened sentence of Wolterstorff's makes a claim about Anselm's understanding of forgiveness that should be ascribed to mercy[57]; (ii) Wolterstorff makes his claims on the basis of a passage which fails to explicitly[58] mention 'forgiveness' at all; and (iii) Wolterstorff assumes that Anselm's conclusions regarding the nature of divine forgiveness hold for the nature of forgiveness *simpliciter*.

So, if Wolterstorff is mistaken about the definition of forgiveness on Anselm's account, is there anything else in Anselm's writings to tell us precisely what he actually thinks forgiveness is? Unfortunately, nowhere in Anselm's work do we find a clear definition of 'forgiveness'. Indeed, there are passages where he seems to use the word in

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[55] *Proslogion* 9 in Anselm, *Monologion and Proslogion: With the Replies of Gaunilo and Anselm,* Tr. Thomas Williams (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing, 1995).

[56] Wolterstorff*, Justice in Love,* 163. The bold lettering is mine. Additionally, it's worth drawing attention to the fact that Wolterstorff is drawing from Anselm's earlier reflections on atonement in the *Proslogion*. In the passage quoted, the focus is on justice rather than God's honor. Justice is relevant to Anselm's view, but it seems to me that it pulls attention away from the true focus of his account of atonement; namely, God's honor.

[57] I should note that although mercy is often identified with the foregoing of punishment, I am persuaded that this identification is false. See Arnold, "What is Mercy" where he pushes against this juridical understanding of mercy by way of three counterexamples.

[58] And of course, on my reading of the passage, i.e. the whole chapter from which the paragraph is taken and the relevant surrounding material, fails to even *implicitly* talk about forgiveness. It's focused on mercy. Moreover, Anselm's more mature account of atonement is found in *Cur Deus Homo*, which makes Wolterstorff's choice of this passage in the *Proslogion* even more peculiar.

incompatible ways. Sometimes forgiveness seems simply synonymous with reconciliation (e.g. *Cur Deus Homo* Bk II, Ch 16), whereas at other points it is not so construed (e.g. Bk I, Ch 12). However, if we are to understand the central issue at the heart of Anselm's satisfaction account, we do not need to clarify his definition of forgiveness any further. We at least know this much: whatever divine forgiveness is on Anselm's account, it requires that God's honor be restored *logically prior* to the granting of forgiveness.[59] But the crucial fault of Anselm's model of atonement is not in his definition of forgiveness or even in his location of the obstacle to reconciliation (i.e. God's honor). Rather, it is his construal of punishment as primarily *retributive* in nature.

3.2 Retributive Punishment, Justice & Atonement – A Philosophical & Biblical Case

The proper definition of retributive punishment allows for several different construals of retributivism.[60] Despite the plethora of retributive positions, however, as a general rule retributivism can be said to affirm that wrongdoers *deserve* punishment for their wrongful actions. And when upon reflection one begins to explore the *grounding* of a wrongdoer's *just desert* of punishment, different retributivism theories begin to emerge.[61]

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[59] In chapter 3 of her manuscript on the atonement, Eleonore Stump argues that, for Anselm, God's love for humanity is conditional on the satisfaction being made. If this were true, then we would have a sufficient reason to reject all Anselmian theories of atonement, for surely, God's love is unconditional. However, I do not think we should see God's honor as getting in the way of his love. Rather, it gets in the way of forgiveness, but only because it is bad *for the human person* to have offended God's honor without making restitution. Indeed, that restitution, once made, brings humanity to a place in which it is ready to receive God's forgiveness. Once we allow that love merely entails *willingness to forgive*, then God can love humanity without simultaneously forgiving humanity. The next step in explaining *why* forgiveness doesn't yet exist involves explaining that there is something about *humanity* (e.g. its guilt or need for penance) that God deals with *because* he loves humanity. Indeed, the logic of Anselm's position seems to require love as the motivation for all of the atonement.

[60] John Cottingham, "Varieties of Retribution", *Philosophical Quarterly*, 29 (1979): 238–46 provides a taxonomy of nine different construals of *retributivism*. The construal at issue in Anselm's writings is positive retributivism; namely, the claim that wrongdoers *deserve* punishment for their crimes. The negative construal claims merely that criminals lose their rights to avoid punishment. Thus, the negative retributivist could claim that sinners have no right to complain if they are punished, but nevertheless, were they to undergo punishment, it would not be a *deserved* punishment. See also the supplementary paper on Cottingham's: Nigel Walker, "Even More Varieties of Retributivism," *Philosophy* 74.290 (1999): 595-605.

[61] For instance, Robert Nozick, *Philosophical Explanations (*Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981): 366–374 presents the view that desert can be calculated by taking account of the offender's degree of culpability and harm done to both individuals and society. Thus, he presents the possibility of determining

That Anselm holds to an understanding of justice as retributive seems undeniable. Throughout his writings on these issues, he makes statements such as, "the just treatment of unatoned sin is to punish it" (*Cur Deus Homo,* Bk I, Ch 12) or "for when you punish the wicked, this is just, because it accords with their merits" (*Proslogion* 10)[62]. Indeed, in light of such pronouncements Anselm seems to endorse a very strong form of retributivism.

But suppose that there is good evidence from either scripture or moral reflection that retributivism is false, at least when it comes to morality generally.[63] In that case, there would be sufficient reason to reject Anselm's satisfaction theory as it is formulated (as well as any other model of atonement which included retributivism as a core conceptually explanatory element). Let us, then, first consider philosophical arguments in favor of retributivism, followed by an exploration of the scriptural data.

3.2.1 Philosophical Considerations

There are, broadly speaking, three primary ways of philosophically motivating the acceptance of retributivism. First, retributivism has very strong intuitive support. Indeed, this intuitive support can be commonly found in the form of an emotion that Jeffrie Murphy has dubbed "retributive hatred".[64] Only a moment's reflection on our immediate reactions and moral assessments of the perpetrators of great evils is necessary to reveal our deeply ingrained desire to see them "brought to justice" via punishment. Thus, in the

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a *fair* punishment that is retributive in nature. Someone might also offer consequentialist grounds for calculating punishment, even if the claim *that wrongdoer X deserves punishment* is grounded deontologically. The appropriate punishment might instead be calculated in terms of deterrence, societal protection, reprobation, reformation, etc. (cf. Jack P. Gibbs, *Crime, Punishment, and Deterrence (*New York: Elsevier, 1975).

[62] Anselm, *Monologion and Proslogion,* 106.

[63] After all, someone might claim that viewing legal punishments as retributive is fine at one level, so long as the justification for whatever punishments are required by law are *morally justified* in other, perhaps consequential, ways.

[64] Murphy and Hampton, *Forgiveness and Mercy,* chapter 3.

absence of defeaters that undermine the force of our intuitions, they are indeed strong

evidence that retributive justice is part of the moral order. Second, some theorists argue

that retributivism is superior to alternative consequentialist theories of punishment and

justice. For example, it is well-known that basic forms of utilitarianism suffer from the

concern that they *in principle* might require the innocent to be punished for the overall

good of society.[65] Moreover, in this context, even if a consequentialist theory of

punishment could persuasively argue that only the guilty can be rightly punished, such a

theory would still need to respond to the objection that *in principle* there is no limit to the

degree of punishment that might be permitted. Yet without a limit to punishment,

wrongdoers might be punished *more than they deserve*, or at least, more than seems morally

permissible. Retributivist theories equipped with some sort of punishment limiting

scheme (e.g. *lex talionis*), however, have a much more reasonable justification for

preventing this sort of over-punishment. As a result, to the degree that a theory of

punishment or justice addresses such concerns, it stands out as superior to its alternatives.

Third, retributivists sometimes argue that retributive theories of punishment are

grounded in more fundamental moral principles. For instance, Jean Hampton has argued

that wrongful actions call into question the equal standing of two human beings; namely,

the perpetrator and the victim. As a result, so she argues, some sort of retributive

punishment is necessary to publicly restore the dignity of the victim.[66]

Each of the above sorts of arguments in favor of retributivism have their limits.

In the case of intuitions, they undoubtedly provide *pro tanto* reasons to believe in

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[65] Smart and Williams, *Utilitarianism: For & Against,* 92-93.

[66] Murphy and Hampton, *Forgiveness and Mercy,* 125. It is, of course, not obvious that wrongdoing calls into question the equality of human persons (i.e. in terms of dignity). Indeed, it seems that many crimes have no bearing, either consciously or unconsciously, on the comparative worth of the two parties involved, such as when someone is wronged when the perpetrator is simply focusing on an immediate perceived need they have.

retributivism for those that have the intuitions[67], but they are hardly decisive. Such intuitions might be overridden by very strong moral intuitions to the contrary (i.e. that retributive forms of justice are not justified without appeal to greater goods to which they might lead) or by scriptural arguments to the contrary.

When countering the second sort of argument suggested *in favor* of retributive forms of justice and punishment—i.e. those arguments that count the ability to explain why there should be *limits* on punishment as a positive feature—a non-retributivist has several options. The first, albeit highly implausible, option would be to embrace the no limit view on punishment as, for instance, an enthusiastic utilitarian might. This position is not an open option in our context, however. A second option, to which I am much more inclined, would be to endorse the following sort of position composed of at least two claims:

> Claim 1 – *punishments are justified in virtue of being reasonably thought as leading to certain ends (e.g. restoration, deterrence, societal protection, etc.), and they are not justified in virtue of being deserved in a retributive sense (i.e. calculated as the required punishment as a function of the harm a wrong action brings about and the degree of the perpetrator's culpability).*

> Claim 2 – *there are limits to what punishments are permissible for bringing about the ends described in Claim 1.*

Now, endorsing Claim 2 is not the same thing as being a retributivist. Retributivism claims that we have a moral duty to punish wrongdoers to the degree to which their wrongdoing merits punishment. That is, retributivism tells us that some form of punishment is positively necessary in cases of wrongdoing. A proponent of Claim 2 can straightforwardly deny this. Instead, all they claim is that *in the case that we do punish a*

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[67] For discussions of this sort of common sense epistemology, see Michael Huemer, *Skepticism and the Veil of Perception* (New York, NY: Rowman and Littlefield, 2001). For social epistemic implications of these same sorts of reasons from intuition, see Linda Trinkaus Zagzebski, *Epistemic Authority: A Theory of Trust, Authority, and Autonomy in Belief* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012). For an enlightening collection of essays disputing common sense epistemology, see Christopher Tucker, *Seemings and Justification: New Essays on Dogmatism and Phenomenal Conservatism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

wrongdoer, we must not over-punish them. This is not to be a retributivist. It is merely to be reasonable.

Of course, we might desire a further explanation for why someone might be justified in affirming Claim 2. As I explained in earlier chapters, the method of reflective equilibrium allows us to sometimes alter theory in response to data and data in response to theory, simply depending on what seems most appropriate from the first-person point of view. In this case, if Claim 2 seems correct to person S, then S does not need to offer further defense of Claim 2 to be rational in endorsing it. Even so, S could easily offer an explanation of her theory as a hybrid theory; that is, one which includes certain moral obligations, perhaps correlative rights, and consequences as factors for determining what actions are right or wrong. Indeed, a virtue ethicist could even offer a general unified account by taking the hypothetical virtuous person's responses to the same situation as determinative of what counts as right or wrong and what competing values (i.e. duties, motives, or consequences) take precedence in a given situation. So it seems that there is no good generalizable reason to object to someone endorsing Claim 1 and Claim 2. And as a result, it seems as if such an argument is in need of further elaboration if it is to retain any bite.

In response to the claim advanced by Hampton that retributive punishment restores the public dignity of the victim, there are at least three things to say. First, strictly speaking the dignity of the victim has not been removed. Rather, the victim has been treated *as if* their dignity were absent. Perhaps Hampton's point, however, is that the *perception* of the dignity and value of a victim has been diminished in the eyes of the public. But this too seems implausible. Indeed, it is *because* we see that the dignity of victims has been maligned that we call for restitution on their behalf. Thus, it does not seem that such goods underlie a need for retributive punishment. Third, even if Hampton were

right that there is a moral imbalance created by the mistreatment of moral agents[68], why should we think that retributive punishment (i.e. roughly, hard treatment applied to the offender in proportion to the harm done and their degree of culpability) is necessary to restore the balance. Indeed, reprobative punishment *sans* proportional hard treatment, or even public moral censure, could be sufficient *in principle* to achieve such an end. Thus, it is simply not the case that a decisive philosophical argument in favor of retributive punishment and justice has been advanced.[69]

Despite the lack of a compelling philosophical case *for* retributive justice and punishment, there is no knock-down case *against* it either. The reason for this is that a retributivist can admit of the goods posited by a non-retributivist. They merely deny that the sorts of consequential goods such non-retributivists have in mind fundamentally ground the reason for punishment.[70]

Thus, it seems that we must turn to scripture if we are to have any strong case for or against retributive punishment and justice. In what follows, I consider a few scriptural passages that, when taken alone, might seem to provide evidence for retributive justice underlying God's rationale for punishment. I think such retributive readings of these passages inevitably and demonstrably involve eisegesis; that is, theologians have read into the text an understanding of retributive punishment where there is none. I will present non-retributive readings of such passages and end with a brief reflection on

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[68] And let us not suppose from the start without argument that humanity exhausts the class of moral agents.
[69] I hasten to add that, contrary to possible appearances, the tone in this claim should not be understood as excessively strong. I tend to doubt that there are very many decisive arguments concerning philosophical theses of the sort to which the question of retributive justice belongs. For a discussion of what conditions are necessary for an argument to be a *good* argument with which I have much sympathy, see Van Inwagen, *The Problem of Evil*, Lecture 3.
[70] Indeed, I doubt a merely deontological construal of retributivism could sufficiently sift through alternative punishments whose value meets the demands of retributive justice but are differentiable with respect to consequences.

various confusions commonly found in authors attempting to defend retributive punishment in scripture.

It would be best, however, to begin with some comments on what would *not* count as strong evidence of retributive justice in scripture. First, to find that God's wrath is directed at humankind does not entail the presence of retributive justice. Non-retributivists often agree that wrath is an appropriate response to have with respect to wrongdoing. What they disagree with retributivists about is *the reason(s) punishment of the offense is morally justified.* Thus, finding wrath is not the same as finding retributivism. Second, finding claims to the effect that wrongdoers *deserve* some punishment or other does not, in and of itself, entail scripture's endorsement of retributivism. On the one hand, the idea that a wrongdoer *got what they had coming to them*, i.e. what they deserved, entails neither the *proportionality thesis* of retributivism nor that the wrongdoer's alleged desert is punishment as opposed to the natural consequences of their action. And on the other hand, even if the wrongdoer's desert is best characterized as punishment (i.e. as opposed to the natural consequences of an action), the question of *why* the wrongdoer deserves punishment must be answered prior to concluding that we have found retributivism. For if the reason they deserve punishment is grounded in promoting a non-retributive good, then we have not found retributivism but merely justice of some other sort. Third, the retributivism we are concerned with is not a mere *legal* retributivism where the reason given to justify punishment of a wrongdoer is via appeal to a legal code (e.g. *x* must receive ten lashes as the appropriate punishment for their thievery). A judge might declare a punishment for a wrongdoer and justify that declaration by appeal to the law and retributive legal norms; however, only if the legal system itself is justified by appeal

to retributivism in the *moral realm* (i.e. as a fundamental value in the world) will the judge's appeal to legal retributive punishment require an endorsement of moral retributivism.[71]

In summary, then, finding scriptural attestation to (i) God's wrath directed at sinners, (ii) the deserts of wrongdoers, or (iii) legal retributivism does not permit us to conclude that retributivism is endorsed by scripture. Non-retributive theories of punishment and justice are compatible with the presence of all three of these features in scripture, and so, we should remain vigilant while interpreting scripture to keep these points at the forefront of our mind. Let us, then, turn to some instances of possible scriptural evidence for retributivism.

3.2.2 Scriptural Case Concerning Retributivism

It is clear that many scholars see *retributive justice* as part and parcel of Pauline theology.[72] Indeed, the entire letter to the Romans might be construed as an affirmation of retributivism. Consider what we read in Rm 2:3-11:

> [3] Do you imagine, whoever you are, that when you judge those who do such things and yet do them yourself, you will escape the judgment of God? [4] Or do you despise the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience? Do you not realize that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance? [5] But by your hard and impenitent heart *you are storing up wrath for yourself* on the day of wrath, when God's *righteous judgment [δικαιοκρίσιας]* will be revealed. [6] For *he will repay according to each one's deeds*: [7] to those who by patiently doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, *he will give eternal life*; [8] while for those who are self-seeking and who obey not the truth but wickedness, there will be wrath and fury. [9] There will be anguish and distress for everyone who does evil, the Jew first and also the Greek, [10] but glory and honor and peace for everyone who does good, the Jew first and also the Greek. [11] For God shows no partiality.[73]

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[71] Indeed, as anyone familiar with the actual *practice* of legal systems is aware, many of the punishments assigned to a particular crime *fail,* by any reasonable standard, to live up to proportionality requirements of retributivism. That is, there is a degree of arbitrariness in the punishment (e.g. someone receives 10 years in prison instead of 9 years and 364 days in prison). Consequential justifications for such legal systems, such as deterrence from crimes, admit of some vagueness whereas strong retributivism does not.

[72] For a representative sample: (i) J. I. Packer, *What Did the Cross Achieve? The Logic of Penal Substitution* (Leicester: TSF Monograph, 1974); (ii) Leon Morris, *The Cross in the New Testament* (Exeter Paternoster, 1966); (iii) Thomas R. Schreiner, "Penal Substitution View," In *The Nature of the Atonement*, Eds. James Beilby and Paul R. Eddy (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 67-116; and (iv) John R. W. Stott, *The Cross of Christ* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1986): 187.

[73] Italics mine.

This passage clearly teaches that God is a judge, and a righteous or just judge at that. Moreover, we see in verse 6 that God repays each person according to their deeds. So absent any consideration of the context of Paul's argument or the Hebrew scriptures echoing abundantly throughout the epistle[74], one might indeed conclude that retributive justice simply *must* be included in the best explanation for various elements of the above passage (e.g. the presence of God's wrath, the calculation of repaying people for their deeds, etc.). However, if we reconsider the broad argument of the epistle to the Romans, it becomes starkly clear that retribution is *not* fundamental to God's *dikaiosune.*

First, it is imperative when reading Romans to realize what question Paul is attempting to answer. Contrary to common misperceptions, Paul is not ultimately trying to answer the question: *what must I do to be saved?* This question is not wholly orthogonal to Paul's project, but it is not what guides his discussion in Romans. Rather, as Richard Hays has aptly noted, Paul is engaging in the project of "theodicy", seen especially in Romans 1:16-17 where Paul both echoes Isaiah 50:7-8 (i.e. "I have not been disgraced…I know that I shall not be put to shame [LXX: αἰσχυνθὼ]") and alludes to Habakkuk 2:4 (i.e. "but the righteous [LXX: δίκαιος] live by my faith [LXX: πίστεώς μου]").[75] That is, Paul is, with a slight deviation from the words of Milton, providing an account which justifies the ways of God to Jews and Gentiles.[76] Or put yet another way, Paul is defending the justice of God's decision to show "no partiality" (Rm. 2:11).

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[74] Indeed, Paul implies that the Hebrew scriptures contain the gospel he proclaims in Rm. 1:1-3a: "Paul…set apart for the gospel of God, ²which he *promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures,* ³the gospel concerning his Son…" (italics mine).

[75] Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989): 38-40; 53.

[76] Cf. John Milton, *Paradise Lost* (New York, NY: Penguin, 2000), Bk 1. Also, for discussion of the make-up of the audience to whom the letter is addressed, see Ben Witherington III and Darlene Hyatt, *Paul's Letter to the Romans: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing, 2004): 8.

But when Paul defends God's impartiality, we must ask *what* impartiality and *why* Paul would need to defend God's decision to be impartial? Indeed, insofar as Paul writes concerning God's *justice,* modern readers typically assume a just God simply *is* impartial. That is, justice entails impartiality (i.e. within this context).[77] But we must remember that YHWH entered into a covenant with Israel in the Hebrew scriptures, a covenant which was *not* impartial.[78] And given the context of a covenant which was *partial to Israel*, the violation of which would amount to violating a promise (i.e. something which a morally perfect being would surely not do), God's breaking the covenant is indeed worrisome. Thus, the impartiality in need of defense is God's impartiality in extending salvation to both the Jews and the Gentiles. The reason this impartiality, which otherwise seems entirely just to us today, is in need of defense is because God's action is perceived by some in Israel as a violation of his promise to be their God. This is the topic of Romans.

But let us turn our attention directly to the text. It is ineluctably clear that Paul writes to explain the place of Gentiles in relationship to God. Consider the following characteristic passages of the text (all italics are my own):

> For I am not ashamed of the gospel; it is the power of god for salvation to everyone who has faith, to *the Jew first and also to the Greek.* (Rm. 1:16)

> There will be anguish and distress [θλῖψις καὶ στενοχωρία[79]] for everyone who does evil, *the Jew first and also the Greek*, but glory and honor and peace for everyone who does good, *the Jew first and also the Greek.* (Rm. 2:9-10)

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[77] Perhaps it is worth adding what might seem obvious: there are contexts where impartiality is unjust. If you are giving out goods to help the poor in a city and give away those goods indiscriminately such that the goods are given to people of higher economic classes without any use for such goods, you have failed to provide a just distribution. Thus, both partiality and impartiality are just in different contexts. What matters is the *reason* for the partiality or impartiality.

[78] In a recent keynote presentation at the University of Cambridge, Brian Leftow argued that the reason for God's election of Israel is entirely a function of God's own desires. As Leftow laid out the problem, there are 4 types of reasons one might give to explain God's choice of Israel: (i) Objective value – Israel was better than all the *possible* alternatives to carry out God's plan; (ii) Risky choice – God just flipped a coin, in a sense, and went with Israel; (iii) No reason – God chose Israel without *any* rationale whatsoever; or (iv) Subjective value – God liked Israel better than the alternatives. The most adequate answer for Leftow ends up being (iv), which would entail that the covenant was indeed *partial* to Israel in a real sense.

[79] Interestingly, Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*, 43 points out that the Greek 'θλῖψις καὶ στενοχωρία' is an allusion to Isaiah 8:22 (LXX). We see in the very next verse of Isaiah 9:1 that "there will be no gloom for those who were in anguish," which is surely a reference to the ones said to be in anguish

> What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience the objects of wrath that are made for destruction; and what if he has done so in order to make known the riches of his glory for the objects of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory—including us whom he has called, *not from the Jews only but also from the Gentiles*? (Rm. 9:22-24)

> *For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek*; the same Lord is Lord of all and is generous to all who call on him. (Rm. 10:12)

> For I tell you that *Christ has become a servant of the circumcised* on behalf of the truth of God in order that he might confirm the promises given to the patriarchs, and in order *that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy*. As it is written,
> "Therefore *I will confess you among the Gentiles*,
> and sing praises to your name" (Rm. 15:8-9)

In all the above passages, we see the theme of theodicy (i.e. justifying God's decision to extend the benefits of salvation to both Jews and Gentiles) clearly. The theme of God's justice does not concern his justice in, say, punishing the wicked as one might expect were the author endorsing retributivism. Instead, the theme of justice concerns God's decision to extend *mercy* to all. And crucially, God does not extend mercy to morally perfect persons, but rather, he extends mercy to sinners (cf. Rm. 3:23). Thus, a mere discussion of God's justice, as we find in Romans, is not at all sufficient to conclude that Paul is a retributivist.

But let us not miss the brilliance of Paul's ability to weave enthymematic allusions into his dense texts, allusions which foreshadow his overall argument. Consider the most difficult part of his text for a non-retributivist in Romans 2, where we find this theme of the unrestricted scope of God's mercy in the veiled subtext: "For *he will repay according to each one's deeds*" (v. 6). This line is almost a word for word lifting of Ps. 62:12 in the Septuagint, as well as Prov. 24:12. In the latter case, the proverb emphasizes the

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in the final line of Isaiah 8. Thus, in echoing this passage, Paul sets up the astute reader to see the ominous outlook of Romans 2 as temporary, an outlook that gives way to the hope of Israel to come. We then see Paul reminding us of this theme when he again echoes Isaiah 8:22 in a different context—i.e. Romans 8:34-35—where he claims that nothing, not even θλῖψις καὶ στενοχωρία can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

appropriateness of *God* as judge, for he perfectly knows the heart of all. In the former case, the psalm emboldens its hearers to *hope[80]* in the Lord, for he provides deliverance and salvation to his people. Thus, as he develops his argument in Romans, Paul is subtly communicating to his readers that, despite the fact that Romans 2 & 3 include *everyone* in the class of people coming under condemnation, those who hope in the Lord for salvation may yet find mercy.[81] Indeed, in the preceding verse, Paul appears to echo Deuteronomy 9:27, the only Old Testament passage in which we find σκληρότητα (tr. stubbornness). In that passage, Moses reminds the Israelites (cf. Num. 11:1-34) how he pleaded with YHWH to show mercy on Israel rather than to destroy them as a result of their grumbling in the wilderness. Thus, Paul is reminding his readers that even when we rightly fall under God's condemnation and serve as objects of God's wrath, God has mercy on those who truly repent.

What, then, is Paul communicating about God's justice by including both these echoes in Romans 2 and the letter's overarching theme of Gentile inclusion in the covenant? First, he reveals God's primary aim when it comes to punishing his people. God does *not* punish to restore the moral order as a retributivist might suggest. Were this the case, then God's decision to have mercy would itself be unjust, for wrongdoers would not receive the punishment due to them. Instead of a retributivist reading, then, Paul communicates that God desires the repentance of those at whom his wrath is directed.[82] In other words, whatever punishment is implemented (e.g. giving someone up to their

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[80] Some translations (e.g. the NRSV) occlude the emphasis on *elpis* somewhat by translating it as some form of 'trust'. This is unfortunate given the context in which Paul quotes this text. Rather, the emphasis is on *hoping* in the Lord's salvation, despite being, oneself, a member of the condemned party in Romans 2.

[81] Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul,* 42.

[82] Someone might wonder how it is best to characterize the wrath of God as *directed at* persons if it is not retributive. An analogy between parents and children is apt. For consider a parent who has been wronged by their child. Let us stipulate that their daughter has stolen the car for an evening on the town. When the daughter returns, her parents will be rightly angry at her. Why? Because she should not have stolen the car in such circumstances! Their reasons for punishing her and whether they punish her, of course, may be either retributive or non-retributive. But the appropriateness of their anger, or indignation, should not be called into question.

passions or debased minds, as in Rm. 1:26 & 28), it aims not at retribution but at restoration. And it is restoration that renders intelligible the justice of mercy, which is applied to those who repent (i.e. by ceasing to refuse the free gift of God's forgiveness).

Even on the reading of Romans just offered, however, a theologian might *insist* that retributive justice lies behind the text as a presupposition that best explains *why* God's mercy is just. For after all, on the picture described above, little has been said about the role of Christ's death in all of this, but surely passages such as Romans 5 (i.e. with the Adam and Christ parallel) and Romans 6 (i.e. with the idea that we are buried and resurrected in Christ) require that we make sense of the need for Christ's death to attain the mercy that God desires to give. The general thought process of such a theologian might look like this:

> God desires to show us mercy, and he desired to show the Israelites mercy as well. However, because justice demands that we be punished (i.e. we deserve death; cf. Rm. 6:23), the only way in which God could show mercy to us was if the deserved punishment were actually implemented. This is why in Romans 5 Paul compares Adam and Christ with one another. For just as all humanity suffered as a result of Adam's sin, so too Christ might represent all humanity in bearing the punishment for our sin.

Despite the appeal of this line of thought, it is worth emphasizing that it is a theological gloss on Romans 5-6, which imports a particular mechanism of the atonement to explain the Adam and Christ parallel. If we look at the Romans text, however, we do see suggestions of an under-described mechanism:

> …[all who believe] are now justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a sacrifice of atonement [i.e. ἱλαστήριον[83]], by his blood, effective through faith… (Rm. 3:24-25a)

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[83] It is worth emphasizing that the Greek word (*h*)*ilasterion* is used to refer to the mercy seat or the altar of burnt offering (Ezek 43: 14, 17, & 20) in the LXX rather than to a type of *sacrifice* (cf. Christian Eberhart, *The Sacrifice of Jesus: Understanding Atonement Biblically* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2011): 114-115), and the term is used similarly in Hebrews 9:5 (i.e. the only other NT appearance).

This brief nod to Christ's death as a part of a *sacrifice* might appear to support the theological objection to non-retributive readings of Romans I suggested above, for after all (someone might think), what is a sacrifice but a substitutionary offering of punishment in place of the punishment one owes to God?

Although I explore the place of sacrifices in atonement more fully in the next chapter, it is worth saying something briefly in response to the understanding of sacrifices just suggested. First, even though we find the notion of Christ being a sin offering here and elsewhere in scripture (cf. Rm. 4:25; 8:3; 1 Cor. 15:3, 20, 23; 2 Cor. 5:21; Gal 1:4), we must find a way to harmonize that understanding with the depiction of Christ as a *covenant* sacrifice (cf. 1 Cor. 11:25), a *yom kippur* sacrifice (Hebrews), a Passover sacrifice (1 Cor. 5:7-8), a firstfruits sacrifice (1 Cor. 15:20, 23), and a sacrifice of self-oblation (Rom. 8:32; Gal. 2:20).[84] Second, whether or not the sacrifice is an *equal* punishment of the animal to the punishment deserved by a wrongdoer is highly dubious, as is (third) the idea that the animal is truly punished in the first place. Thus, if we are to understand the sacrificial process as involving substitution at all, we must carefully explicate precisely *what* is substituted for *what* in the ritual (e.g. Is the death of the animal substituted for the death I, as the sinner, deserve? Is the animal's death merely the penalty that *would have been* punishment applied to me?). Let us, then, set this problem of explaining the significance of sacrificial imagery aside for the time being and turn to a further scriptural text often thought to teach or presuppose a sort of retributivism: Isaiah 53.

Isaiah 53, one of several servant songs in Isaiah, has been called "the most contested chapter in the Old Testament" due to its incredibly convoluted interpretive difficulties.[85] Indeed, its very status as speaking to issues of atonement is highly

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[84] Thanks to Marshall, *Beyond Retribution,* 63 for all but one of these references and sacrificial categories.
[85] Brevard Childs, *Isaiah*, OTL (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2001): 410.

contested.[86] For instance, many authors deny that the context of Isaiah 53 is cultic in character, and thus, does not depict the suffering servant as being appropriated as a sacrifice.[87] Such objections to treating Isaiah 53 as concerning atonement seem hasty unless by 'atonement' we merely understand atoning *sacrifice*. But, of course, 'atonement' (and the Hebrew: 'כִּפֶּר') might extend beyond the meaning of atoning sacrifice (e.g. Numbers 16:46-49 or Joshua 7), and there are several New Testament passages that suggest Isaiah 53 ought to be read in light of Christ's atoning death (e.g. Romans 15:21 or Acts 8:26-40). Consequently, we should include Isaiah 53 in our collection of passages concerning Christ's atonement.

Given that Isaiah 53 is relevant to an explication of atonement, then, we should ask ourselves whether or not it presupposes retributivism. Let us begin with the passage.

> 4 Surely he has borne our infirmities
>   and carried our diseases;
> yet we accounted him stricken,
>   struck down by God, and afflicted.
> 5 But he was wounded for our transgressions,
>   crushed for our iniquities;
> upon him was the punishment that made us whole,
>   and by his bruises we are healed.
> 6 All we like sheep have gone astray;
>   we have all turned to our own way,
> and the LORD has laid on him
>   the iniquity of us all. (Isa 53:4-6)

Before continuing on with the passage, let us pause here to see if we yet have textual support for retributivism. We have some textual evidence in verse 4 that the suffering servant (i.e. Jesus) *bears* suffering that is *in some sense* ours. The sense in which

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[86] Childs, *Isaiah*, 418.

[87] E.g. (i) Eberhart, *The Sacrifice of Jesus*, 119; (ii) Childs, *Isaiah,* 418; (iii) R. N. Whybray, *Thanksgiving for a Liberated Prophet: An Interpretation of Isaiah Chapter 53*, JSOTSS 4 (Sheffield: JSOT, 1978): 29-57; and (iv) Harry M. Orlinsky, "The So-Called 'Servant of the Lord' and 'Suffering Servant' in Second Isaiah," In *Studies in the Second Part of the Book of Isaiah,* SVT, XIV (Leiden: Brill, 1967): 56. See J. Alan Groves, "Atonement in Isaiah 53: 'For He Bore the Sins of Many,'" In *The Glory of the Atonement: Biblical, Historical and Practical Perspectives* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004): 88 for discussion of appropriating Isaiah 53 as a non-cultic interpretation of one's suffering on humanity's (or Israel's) behalf (i.e. either vicariously or substitutionally).

the suffering is ours, however, is not yet explained. One might say that Jesus bears *the same sorts* of suffering that we (i.e. either corporate humanity, the church, or Israel) do. And such a suggestion might merely indicate the Incarnation—i.e. he was human in every way as we are (cf. Hebrews 2:17-18)—or it might indicate something more. In verse 5 we see that Jesus was "wounded *for* our transgressions" and "crushed *for* our iniquities," but what is meant by the word 'for' here? Someone might think that the wounds *pay the price* due for our transgressions, but the only rationale given in this verse is this: these punishments *heal* us. How do they heal us? By paying the retributive price due? Nothing to this effect is said explicitly, and thus, this text can only be construed as endorsing such a retributivist element if there are good independent reasons to endorse retributivism. Finally, in verse 6, however, we see that our sin was laid upon Jesus, the suffering servant. The language of 'laid upon' is again multiply ambiguous. It could be interpreted as either metaphysical or forensic imputation of sin to Christ, but it might also be simply a shorthand way of saying that Jesus became a sin offering on our behalf. Indeed, this latter interpretation seems to be supported by what we find in verse 10:

> [10] Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him with
>   pain.
> *When you make his life an offering for sin*,
>   he shall see his offspring, and shall prolong his
>   days;
> through him the will of the LORD shall prosper. (Isa 53:10; italics mine)

In verse 10, we also find a theme of God *willing* the pain of the suffering servant towards the end of making a sin offering. Does such a claim immediately imply that God *causally determined* the crushing of Jesus on the cross? Clearly not, for it is well known that God's will, like anyone's will, can be represented in multiple ways.

To see this, consider, on the one hand, 1 Timothy 2:4 where Paul tells us that God desires that all be saved and "come to the knowledge of the truth," and consider, on the other hand, the very plausible empirical claim that some people will not participate

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in the new creation. If the latter claim that some people fail to participate in new creation is true, then God seems to have a desire that is not satisfied for, after all, Paul tells us that God *desires that all participate in the new creation*, something which, empirically speaking, seems pretty unlikely. One way to explain how God might have an unsatisfied desire, then, is to posit an antecedent/consequent will distinction in God. On such a view, God has desires about how the world will be, including an unconditional desire for free creatures. Such desires collectively constitute God's antecedent will; that is, what God wills (logically) prior to accounting for the effects of creating free creatures. However, the unconditional desire for free creatures, on this view, has implications for which of God's other desires might be satisfied. For instance, one desire God has antecedently is the desire that *all persons* be brought into the new creation. But given his additional desire that such people *freely choose* to enter the new creation, God sees his antecedent will cannot be satisfied. That is, God sees that the set of his unconditional desires is not constituted by mutually satisfiable (or compossible) objects. As a result, God forms a different set of *conditional* desires, all of which are compossible and collectively make up his consequent will; that is, what God desires (logically) after accounting for the decisions of free creatures.

So let us return to the question of how we might affirm Isaiah 53:10 when it says that it was God's will that Christ experience pain and be crushed. This certainly is a violently construed image, but strictly speaking, it is consistent to read this passage as teaching that God willed such things as part of his consequent will rather than as part of his antecedent will. And if so, then a reasonable way to understand God's permission of Christ's suffering is as a consequent of the free decisions of his creatures that he then uses to our benefit. That is, humanity is responsible for violently implementing Christ's suffering upon him and God appropriates Christ's suffering as an occasion for making a sin offering on behalf of all humanity. Such an interpretation does, of course, extend a

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bit beyond the text, but it is also *consistent* with the text, and thus, allows us to see that retributivism is also not *taught* by the text but is, rather, an attempt to flesh out Isaiah 53's meaning.

There is much more that one might say concerning Isaiah 53, but this is sufficient to rule out the view that Christians are committed to retributivism by that text. Let us turn, then, to a consideration of one further complication for non-retributivists found in the Hebrew Bible; namely, the principle of *lex talionis*.

We find the *lex talionis* presented explicitly in three different passages in the Pentateuch: Exodus 21:20-25, Leviticus 24:19-22, and Deuteronomy 19:18-21. For reference, consider just the Leviticus passage:

> Anyone who maims another shall suffer the same injury in return: fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth; the injury inflicted is the injury to be suffered. One who kills an animal shall make restitution for it; but one who kills a human being shall be put to death. You shall have one law for the alien and for the citizen: for I am the LORD your God.

Such passages bear witness to "laws of retaliation" that we find in Ancient Near Eastern law codes.[88] The comparative humaneness of the Hebrew *lex talionis* has been noted by many scholars[89], and unlike other cultures, the class system seems to have played far less of a role in determining the punishment due for different crimes (hence, the explicit command to "have one law for the alien and for the citizen" in the Leviticus passage quoted above).

Moreover, the Hebrew *lex talionis* was applied as a limit on the punishment that could be administered for a particular offense (i.e. not as a retributive expectation or *due*

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[88] Much of my discussion is indebted to the discussion found in Marshall, *Beyond Retribution*, 79-84. See Denny J. Weaver, "Transforming Nonresistance: From *Lex Talionis* to 'Do Not Resist the Evil One,'" In *The Love of Enemy and Nonretaliation in the New Testament*, Ed. W. M. Swartley (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1992): 32-71 for a nice discussion of the relevance of such law codes (e.g. the Code of Hammurabi).

[89] E.g. Marshall, *Beyond Retribution*, 79-80; G. J. Wenham, "Law and the Legal System in the Old Testament," In *Law, Morality, and the Bible: A Symposium*, Ed. B. N. Kaye and G. J. Wenham (Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 1978): 24-52.

punishment). After all, there are obvious cases in which the literal *lex talionis* would not result in equivalent punishments being laid upon the wrongdoer. Suppose, for instance, that I go about knocking out teeth from 28 individuals and that I do so in such a way that I knock out a different type of tooth from each individual (e.g. never do I knock out the same molar-type in two different people).[90] However many turps (i.e. units of evil) I introduce into the world through this pernicious and calculated sort of wrongdoing, that same number must be balanced out via the logic of retribution. But then, what should my punishment be? It might seem natural to assume that the proper punishment for me would be to remove all 28 of *my* teeth and call things even. But that would be absurd! For the number of turps introduced into the world conditional on my losing *all* my teeth would surely surpass the turps I introduced into the world when knocking out just *one* tooth in 28 other persons. So I should not be punished via the removal of all my teeth. But then what punishment would be apt? *Lex talionis,* if interpreted in a literal way as requiring the very same punishment does not seem to provide the correct answer in such a case.

This point is driven home even more heavily with the Exodus 21:22-25 appearance of the *lex talionis* which, rather than sanction a true eye-for-an-eye penalty, opts for an eye-for-some-sufficient-value-of-an-eye penalty instead[91]:

> When people who are fighting injure a pregnant woman so that there is a miscarriage, and yet no further harm follows, the one responsible shall be fined what the woman's husband demands, paying as much as the judge determines. If any harm follows, then you shall give life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth…(Ex. 21:22-24a)

The equivalent punishment of the scenario here described (i.e. if we ignore the issues concerning degree of culpability) would not be monetary, but rather, would require the taking of an innocent life in retaliation; namely, the life of the wrongdoer's next

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[90] If you're puzzled as to why someone might engage in this sort of behavior, just imagine that I am Dr. Frankenstein collecting a full set of teeth for my monster.
[91] We see such a practice also in Josephus, *Ant.* 4.280.

expected unborn child. Such a verdict would be morally horrendous, and so, obviously requires straying from a strict *lex talionis* logic.[92] What then is the purpose of the *lex talionis* in the books of the law?

There are a number of justifications we might offer to explain the use of *lex talionis*, but it should be clear that whatever the rationale, it excludes a strong affirmation of retributivism. Rather, it merely sets a *limit* to the punishment permissible for different offenses, whereas on retributivist models of justice, an equivalent punishment would *ultimately* be required.[93] Thus, no affirmation of retributivism is to be found in the *lex talionis*.

From the Christian perspective on the *lex talionis*, however, even more can be said, for Christ calls Christians to an even greater standard in his sermon on the mount. There Matthew represents Jesus as saying:

> You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' But I say to you, do not resist an evildoer. But if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also; and if anyone wants to sue you and take your coat, give your cloak as well; and if anyone forces you to go one mile, go also the second mile. Give to everyone who begs from you, and do not refuse anyone who wants to borrow from you. (Mt. 5:38-42)

Here we see Jesus citing directly the *lex talionis* measure and charging his listeners[94] to demonstrate even greater love and mercy towards an offender. Someone might think

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[92] There were, of course, scholars who may have thought otherwise, such as Philo, *The Special Laws*, Tr. F. H. Colson, Vol. 7-8 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1928-1965): III, 181-182. Yet clearly there were instances of rabbis who saw these sorts of difficulties in the Hebrew scriptures: e.g. Babylonian Talmud, Tractate *Baba Qamma*. 83b-84a. For a discussion of the rabbinical interpretation of the *lex talionis*, see Jacob Milgrom, "Lex Talionis and the Rabbis," *Bible Review* 12.2 (1996): 16-48.

[93] As ever, there are complications. Some who think that Christ actually *paid* the retributive price for all sin might think that retributivism is true but that the deviation from retributivism allowed in the law and *lex talionis* cases is permissible precisely *because* the retributive demands have been met by Christ. If this is right, however, notice what follows from it: nothing about the *lex talionis* texts teaches that moral retributivism is true.

[94] There is some debate about *who* is the audience of Jesus' message, his disciples only (cf. Robert A. Guelich, *The Sermon on the Mount: A Foundation for Understanding* (Waco, TX: Word Publishing, 1982: 59-60, who offers a redactional interpretation of some incongruities in the text) or others who were following him (cf. Charles H. Talbert, *Reading the Sermon on the Mount: Character Formation and Decision Making in Matthew 5-7* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2004): 12-13). There is also the issue of who the audience is intended to be for Jesus' teaching *as part of Matthew's gospel*. And finally, there is also the question concerning the so-called sermon's status *as a sermon*. Is it rather, as N. T. Wright suggests (cf. Wright, *Jesus*

Jesus is telling his audience to reject the *lex talionis* altogether[95], but this is to go beyond the teaching of the passage. Whether or not Jesus is teaching such rejection will depend on the purpose of the *lex talionis* and the people over whom it has jurisdiction in his eyes. Perhaps, for instance, Jesus merely thinks *his followers* should follow such a demanding norm for action as turning the other cheek rather than all people. If so, then he is not rejecting the *lex talionis* so much as modifying (or clarifying) its scope.

Yet given that the *lex talionis*, as we have seen, is truly only prescribing a *maximum permissible* penalty for various offenses, following Jesus' instructions is not a violation of that law. Suppose the appropriate *lex talionis* measure for a slap in the face is to *at most* slap one's offender in return. In that case, there are many ways to follow the *lex talionis* prescription. You could, of course, satisfy the *lex talionis* by slapping the offender, but you could equally well ignore the slap, pray over the offender, attempt to understand if something else is bothering the offender, buy them a beer, or as Jesus suggests, offer them your other cheek. So, Jesus is not teaching anything in strict contradiction with the *lex talionis*; rather, he is simply teaching his followers to satisfy the *lex talionis* by way of a higher standard.[96] What precise standard Christ has in mind might be controversial[97], but we can, at the very least, conclude that for Christ, the just punishment of an offense is not determined by retributive calculation, but rather, by *charity*.

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and the Victory, 287), a collection of sayings that are the sorts of things Matthew and the other disciples heard Jesus saying put together not unlike a collection of aphorisms?

[95] Although, see Dale C. Allison, *The Sermon on the Mount: Inspiring the Moral Imagination* (New York, NY: Crossway Publishing, 1999): 93-94, who claims that Christ is overturning *lex talionis* at the individual level while leaving it operative at the governmental level.

[96] It is possible that Jesus was pushing against a common interpretation of the *lex talionis* punishments as binding. Indeed, there certainly were some people who took the ascribed punishments quite literally. Indeed, Jesus could have been doing *both*! That is, he could have been rejecting the literal interpretation of *lex talionis* while also affirming the moderate interpretation of the *lex talionis* with the added twist that his audience should seek a higher standard of right living.

[97] Though see Mt. 5:44 & 48—"⁴⁴ But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you…⁴⁸ Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect."—where Christ echoes the language of Lev. 19:2 & 18 ("² You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy…¹⁸ You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD.")

So, to summarize what we have seen, do the scriptures *teach* retribution? I have not attempted an exhaustive survey of the possible texts, for that would amount to a book in itself. Rather, I have looked at the book of Romans, Isaiah 53, the *lex talionis* and Jesus' teaching on the *lex talionis*. We have not found any good reason to think that these texts teach retributivism; or perhaps to put it a bit more strongly, we have found good reason to *doubt* that these texts teach retributivism. There does remain the question of the rationale behind the Hebrew sacrificial system, but before turning to that, let us first consider one highly regarded, at least in some circles, mechanism of the atonement: *penal substitution*.

4. On the Various Forms of Penal Substitution

The definition of penal substitution is not immediately straightforward; however, before delving into the mire of attempting such a task, there are a few uncontroversial remarks we can make. First, those who endorse penal substitution do so because they consider it "the most promising of the objective theories" of the atonement.[98] That is, they think that penal substitution provides a solution to the problem of atonement that is irreducible to merely psychological features of humans. Second, for any penal substitution theorist, they will be happy to ascribe punishment, *in some sense,* to Jesus and maintain that Jesus takes on some sort of status in our place (e.g. being the bearer of sin, morally guilty for sin, legally guilty for sin, the object of God's wrath, bearer of suffering, *etcetera*). Beyond these general definitional points, however, defining the view becomes

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[98] Gordon Graham, "Atonement," In *The Cambridge Companion to Christian Philosophical Theology*, Eds. Charles Taliaferro and Chad Meister (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010): 134. And although I prefer to avoid Aulén's subjective/objective distinction, it's influence is difficult to avoid entirely. Let us interpret 'objective' above, then, as not merely subjective; that is, as not merely "consisting essentially in a change taking place *in men"* (Aulén, *Christus Victor,* 18; italics mine). Moreover, I understand Aulén's 'in men' to indicate characterological or psychological changes.

quite convoluted. Consider, for instance, the following definition from Thomas Schreiner:

> …before defending penal substitution from the Scriptures, I should clarify what is meant by penal substitution. The penalty for sin is death (Rom 6:23[99]). Sinners deserve eternal punishment in hell from God himself because of their sin and guilt. God's holy anger is directed (Rom 1:18) against all those who have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Rom 3:23). And yet because of God's great love, he sent Christ to bear the punishment of our sins. Christ died in our place, took to himself our sin (2 Cor 5:21) and guilt (Gal 3:10), and bore our penalty so that we might receive forgiveness of sins.[100]

Let us not linger too long analyzing this definition, but it is worth pointing out some difficulties with Schreiner's definition as it stands. First, it seems that he treats penalties and punishments as synonymous. Sometimes the concept picked out by the words 'punishment' and 'penalty' is indeed one and the same concept, but this is not always the case. Thus, it would be preferable for Schreiner to flag if he intends to make a distinction here or is treating them synonymously. Second, we see that the just desert for human sin is "eternal punishment in hell" and that Christ was sent to "bear the punishment of our sins". Strictly speaking, from these two claims it follows that Christ undergoes eternal punishment in hell, but Schreiner does not say this. Rather, Christ dies in our place, and so, one must ask whether the full punishment of sin was actually taken on by Christ, who does not seem to have spent an eternity in hell, at least according to the biblical narrative's lights.[101]

Despite the apparent intuitiveness of what is meant by 'penal substitution', then, it is clear that defining the view brings with it numerous difficulties, the first of which is the *definition of punishment* with which a particular theorist allies herself.

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[99] Notice the theologically-loaded translation of 'ὀψώνια' Schreiner gives here as *penalty*. 'Wages' or 'pay' are better translations of the word unless one thinks 'wages of sin' is metaphorical for 'the penalty owed as a result of sin'. But again, we need a strong theological justification for such a translation.

[100] Schreiner, "Penal Substitution View," 72-73.

[101] Perhaps Jesus does spend some time in *Sheol* as seems to be implied in 1 Peter 3:18-20. This passage is fascinating, especially in light of certain Second Temple texts such as the 1 Enoch. See Lewis R. Donelson, *I & II Peter and Jude: A Commentary* (Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 2010): 116-117.

Consider, for instance, a recent exchange between William Lane Craig and Mark C. Murphy concerning the incoherence of penal substitution. Murphy claims that penal substitution is incoherent since it requires that an innocent person be punished, where punishment entails condemnation of the one punished "as performer of the wrong".[102] As Murphy would have it, then, to authoritatively implement hardship on someone for failing to follow a rule without *also* expressing condemnation of that person is not to punish but to penalize.[103]

Indeed, there are many instances of hard treatment being applied without an accompanying condemnation for having performed a wrong. Consider, for example, the following case. In baseball, there is a sort of illegal motion known as a balk. If a pitcher balks while a player from the opposing team is on base, then time is called by the umpire, and the opposing player is advanced to the next base. Clearly enough, pitchers rarely balk intentionally, and so, balking is often a blameless offense. The pitcher is not *condemned* for violation of the rule, but hard treatment is indeed endured, sometimes to the point that a game is lost. Moreover, not only does the pitcher undergo hard treatment, but so too does the entire team undergo such treatment as a result of the pitcher's literal misstep. Such a case, on Murphy's view, constitutes two instances of the implementation of a penalty rather than a punishment (i.e. implemented on the pitcher and also the team as a whole).

Craig points out, however, that to distinguish between penalty and punishment by adding the expressivist condition that one only punishes when *expressing condemnation* fails to properly divide the cases.[104] Consider the baseball case just given above. Is it really obvious that there is no condemnation being expressed of the pitcher? There certainly is

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[102] Hill and Jedwab, "Atonement and the Concept of Punishment", 141.
[103] Murphy, "Not Penal Substitution," 255.
[104] Craig, "Is Penal Substitution Incoherent,", 6.

no condemnation of the pitcher that includes any *mens rea* (i.e. guilty mind) element, but that does not entail that condemnation is absent altogether. Indeed, it seems that the pitcher *is* being condemned for violating the rules of the game, and the hard treatment implemented upon him and his team is one means of expressing that condemnation.

Nevertheless, the disagreement between Craig and Murphy highlights an important point. There is *something* significantly different about the baseball case and a case of punishing a criminal, perhaps even in what is expressed in implementing hard treatment. But identifying the differences neatly is a difficult task. As a result, Craig suggests that we define penal substitution in the following manner:

> …penal substitution in a theological context ought to be understood as the doctrine that God inflicted upon Christ the suffering which we deserved as the punishment for our sins, as a result of which we no longer deserve punishment.[105]

What is important to note in this definition of penal substitution is that it is neutral concerning whether or not Christ was actually punished despite clearly stating that Christ suffered. That it leaves such a question open is good, for there are penal substitution theorists who vehemently deny that Christ was punished.[106] What is significant on this articulation, then, is that Christ *suffered* something (i.e. punishment or penalty) that *would have* been punishment if applied to humanity.

The next difficulty, however, in defining penal substitution is to ask more about the nature of the suffering endured on our behalf. Some substitution theorists suggest, for example, that Christ suffered a punishment different in kind but equal in value from God on humanity's behalf.[107] Such a view, then, would be akin to the parent who

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[105] Craig, "Is Penal Substitution Incoherent,", 3-4.

[106] Cf. John Stott, *The Cross of Christ*, 151 & I. Howard Marshall, "The Theology of the Atonement," In *The Atonement Debate,* Eds. Derek Tidball, David Hilborn, and Justin Thacker (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2008): 63. See Hill and Jedwab, "Penal Substitution and Punishment," Appendix for a list of quotations from people who do affirm that Christ was punished, despite Marshall's insistent claim to the contrary.

[107] There are two options, here, that Oliver D. Crisp has called non-penal substitution and penal non-substitution. For an explication of the former sort of theory, see Oliver D. Crisp, *Retrieving Doctrine: Essays in Reformed Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2010): 92-115 on John McLeod Campbell's

appeases her child's despair at losing a toy not by going to purchase the toy anew, but rather, by finding something else of equal value to her child to offer in its place (e.g. a trip to the ice cream shop). Thus, on this form of penal substitution, what is crucial about Christ's suffering is *not* that it is precisely the same suffering we deserve as punishment, but rather, that Christ's suffering is equal in value in place of the value of our deserved punishment.

It is worth briefly describing in closer detail how such a view helps explain an asymmetry between the punishment due humanity and the suffering endured by Christ. Suppose the punishment due humanity includes both physical death and eternal suffering in Hell. Christ fails to suffer *both* those things. And so, it seems that Christ's suffering is inadequate to the task of substitutionary atonement. However, suppose we include the following explanation for the asymmetry perceived here:

> The *value* of Christ's death is infinite, for Christ has a divine nature. Moreover, when humanity sinned, the merited punishment for such sin was *infinite* in value. Thus, Christ's death was alone sufficient to pay the penalty due for human sin since they were of equivalent value. Now, had a mere human attempted to bear the sins of humanity on the cross without also suffering eternally in Hell, the overall value of that suffering would have been finite, and no aggregate of merely human attempts to satisfy the demands of punishment would have sufficed. Indeed, even eternal suffering only *approaches* infinite temporal duration (i.e. is potentially infinite) *without reaching* infinite temporal duration (i.e. is not actually infinite), so even the entire set of mere humans undergoing both death and eternal suffering fails to attain to an infinite value.[108] Nevertheless, *sans* Christ's sacrifice, human death and eternal suffering due to sin is the closest to satisfying the demands of justice to which the world can attain. Thus, although it might be unintuitive initially, the value of Christ's death alone is equal to the value of all humanity's death and eternal suffering in Hell.[109]

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non-penal substitution theory, as well as another paper cited in Crisp's essay; namely, J. B. Torrance, "The Contribution of McLeod Campbell to Scottish Theology," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 26 (1973): 295-311. For explication of the latter sort of theory, which I take fall legitimately within the family of *penal substitution views* despite the name given it by Crisp, see Oliver D. Crisp, "Penal Non-Substitution," *Journal of Theological Studies* 59.1 (2008): 140-168. The sort of view I think Schreiner must be endorsing in his article lies within the so-called Edwardean (i.e. Jonathan Edwards, Jr.) view detailed in the lattermost Crisp article.

[108] There may be ways of disputing this claim, perhaps if one were to deny that humans are essentially *temporal* creatures. If so, then suffering *in eternity* (i.e. atemporally) might provide actually infinite value insofar as it amounts to the satisfaction of humanity's infinite punishment. Such a maneuver, however, seems to my mind truly heroic (i.e. a last ditch effort to save the view by any means necessary).

[109] Just to be clear, I do not endorse this view. Indeed, I deny it. However, it gets around the theoretical asymmetry of punishments issue, and thus, I think it is a better model of penal substitution.

Thus, from the above examples, it is clear to see that the nature of Christ's suffering might be described in several ways. The first option is to claim that humanity deserves death and that Christ dies *in place of* all humanity. A second option is to claim that humanity has merited an infinite punishment, the value of which is met (and perhaps can only be met) by the God-man's suffering in our place.

Once we understand the particular form Christ's suffering takes in place of our own punishment, we can then move on to the next question concerning the *justice* of that punishment. That is, we can move on to ask about the justification or rationale for the particular suffering Christ endures on our behalf. Indeed, exploring this question is crucial for understanding the broad family of penal substitution views, for it is in answering this question that they most widely diverge.

There are four different types of justification concerning punishment that we will consider here: retribution, deterrence, protection, and restoration.[110, 111] Since I have already explicated the notion of retribution above in §3.2, I revisit it here only to briefly apply it to the case of penal substitution.

According to the retributivist about punishment, the justification for the suffering Christ endured on humanity's behalf was that it was equivalent, either in kind or in value, to the punishment humanity *deserved* for sin. That is, the punishment due humanity for sin merited a particular punishment that *fit* the crime, so to speak, and Christ bore it (i.e.

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[110] And I take it as obvious that someone can be *unjustly* punished. Thus, I disagree with anyone who defines punishment in such a way that something counts as punishment only if it is *morally just*. However, no one could possibly be *unjustly punished* by a morally perfect God (See Richard Otte, "A Theistic Conception of Probability," *Faith and Philosophy* 4.4 (1987): 427-447 for an argument that theistic metaphysics has implications for modal logic and probability). Thus, the relationship between the coherence question and the moral acceptability question of penal substitution is more complicated than some contemporary discussions of it seem to imply.

[111] The justifications listed above are commonly treated as the main live options in ethics. See, for instance, (i) Marshall, *Beyond Retribution,* chapter 3; (ii) Wolterstorff, *Justice in Love*, chapter 17 (although, he includes reprobative punishment as well); and (iii) Hugo Adam Bedau and Erin Kelly, "Punishment", In *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Ed. Edward N. Zalta* (Fall 2015 Edition), URL = <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2015/entries/punishment/>.

either as actual punishment or as a penalty that would have been our punishment) on humanity's behalf. Thus, the retributivist reading of penal substitution offers an intelligible explanation of both *why* Christ died and, at least potentially, the appropriateness of the *way* Christ died.

Despite the tidiness of the retributive penal substitution model, however, we have seen that there is neither good scriptural reason nor compelling philosophical reason to endorse retributivism. Consequently, if one is to adopt a penal substitution model of the atonement, it would be best to consider alternative justifications of the punishment endured by Christ.

Someone might offer deterrence as a rationale for Christ's punishment. To understand how this might proceed, however, perhaps we should begin with an example at the level of human judicial systems. In criminal justice, for instance, punishments are often prescribed in part to deter human agents from committing a felony. For example, it is illegal to exceed speed limits, but the *fact* of such an action's illegality is not enough to prevent people from speeding. There must also be an associated punishment, the threat of which motivates sufficiently cautious persons to obey the law. Usually some sort of fine that varies with the degree to which a person exceeds the speed limit is implemented, and at least some of the time seems to prevent many people from speeding. Thus, included in the rationale of deterrence is a *set of persons* to whom the law applies and a *prescribed punishment* accompanying the law, which is *knowable* by those over whom the laws range.

If a penal substitution theorist is to render intelligible a deterrence-based model, then they need to start by identifying the constituency involved and the punishment prescribed by the law. In this case, then, the answer is quite straightforward: all of humanity is given the law to not sin and the punishment of sin is death. On the rationale,

then, of deterrence, death was given as a punishment for sin to prevent humanity from sinning. There are a few oddities that accompany such a view. First, if God's rationale for the punishment was to prevent human sin, then the prescribed punishment seems to have been incredibly ineffective. All humans save one (or two depending on the particular Christian tradition in question) have sinned, so the threat of death seems not to have deterred humanity well at all. But God is omnicompetent, so such a massive failure concerning the purpose behind the punishment of death seems highly dubious.[112] Second, it is not clear why, on a deterrence penal model, God did not simply declare that the punishment of sin was *the death of the incarnate son of God*. Perhaps Christ dies in our place because his death is a better deterrent of sin than our own deaths would be, but if that were the case, then no reason for beginning with a prescribed punishment of the death of each individual human sinner seems available. Third, it is not obvious at all that humanity is aware that sin leads to death. In Romans 1, Paul writes as if the moral law is inscribed on the hearts of all people such that they have knowledge of morality; however, knowledge of the moral law in general does not extend to knowledge of that to which violations of the moral law will inevitably lead (i.e. death). If so, then without knowledge of the connection[113] between sin and death, the aim of deterrence is completely undermined. Consequently, no plausible deterrence-based penal substitution model seems to be forthcoming.

Perhaps a protection-based rationale for penal substitution might fare better. Consider, again, a typical instance of protection rationale for punishment found in human legal systems. Suppose Lex has been incarcerated for stealing Clark's tractor. During the

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[112] Perhaps this argument is too quick, for after all, even if *all* human individuals sin, it might be the case that the objective probability that they would sin was diminished as a result of knowing that their sin would lead to death. And perhaps only a diminished probability is all that is needed to make sense of Christ's punishment as deterrent even if everyone actually sins.

[113] I'm not sure how to construe this connection. Is it causal? Nomic? Metaphysical?

early stages of his incarceration it comes to the attention of the legal authorities that Lex's kleptomaniacal tendencies are a danger to all of society. As a result, the length of his prison sentence is increased to a time after which psychological studies have shown kleptomania necessarily, and inexplicably, subsides. Why did Lex receive a 10 year sentence, you ask? Well, it was not safe for society until after that time. Thus, the punishment he received was essential for the sake of protection.

Applying such a protection rationale to Christ's punishment is difficult, especially since protection-based punishments are most commonly offering protection *from the person punished*. In penal substitution such a rationale is puzzling since surely no one needs protection *from* Christ. Rather, on the Christian story it is salvation that is needed from Christ. Therefore, it seems that a protection-based rationale for Christ's punishment would be theologically antithetical to core teachings of scripture.

But perhaps this dismissal is too quick. If the rationale for punishment is protection, then it is necessary that we begin with the original punishment prescribed and see if the same goal of protection can be preserved when Christ's death is substituted for the original punishment. The original punishment, on a protection-based penal substitution model of the atonement, was death to anyone who sinned. Why was death prescribed? To protect. But who was being protected and from what? At this point the possible answers seem wide-ranging. One option would be to say that humanity was being protected *from itself*, perhaps because were human agents not limited in their time on earth post-sin, then sin would corrupt them beyond a point God was willing to endure. Another option would be to say that the whole cosmos was being protected from humanity, for given enough time individually, perhaps sinful human persons would destroy the earth beyond the point of redemption. Suppose that either of these reasons were true. How might Christ's death function as a proper substitute for the death of all

humanity in a way that achieved the same protection-based end (i.e. protecting humanity from itself or the world from humanity)? The only reasonable explanation seems to be that Christ's death takes away the inevitable corruption of human nature presupposed in the original explanation for the view. That is, something about Christ's death reorients the trajectory of human character formation from corruption to sanctification.[114] Thus, in light of Christ's substitutionary death, protection is still achieved.

Thus, initially it appears that there is an intelligible way to develop a protection-based penal substitution theory. However, there is at least one crippling difficulty with such a view; namely, that the explanation of why Christ's death was a proper substitute for the punishment of humanity offered a *restorative* rationale rather than a merely protection-based rationale.[115] To see why, notice that the original punishment for sin, human death, protects by removing the destructive agents from the picture entirely. But when Christ suffers in place of the original punishment, his death protects by changing the originally destructive agents. Such a view might be consistent with the redemptive *telos* of the biblical worldview,[116] but it is no longer a merely protection-based rationale. Thus, it seems that the most plausible protection-based penal substitution model reduces to the final model we will consider; namely, a restorative penal substitution model of atonement.

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[114] In other words, Christ's death removes the potential for corruption by replacing it with potential for sanctification, whereas the death of humanity removed the potential for corruption by removing *entirely* those agents capable of corruption. Christ's death, on this view, leaves the agents intact but reforms them.
[115] One other issue that I gesture at here is that the protection rationale does not clearly treat the perpetrators of sin as means in themselves. Punishment is merely for the sake of protecting *other agents*, and thus, it fails to take the moral dignity of perpetrators seriously. The restoration model into which the above protection-based model morphs, however, does not suffer from this issue.
[116] For a nice and accessible overview of this, see J. Richard Middleton, *A New Heaven and a New Earth: Reclaiming Biblical Eschatology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic Publishing, 2014).

According to restorative penal substitution, the punishment human beings deserve for sin is death and perhaps eternal suffering as well. Let us try to conceive of how each of these punishments might be perceived as *restorative* in turn.

Someone might immediately object to the idea that death could be restorative, for death brings about the *end* of the thing that one hopes to restore; namely, the sinner. On the Christian worldview, however, one's physical death is not the end.[117] After physical death, one has a bodily resurrection to which one can look forward and after which a judgment for inclusion or exclusion from the new creation is issued. Thus, an objection along such lines is a *non sequitur* for the Christian.

And although the idea that death could be a type of restorative punishment is indeed counterintuitive, there are ways to reconceptualize the view that are intelligible. For instance, the fact that physical death is imminent entails that one's time is limited in this plane of existence. Consequently, if we are to fully flourish, we cannot simply put off the hard work of virtue development to another time. There is no other time. And so, the finitude of this life seems particularly apt to help us become better persons.[118]

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[117] In my honest moments, such as the one from which this footnote developed, I note that this is a complicated matter. For instance, some Christians are physicalists about human persons. That is, they take persons to be identical to their bodies. Thus, if the body ceases to be alive, the person ceases to be alive (cf. Trenton Merricks, "The Resurrection of the Body," In *The Oxford Handbook to Philosophical Theology*, Eds. Thomas P. Flint and Michael C. Rea (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009): 476-490). Thus, when I say physical death is not the end, I should qualify that, for the physicalist, it is perhaps *an end of sorts*. But, of course, the literature on Christian physicalism and the resurrection of the dead includes a number of attempts to explain how a person might be resurrected after the first physical death. Merricks' paper advocates a gappy existence solution while Peter Van Inwagen, *The Possibility of Resurrection and Other Essays in Christian Apologetics* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1998): 45-52, argues for a solution of continued identity via an elaborate preservation of at least one physical atom belonging to each person at death. If one admits of hyperspace, however, solutions for this problem become almost too easy. See Hud Hudson, *The Metaphysics of Hyperspace* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005): 182-204 for some relevant discussion. For a sophisticated substance dualist perspective, see Richard Swinburne, *Mind, Brain, and Free Will* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

[118] It's worth noting that death itself can serve the restorative purpose I've attributed to it *whether or not* it is an externally imposed punishment for sin that is not merely the natural consequence of sin. Thus, treating it as punishment in this strong sense is not required to discuss how the prospect of physical death might be in some sense redemptive for us (cf. Richard Swinburne, *Providence and the Problem of Evil* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998)).

What of the idea of eternal suffering as restorative? If death seemed counterintuitive to treat as restorative punishment, then eternal suffering likely appears to be a contradiction in terms. However, this is not the case. For there are two ways to aim at the flourishing of a perpetrator: (1) to help them in increasing their degree of flourishing and (2) to prevent them from decreasing in their degree of flourishing.[119] It does not seem plausible that eternal suffering in Hell would benefit the one being punished in the first sort of way, especially given traditional understandings of the nature of Hell from which no escape is possible.[120] Nevertheless, the second means of promoting a person's flourishing—i.e. by *preventing a decrease* in flourishing—does seem like a coherent way of explaining the restorative benefits of eternal suffering in Hell.

To demonstrate this all that is necessary is that we discover a model that is psychologically possible, for all we know, of a person who resides in Hell and for whom suffering acts as a preventative from drifting deeper into depravity. Suppose acts of sin cause a person increasingly to inculcate moral vice into their psyche. Thus, every act of sin causes a person to move away incrementally from full human flourishing.[121] Suppose further that all persons in Hell desire to sin. The failure to satisfy one's desires, let us say, is a form of suffering, even if those desires are themselves *for* something which is not intrinsically good. From this it follows that the denizens of Hell suffer if they are not permitted to satisfy their desires to sin. Why would such persons be prevented from satisfying these desires? The explanation need not involve retribution, deterrence, or protection for other persons. All that is necessary is that the following, or something similar be true: God prohibits those in Hell from continuing to sin because were God to

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[119] For the use of such a distinction in work on the problem of evil, see Eleonore Stump, *Wandering in Darkness*, 392.

[120] See Jonathan Kvanvig, *The Problem of Hell* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993) and Jonathan Kvanvig, *Destiny and Deliberation: Essays in Philosophical Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011) for insightful discussion of these issues.

[121] See Robert Kane, *The Significance of Free Will* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

allow such sin to continue, those in Hell would inevitably drift further away from their own flourishing and union with him. Therefore, contrary to initial appearances, eternal suffering in Hell can indeed be given an intelligible restorative rationale.

Someone might respond, however, that the restorative rationale for hell offered above, while conceivable, does not fit easily with the ring of scripture. I have two things to say as a rejoinder. First, the *rationale* for the eternal suffering of Hell is not, I think, spelled out in the pages of the scriptural witness. As a result, I think we must interpret passages concerning eternal punishment in light of other passages that clearly articulate the attitude God directs toward all humanity (i.e. a set of human beings that includes, presumably, humans that are not redeemed[122]). Moreover, given the earlier arguments advanced against a retributivist understanding of divine justice in scripture, it is incumbent on us, if we aim to keep our eschatology in line with the scriptural constraints just given, to offer a restorative model that is epistemically possible.

So it is possible to see the human punishments for sin—i.e. death and eternal suffering—as restorative punishments. Is it possible to make sense of Christ's suffering on the cross serving as a *substitute* for such punishment?

It is indeed possible to understand Christ's suffering as substitutional on this view, at least when it comes to the efficacy of Christ's suffering for human restoration. On the account just given for human restorative punishment, the explanation for the justice of death and eternal suffering *qua* punishments for sin involved demonstrating a conceptual link between such suffering and the flourishing of humanity. Thus, so long as Christ's suffering is at least as effective at bringing human persons to full flourishing as

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[122] This is, of course, on the assumption that universalism is false. Perhaps that is a bad assumption, but I doubt it is one that is particularly or contentious.

human suffering for sin would be, then Christ's suffering seems in principle adequate as a substitute.[123]

So, does Christ's sacrifice sufficiently inspire humanity such that they move away from their patterns of sin to lives of virtue and godliness—i.e. at least as well as they would under the original punishments of death and eternal suffering? The obvious biblical answer must be in the affirmative. Surely any reading of Romans 7 & 8 concerning the life lived in the Spirit, as compared with a life lived in the flesh, clearly supports such an affirmation. Thus, Christ's suffering can indeed sufficiently inspire fuller devotion from his followers.

Despite the clear efficacy of Christ's suffering on our behalf, however, is it likewise clear that on this account Christ suffers *in our place* (i.e. such that we do not *also* suffer[124])? If we attend carefully to the way in which we discuss the substitution process, we see that there are several ways to spell out the substitution.

> Penal Substitution$_1$ – Person A is a penal substitute for person B iff A bears the punishment due to B & B is not punished.
>
> Penal Substitution$_2$ – Person A is a penal substitute for person B iff A bears the punishment due to B *with* B.
>
> Penal Substitution$_3$ – Person A is a penal substitute for person B iff A bears an equivalent (or more effective) punishment to the punishment due to B & B is not punished.

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[123] Notice that equivalent values on this model will require that one's calculation of value incorporate the *instrumental* value of Christ's death when it comes to bringing about restoration. That's not to say that there is no intrinsic value involved with respect to Christ's death, but just that instrumental considerations will have to play an increasingly important role.

[124] I take it as a teaching of the various scriptural passages concerning union with Christ that there is a real sense in which we *do* share in Christ's suffering. Thus, Christ's substitution or representation of our suffering, whatever it is, must allow us to truly say we suffer. However, the particular manifestation of the suffering undergone *in Christ* as compared to the suffering that would have been ours without Christ is *a different manifestation of suffering*. Thus, a theme of substitution does seem to be retained. This sort of view has implications for the *double jeopardy* objection to penal substitution (i.e. that human sin is, in a sense, punished twice; once in Christ and again in those who suffer death and eternal damnation).

> Penal Substitution$_4$ – Person A is a penal substitute for person B iff A bears an equivalent (or more effective) punishment to the punishment due to B *with* B.

According to the first and third options, penal substitution entails that sinners do not undergo punishment. That is, Christ's punishment substitutes or takes the place of our punishment such that we do not undergo suffering ourselves. On options two and four, however, punishment is instead undergone *with* Christ. Now, someone might think that options two and four have simply given up the substitutionary component of penal substitution, but it depends on how narrowly substitution is construed. If one is inclined to restrict the substitutional element of penal substitution to putting one punishment (i.e. Christ's punishment) in place of the other (i.e. our punishment), then the second option appears not to be a form of penal substitution at all. However, if we allow that one set of persons undergoing punishment (i.e. {Christ, us}) being substituted for a different set of persons undergoing punishment (i.e. {us}) is sufficient to count as a penal substitution model, then option two is exonerated (*mutatis mutandis* for option four).

However, option four retains an additional substitutionary element as compared to option two, for although Christ is punished *with* us, the punishment we bear with Christ is *different* from the punishment we would have endured without Christ. Thus, one punishment is indeed put *in place of* the other punishment. As a result, all four options have legitimate claims to being forms of penal substitution (with a slight qualification for what that substitution looks like according to option two).[125]

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[125] I leave to one side here Mark Murphy's fascinating discussion of vicarious punishment. On his view, A is vicariously punished for B whenever B's suffering *constitutes* A's punishment. Given the flexibility of how we understand 'punishment' scripturally, however (i.e. as suffering, expressivist condemnation of the person, or expressivist condemnation of the action), the distinction seems to confuse discussions of penal substitution rather than clarify. In other words, on my view, vicarious punishment in Murphy's sense is neither necessary nor sufficient for an instance of punishment counting, or failing to count as, penal substitution.

With these four options in place, then, let us revisit the question of whether the restorative model I have offered of our suffering and Christ's suffering in our place can be truly called penal *substitution*. If it is reasonable to construe the way in which Christ's suffering substitutes for ours along any of the four options above, then the answer is a resounding "Yes!"

It is very difficult to imagine how either options one or three can accommodate restorative penal substitution. To see the difficulty, we must first appreciate that often *our* suffering is partly constituted by the suffering of others. For instance, I suffer tremendously when I hear that my spouse has had a bad day at work or when my children tell me that they are having trouble making friends at school. Their suffering is not *merely* their suffering. It also constitutes *my* suffering because I love them. Similarly, it is difficult to imagine how Christ's suffering *on my behalf* could possibly *fail* to partly constitute *my* suffering given the love I have for Christ. Thus, to say, as options one and three do, that Christ's punishment counts as a penal substitute for my punishment *only if* I am not punished seems to strain plausibility if we allow that suffering *for the sake of restoration* might count as punishment. This leaves us with options two and four.

Option four seems to provide the most defensible version of restorative penal substitution. According to a model along such lines, Christ suffers for our sin by enduring suffering that is at least as efficacious as the suffering we would have endured for our sin with respect to promoting human flourishing. Moreover, the suffering endured by Christ, on this account of penal substitution, is endured by us as well *with* Christ, thereby overcoming the concern about implausibility facing options one and three.

Let us take stock, then, concerning the reflections we have just concluded about the various possible forms of penal substitution. We have seen that punishment generally admits of four different moral justifications: retribution, deterrence, protection, and

restoration. Both the retributive and restorative penal substitution models are intelligible theologically, but the other two rationales are highly dubious. Because deterrence models would need to explain the lack of widespread human knowledge concerning the link between death *as a punishment for* sin, they are wildly implausible. Protection-based accounts, on the other hand, only seem intelligible insofar as they admit of a restorative account of Christ's suffering, and thus, they appear implausible as stand-alone models.

Thus, penal substitution theorists must choose between adopting either a retributive or a restorative model. However, as I argued in the previous section, retribution as a rationale for punishment is not to be found in scripture's witness to the atonement. Thus, assuming that the best way to think of Christ's suffering is as a form of punishment for the sins of humanity, the only biblical model of penal substitution is a restorative one.

5. Conclusion

We have seen that the only biblical model of penal substitution is a restorative one. That claim, however, was made *on the assumption* that the best way to construe Christ's suffering on the cross was as a *punishment*. There are passages in scripture where such a construal appears reasonable, such as in Galatians 3:13 where Christ is said to have become a curse for us. This passage is a quotation of Deuteronomy 21:23 where the curse in mind is clearly a punishment of the law. Thus, to deny that such a metaphor is advocated by scripture seems to go too far.[126]

Nevertheless, there are arguments to be made—theological, exegetical, and philosophical—against the view that takes Christ's death as *punishment* to be the best

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[126] See Kevin J. Vanhoozer, "The Atonement in Postmodernity: Guilt, Goats and Gifts" In *The Glory of the Atonement: Biblical, Historical and Practical Perspectives,* Eds. Charles E. Hill and Frank A. James III (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004): 367-404, for an excellent discussion of the relationships between a number of these biblical themes.

metaphor for atonement.[127] For example, someone might deny that *any* metaphor for atonement can possibly stand alone or they might question our epistemic access to the answer concerning what metaphor would be best. I advocate neither of these approaches. To the contrary, I think we do, in principle, have epistemic access to the best metaphor(s) for atonement, and although I have sympathies with the view that doubts any single metaphor of atonement can stand on its own, I am skeptical that the boundaries which distinguish one metaphor from another have been drawn very carefully. As a result, I find such a view unhelpful on the whole.

Despite my satisfaction that restorative penal substitution offers a reasonable outworking of the teachings of Christian scripture on Christ's atonement, it is not my preferred explanation of why Christ had to die. Rather, my preferred model draws upon the metaphor of Christ as a sacrifice (and not in a way which conflates the notions of sacrifice and punishment). In the next chapter, we begin with some brief reflections on how one might go about evaluating different explanations of atonement followed by a construction of a sacrificial explanation of Christ's atonement.

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[127] The use of the concept of metaphor in theology is different from the concept of metaphor found in contemporary analytic philosophy. For a discussion of metaphor as it relates to the atonement, see Hans Boersma, *Violence, Hospitality, and the Cross: Reappropriating the Atonement Tradition* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic Publishing, 2004): 99-114. For the work of metaphor that seems to be most influential in theological contexts, see (i) Sallie McFague, *Metaphorical Theology: Models of God in Religious Language* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982); (ii) Sallie McFague, *Models of God: Theology for an Ecological, Nuclear Age* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987); (iii) Gunton, *The Actuality of Atonement*, 27-52; (iv) Susan Patterson, "Janet Martin Soskice: Metaphor and a Theology of Grace," *SJT* 46, no. 1 (1993): 1-26. The best accessible summary of the current state of the art in analytic philosophy is, of course, Hills, David, "Metaphor", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2017 Edition), Ed. Edward N. Zalta, URL = <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2017/entries/metaphor/>

Chapter 4
A Sacrificial Explanation of Atonement: How Yom Kippur and Passover Illuminate the Work of Christ

Explanations for *how* atonement is achieved by Christ come at varying levels of illumination. Indeed, the question—i.e. *why did Jesus have to die?*—might be answered simply by quoting scripture: "Christ died *for our sins*" (1 Cor. 15:3). In traditional Christian belief, such a claim is undoubtedly true, and it even tacitly expresses a mechanism by which atonement[1] is brought about. Here's the logic of the statement: (i) human sin requires a response of *death* and (ii) Christ's death somehow fulfills that requirement. Of course, the 'somehow' in the previous sentence might be explicated more fully, and in so doing, one provides, if all goes well, a fuller explanation for the question of *why Jesus had to die.* In other words, by expounding in more detail the question of *how* Christ's death achieves atonement, one is not moving from non-explanation (or non-mechanistic explanation) to explanation. One is simply moving from one explanation to a better, or more illuminating, one.[2]

What are some criteria by which competing explanations for atonement might be measured?[3] One undoubtedly subjective criterion might be this: *the degree to which an explanation relieves our befuddlement,* or to put it another way, *the degree to which we are satisfied*

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[1] Precisely *what* atonement is supposed to be is, of course, historically complicated and controversial. The word itself was a neologism in the English language used to mean the *state* of being at-one with someone. In the theological context, a doctrine of atonement is, then, a doctrine of means by which full unity with God might be achieved. Another way to approach atonement, however, is to say it is the act by God which deals with the problem(s) of sin introduced by the Fall. I suspect that the disagreement here is primarily semantic given the history of the term. One might expand or restrict the semantic field of the term 'atonement' in various ways without coming into conflict with the authority of scripture on the topic, depending on *what else* one has to say about the divine-human relationship.

[2] In this chapter I am not concerned to enter very far into the debate concerning the best way to categorize competing explanations of the atonement (i.e. as counting as motifs, metaphors, or full-blown models of atonement). For an account with which I am sympathetic on these questions, see Crisp, "Methodological Issues".

[3] The alert reader will notice a shift in this chapter from the language of 'models', utilized in the previous chapter. I take models to ground a certain type of explanation, but in order to avoid unnecessary complications with the terminology of my own account of atonement, I have opted for the more inclusive term 'explanation'.

by an explanation.[4] I say this is 'undoubtedly subjective' because it is *our* mental states and *our* intellectual expectations that serve as the primary arbiters of when a given explanation performs better or worse in accordance with this criterion. That this criterion is subjective is by no means a pejorative claim. For surely in offering an explanation that one intends to appeal to *human minds,* that explanation's ability to put such minds at ease ought minimally to count in its favor. Another plausible criterion, found in recent work by at least one prominent biblical scholar[5], is that an explanation should be *in accordance with all the scriptures* (cf. Lk. 24:25-27). Now, *measuring* such a criterion is a significant task, but there may be clear cases in which a given explanation is *more* in accordance with all the scriptures than an alternative explanation. In such a case there is a reason to *prefer* the more scriptural explanation to the other (although I hasten to repeat, not necessarily a decisive reason). Additional criteria might be drawn from work in philosophy of science where theoretical virtues (e.g. simplicity or explanatory power) can serve to enhance or diminish the plausibility of a given explanation. In this way, a theory will best succeed if it can provide an appropriate *balance* between simplicity and explanatory power in accordance with the subject matter with which questions of atonement are concerned.[6]

In this chapter, I present an explanation of the atonement that, by my lights at least, scores well on each of the above criteria. I emphasize this because many readers will be predisposed from the start to dismiss the *sort* of explanation I offer; namely, a *sacrificial explanation of the atonement.* The reasons for which contemporary theologians are uncomfortable with sacrificial explanations of atonement are many and varied, but I suspect in most cases one of the following reasons plays a significant role for most

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[4] Of course, these two ways of stating the criterion aren't precisely equivalent by themselves, so for anyone concerned about this, allow us to simply stipulate that the relief of one's befuddlement *just is* one's being satisfied by an explanation.

[5] See NT Wright, *The Day the Revolution Began* (New York, NY: HarperCollins, 2016).

[6] And the importance of *fit with the subject matter* is significant since, as NT Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God,* 99-104 points out, simplicity in *history* is far less decisive than we'd expect it to be in the theoretical sciences.

people: (1) sacrifice is inherently violent, and a violent explanation of the atonement is surely inconsistent with the God of Christianity[7]; (2) sacrificial understandings of the cross begin from evolutionist assumptions concerning the origin of sacrifice that are false[8], or at least unpersuasive; (3) the sacrificial system is repudiated by the prophets in the Hebrew Scriptures, so whatever the reason for the atonement, it is unlikely to be the need for a sacrifice[9]; (4) the only plausible sacrificial explanation of atonement is penal substitution, and this is not penal substitution[10]; or (5) sacrifices presuppose a wrathful and bloodthirsty deity, and no Christian explanation of atonement should presuppose such a thing.[11] There is not space in this chapter to deal with each of these objections to sacrificial explanations of atonement directly except to say that either they do not apply to this sacrificial model of the atonement—as in objections 1 and 2—or they can be dismissed on independently plausible grounds. Nevertheless, some of what I do say in constructing this account of atonement is relevant to such objections as readers will recognize.

In what follows, then, I identify various constituents of a *sacrificial* explanation of the atonement (§1) grounded in an understanding of the Hebrew sacrificial system. In §2

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[7] See, for instance, (i) Darby Kathleen Ray, *Deceiving the Devil: Atonement, Abuse, and Ransom* (Cleveland: Pilgrim, 1998) or (ii) Rita Nakashima Brock and Rebecca Ann Parker, *Proverbs of Ashes: Violence, Redemptive Suffering, and the Search for What Saves Us* (Boston, MA: Beacon, 2001).

[8] For examples of sacrificial views that might fit this category, see: (i) René Girard, *Violence and the Sacred*, Tr. Patrick Gregory (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977); (ii) René Girard, *The Scapegoat*, Tr. Yvonne Freccero (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986); (iii) Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966); (iv) Marilyn McCord Adams, *Christ and Horrors* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); and the insightful discussion of such views found in (v) Klawans, *Purity*.

[9] For the classic version of this criticism, see Max Weber, *The Sociology of Religion*, Tr. Ephraim Fischoff (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1963), and see Klawans, *Purity*, 75-100 for a trenchant discussion of these issues.

[10] I have in mind someone like Groves, "Atonement in Isaiah 53," although I do not actually know whether he would advance this criticism. Basically, if someone thinks a sacrificial view *just is* a penal substitution view, then my explanation of atonement will be, to them, a non-starter.

[11] Something like this objection is critically discussed in McCall, *Forsaken.* See C. Stephen Layman, *Philosophical Approaches to Atonement, Incarnation, and the Trinity* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 22-25 for someone offering this sort of objection as a reason to reject sacrificial explanations of atonement as being on equal par with other options, such as the reparative view of Richard Swinburne (cf. Swinburne, *Responsibility and Atonement*).

I begin my explanation for how Christ's death can be viewed as a sacrifice *for our sins* with a brief summary of the problem of sin as I introduced it in chapter 3, followed by an explication of which components of the problem of sin are dealt with by this model of sacrifice as well as an explanation of *how* this is accomplished. On my account, Christ's sacrifice does not deal with *the whole* problem of sin. Rather, I reserve other parts of my theology, such as divine forgiveness[12] and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, for completing that task. In §4, I spell out an expanded sacrificial model that addresses the remaining elements of the problem of sin and offer some further reflections on how to compare the merits of one model of atonement to another.

1. The Elements of Hebrew Sacrifice

To fully appreciate the Hebrew sacrificial system, it is crucial that we recognize the relevance of *ritual purity* as a prerequisite for sacrifice.[13] Given that a sacrifice was to be offered from *within* the sanctuary and that ritual impurity barred one from entrance to the sanctuary, unless one first followed the prescribed purity codes to become ritually pure, one could not offer a sacrifice. Thus, for any person, such as the high priest, to make atonement for their own sins or the sins of Israel, ritual purity was a necessary pre-requisite.

This aspect of the sacrificial system is strongly verified if we consult ancient Jewish literature. Both purity and sacrifice are treated together by the book of Leviticus, the work of Ezekiel, and various non-biblical sources (e.g. *Jubilees,* the *Temple Scroll,* and

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[12] Some theologians think that the atonement is a means to divine forgiveness because it satisfies God's justice, usually construed in a retributive fashion. This is categorically *not* how I understand the relationship between atonement and divine forgiveness. Although atonement is, on my view, a means to forgiveness, it serves as a means by enabling human agents to accept the forgiveness already on offer. Moreover, the sacrifice involved on this explanation of atonement has ontological significance for human nature itself (i.e. a nod to vicarious humanity views of atonement).

[13] Klawans, *Purity*, 4.

4QMMT).[14] Thus, any adequate account of the atonement as a sacrifice modeled on Hebraic sacrifices must have something to say about the necessary preconditions of offering the relevant sacrifice.

The second element of the Hebraic sacrificial system is the *place* of the offering, which traditionally would have been, of course, the temple. There are examples of sacrifices offered to *Yahweh* in the Hebrew scriptures outside of the temple. For instance, sacrifices were offered by Cain and Abel (Gen. 4), Noah (Gen. 6), and the nation of Israel at the first Passover (Ex. 12). Thus, it is not necessary for a sacrificial explanation of the atonement to be able to account for the sacrifice taking place within the temple of *Yahweh*. However, such a feature is not precluded either.[15] In any case, if we are to advance an account of the atonement in which a sacrifice in the style of Hebraic sacrifices serves as a centerpiece, identifying some particular location of the sacrifice is desirable.

The third element is the *sacrifier* (i.e. the one offering the sacrifice). Sometimes priests offer sacrifices for themselves, in which case they are *both* priest and sacrifier.[16] In most instances, however, the sacrifier is not the same person as the priest. Rather, sacrifiers tend to be individual persons or, on some occasions, collections of persons[17] (e.g. the nation of Israel) who bring the animal (grain or whatever) to be sacrificed and are *represented* by the priests. In representing the sacrifier(s), priests ensure that the offering

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[14] Klawans, *Purity*, 4.

[15] The situation becomes increasingly complicated in the New Testament. For instance, in John 1 we encounter the *logos* who tabernacled among us (Jn. 1:14, 'ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν') and in Paul, we are told that *our bodies are a temple of the Holy Spirit* (cf. 1 Cor. 6:19-20). Are we supposed to claim that Jesus was a sacrifice that was offered in the tabernacle, that is, his assumed human nature? Maybe, but it certainly fails the illumination test for explanations of atonement if that's all we can say.

[16] After all, as (Klawans, *Purity*, 54) points out, "all Israelites (priests included) are obligated to reproduce (Ge. 1:28, 9:7)." Thus, ritual impurity was itself obligatory for even priests since all reproductive acts resulted in ritual impurity. In such cases, washing, waiting, or offering sacrifices might all serve as a means of regaining ritual purity.

[17] I do not, here, want to enter into the ontology of these collections of persons. Are they greater than the persons that compose them? Perhaps, but that is a question for another time. For some recent discussions on this issue with respect to the practice of worship, see (i) Terence Cuneo, *Ritualized Faith: Essays on the Philosophy of Liturgy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016) and (ii) Joshua Cockayne, "Inclusive Worship and Group Liturgical Action," *Res Philosophica (forthcoming)*.

is handled in accordance with the conditions prescribed by the sacrificial system and perform the bulk of the sacrificial ritual on the sacrifier's behalf.

In this way, two further elements of the sacrificial system are introduced; namely, the *priest* and the *sacrifice*. First, in accordance with the sacrificial system in Leviticus, in order for someone to qualify to be a priest, it was necessary that they belong to the tribe of Levi. But given that there were both non-Levitical priests in the Hebrew scriptures (cf. Melchizedek in Gen. 14:18-20 & Ps. 110:4) and sacrifices given by non-Levitical figures (cf. Gen. 4 & 6), a sacrificial account of atonement could plausibly relax this element of sacrifice. Second, sacrifices came in a variety of forms. Among the animals offered in a sacrifice were goats, bulls, doves, rams, sheep, and pigeons while the non-animal substances offered consisted of flour, wine (cf. Num. 15:5), the anointing oil (i.e. myrrh, cinnamon, cassia, and olive oil; cf. Ex. 30:22-33), incense (i.e. frankincense, resin, mollusk scent, and galbanum; see Ex. 30:34-38), or some subset of such substances. Moreover, the portion or element of animal sacrifices (i.e. burnt offerings, some peace offerings, sin offerings, and guilt offerings) most particularly associated with atonement was the *blood* of the animal[18]. For example, the blood would be applied to various items and when it was (e.g. the curtain, altar, sacrifier, etc.), they would be cleansed in some way.

Contemporary commentators have puzzled over the significance of the blood application rites involved in such sacrifices. Why, they ask, is blood thought to be capable of effecting atonement? Is there something special about the blood that makes it particularly apt for effecting atonement while other portions of the animal are simply inadequate? As a number of commentators[19] have pointed out in response to such queries, the only explanation offered in the instructional material available in the Hebrew

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[18] It's worth noting what Eberhart, *The Sacrifice,* 85-86 has pointed out: the sin offering instructions in Lev. 5:11-13 appear to be an appendix to the original rite that allows poor people to substitute flour for animals in the sin offering. Thus, the essentiality of blood in such rites should not be assumed.
[19] Cf. (i) Moffitt, *Atonement and the Logic of Resurrection,* 40, 219-220, 257-278 & (ii) Eberhart, *The Sacrifice,* 65.

scriptures is this: *the life of the animal is in the blood*, and thus, *it is life that effects atonement in sacrifice* (cf. Lev. 17:11).[20]

But *how* does life effect atonement? There are a number of alternative ways of construing the answer to this question as it was understood in the Hebrew scriptures, but the most plausible construal is that blood/life removes or covers obstacles to divine presence.[21] Perhaps the divine presence is initially repugned by the temple due to sin (and its consequent impurity), but after the application of life to the temple, what is off-putting about the temple has been cleansed. If this is the case, then a sort of expiation has occurred. Perhaps the divine presence is angry and withdraws from the temple as a result of that anger until the application of life *satisfies* divine wrath. In that case, a sort of propitiation has occurred.[22] Whichever explanation one opts for concerning the *way* in which atonement is made, however, the explanation offered, as well as the portion of the sacrifice identified as efficacious for atonement, constitute two further elements of a sacrificial explanation of atonement.

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[20] Indeed, this understanding of the significance of what is offered in the sacrifice as *life* is corroborated by the rabbinical tradition, which sometimes allowed fasting to count as sacrifice due to the diminishment of one's own flesh and blood. That is, fasting is a type of sacrifice because one gives up once living parts of oneself as a gift to God. See Moshe Halbertal, *On Sacrifice* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012): 44 & 49.

[21] We find this, for instance, in Baruch A. Levine, *In the Presence of the Lord: A Study of Cult and Some Cultic Terms in Ancient Israel* (Leiden: Brill, 1974): 22-27. It is worth noting that what adds to the plausibility of such a conjecture is that it is logically weaker than alternatives that specify more about the means by which the divine is attracted. Alternative suggestions such as that sacrifice atones by giving *food* to the divine or by emitting a pleasant scent accrue lower intrinsically probabilities in virtue of their added complexity. Such intrinsically weaker hypotheses can, of course, come out as most probable once all the data comes in, but they begin from a disadvantaged staring point. My claim here runs against the argument of dwindling probabilities as found in Alvin Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 376-380. The success of the argument is not obvious, however. The following papers are a nice entry into the debate: (i) Richard Swinburne, "Natural Theology, Its "Dwindling Probabilities" and "Lack of Rapport"" *Faith and Philosophy* 21.4 (2004): 533-546; (ii) Alvin Plantinga, "Historical Arguments and Dwindling Probabilities: A Response to Timothy McGrew," *Philosophia Christi* 8.1 (2006): 12-21; & (iii) Timothy McGrew & Lydia McGrew, "On the Historical Argument: A Rejoinder to Plantinga," *Philosophia Christi* 8.1 (2006): 23-38.

[22] It is worth reminding the reader that the purpose of *sacrifice* cannot be reduced to atonement, for many sacrifices had nothing to do with atonement (e.g. the offering of well-being). The construal of sacrifice's primary purpose as *attracting the divine* allows non-atonement sacrifices to be seen as serving a positive purpose without having to construe that in an artificial way (i.e. as having always to do with sin). Atonement sacrifices remove obstacles to divine presence while other sacrifices, which seem to by far predominate, provide positive reasons for the divine presence to either come or remain. See Klawans, *Purity,* 71-72.

Now, since we are still, at this stage, in the process of laying down prolegomena to a sacrificial explanation of Christ's atonement, it would be improper at this point to rule out the possibility of construing Christ's death as a sacrifice that is *not* explicitly known as atoning sacrifices in the Levitical material. Thus, as an additional element of a sacrificial explanation of the atonement, one must report whether Christ's death ought to be construed as an atonement sacrifice of some particular sort, as an alternative (i.e. non-atonement) sort of sacrifice (e.g. well-being offering or Passover sacrifice), or as some combination thereof. In doing this, we may see how Christ's sacrifice might be intended to deal *not only* with the problem of sin, but perhaps, with some other theological difficulties as well.

Let us summarize, then, the eight components of a sacrificial explanation of atonement that I have delineated above[23]:

> i. Ritual purity
>
> ii. Location of the offering
>
> iii. Sacrifier
>
> iv. Priest
>
> v. Sacrifice (e.g. animal or vegetal substance)
>
> vi. Portion or element of the sacrifice that is efficacious (e.g. blood/life)
>
> vii. Explanation of *how* said portion is efficacious (i.e. the means)
>
> viii. Alternative or additional non-atonement construals of the sacrifice (e.g. Passover, well-being, etc.)

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[23] Someone might be tempted to build the laying on of hands ritual into a sacrificial explanation of atonement as well. I set it aside for convenience, although let me emphasize here that it is a particularly thorny difficulty for penal substitution theorists who understand sin as *transferring* to Christ in a way analogous to the *yom kippur* ritual. As I read the description of this (and other rituals), such an interpretation seems simply wrongheaded. See (i) Eberhart, *The Sacrifice*, 64; (ii) Klawans, *Purity,* 63 & 85. The laying on of a *single* hand in these sacrifices is to be distinguished from the laying on of *both* hands and leaning on the animal by a priest in the *yom kippur* rite. The instructions for the two practices are different, and this difference is one to which interpreters of the sacrificial system should attend. One version of the rite involves a sense of the transfer of sin whereas the single-handed rite is included in sacrifices with no sin-cleansing intent at all.

The above elements are not intended to be exhaustive of a given sacrificial explanation of atonement. Moreover, it is not even necessary, on my view, for someone to expand upon each of the elements I discuss above to qualify as offering a sacrificial explanation of atonement. Such expansions, however, boost the explanatory scope of an explanation (i.e. the amount of data for which the explanation is intended to account), and insofar as the explanation succeeds in its explaining of the data (e.g. scripture or moral intuitions), it receives an additional boost of overall plausibility for its high explanatory power.[24] Thus, filling out the above elements in more detail, if done in a way that matches the data, results in a more powerful explanation of atonement. So now that we have a sufficient understanding of some crucial elements of a sacrificial explanation of atonement, let us return momentarily to the various components of the problem of sin which some of these elements will be concerned to address.

2. The Sacrificial Model

2.1 The Problem of Sin: A Summary

Our discussion of the problem of sin was lengthy, and I will not rehearse it all now. However, it will be helpful to recall some initial details. Guiding our reflections was the concept of *union with God*, which plausibly serves as the basic aim, even if a bit abstract, of the work of Christ. This is not to say there were no other goods brought about by Christ's work. Clearly enough, the atonement is an expression of God's glory, God's love, God's justice[25], among other things. Nevertheless, these other aims are connected in important ways to the desire for union with humanity insofar as (i) desire for union constitutes in part the nature of *love*, (ii) justice is restorative, rendering the restoration of

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[24] I am here appealing to the second and third dimensions of evaluation delineated in the introduction while leaving aside the by no means unimportant criterion of subjective illumination.
[25] Even God's wrath, when rightly understood.

union with creation a just aim, and (iii) God's glory is promoted most fully by the expression of his love for us. This is why I take union as my starting point.

As I divide up the various components of the problem of sin, there is the problem of human guilt, human divisions, and the deficiency of human nature consequent on the act of original sin. Technically the deficiency of human nature is a consequence of sin, and so, it properly falls under the category of human guilt. However, given the unique nature of that consequence, I include it as a separate component because it cannot be addressed in the same way as most of the other subcomponents of the problem of human guilt.

So, let us recall again my summary of the problem of sin from the previous chapter. The problem of sin is composed of…

1. Human guilt, including both (i) internal and external components of sinful actions and (ii) our initial and ongoing relationships to those actions.
2. Human divisions, including (i) generally those divisions we use to justify disunion between each other and (ii) specifically the division between Jews and Gentiles as used for God's purposes of redemption.
3. Some sort of deficiency in human nature. What is the nature of this deficiency (i.e. a disease inherited from Adam or original guilt? Is it an ontological deficiency?) and what is the nature of union with Christ, which, by hypothesis, is meant to address it?

This is the problem a doctrine of atonement, on my understanding, is meant to address. Now, a *sacrificial* explanation of the atonement may not address every facet of the problem of sin as I have outlined it here, but this is not altogether problematic. As I state in the introduction, I reserve other aspects of my theology to address different elements of the problem of sin, such as a doctrine of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit or a particular understanding of divine forgiveness. I discuss the relevance of these additional factors in the expanded sacrificial explanation of atonement in the final section, but for now, let us turn to an initial statement of a sacrificial explanation of the

atonement informed by how it addresses various components of the problem of sin as identified above.

2.2 Some Additional Preliminaries

As I develop the *sacrificial* explanation of the atonement, it does not address the whole issue of human guilt except (i) to correct a form of ritual impurity belonging to creation and human nature in virtue of original sin and (ii) to illustrate by ritual means the removal of moral impurity by means of a *yom kippur* scapegoat.[26] The additional internal (i.e. character-based) and external (i.e. consequence-based) components of human guilt are dealt with by, on the one hand, the process of sanctification spurred on by the Holy Spirit and, on the other hand, by God's forgiveness of humanity that changes the relationship between wrongdoer and wrong done. That is, in virtue of God's forgiveness, the fact that humanity has sinned no longer belongs to humanity's moral history, but rather, to humanity's merely personal history.[27] That humankind sinned is not denied in forgiveness, but rather, the *fact* that humankind sinned simply ceases to determine God's evaluation of the character of humankind[28] subsequent to forgiveness. In other words, humanity's sins are no longer *counted* against them.

When it comes to human divisions, the sacrificial explanation of the atonement does address a significant difficulty; namely, the problem of reconciling God's faithfulness to the covenant he made to the Jews (i.e. that they would be his people and

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[26] Some authors (e.g. W. C. Kaiser, "The Book of Leviticus," *NIB* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1994): 1112) suggest that the scapegoat ritual illustrates the '*effect*' of atonement while the sacrificial goat illustrates the '*means*'. Alternatively, Gane, *Cult and Character*, 256 points out that the scapegoat deals with only moral faults whereas the sacrificial goat removes both ritual and moral impurities. Ganes' point problematizes Kaiser's suggestion since both rites seem to be *means* to different ends on such an interpretation.

[27] With all the various qualifications assumed as outlined at the end of chapter 2.

[28] I assume that forgiveness is offered to *all* humanity rather than some subset of all humanity (e.g. the elect). However, as I have indicated elsewhere, forgiveness should be construed as sometimes bilateral (in a sense), and thus, it is effective only for those who are ready to receive the benefits of the offer. This distinction allows us to further distinguish elect from non-elect in terms of those persons who accept the offer of forgiveness.

he would be their God) while also maintaining God's justice in extending the benefits of salvation to Gentiles. More generally, however, it is not obvious how the sacrificial nature of the explanation contributes essentially to dealing with the problem of divisions in humanity (i.e. as found in systemic injustices). The expanded model, however, highlights at least one way in which the sacrifice of Christ might even be extended to address these divisions in part.

Sacrificial explanations of atonement are especially relevant to dealing with the third component of the problem of sin concerning the deficiency of human nature. Once sin enters into the world, human nature is revealed to be deficient in some way. One obvious way of spelling out this deficiency, which is informed by a sacrificial explanation, is to suggest that human nature becomes *impure* as a result of sin. Despite presupposing that this impurity is brought about by moral wrongdoing, we should not assume that the sacrifice which corrects the impurity corrects the *moral* dimension of the problem, or rather, that the sacrifice *only* corrects the moral dimension. To make such an assumption ignores the distinction between ritual purity and moral purity. Ritual impurity was something which excluded individuals from the sanctuary, but moral impurity brought about no such effect (cf. Ex. 21:14, where murderers sought sanctuary in the sanctuary).[29] They were dealt with in different ways by different sacrifices or elimination rituals. On my sacrificial explanation, then, the solution for the deficiency problem concerning human nature most closely resembles a ritual purification sacrifice rather than a sacrifice (or other ritual) aimed at moral purification.

Before delving into the full sacrificial explanation of atonement, it is worth reflecting briefly on some of the scriptural inspiration for the sort of account I am

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[29] Klawans, *Purity*, 55. See especially his point 6 for discussion of the distinction between moral and ritual defilement.

providing; namely, an account that treats the single event of Christ's sacrifice as simultaneously a *yom kippur* sacrifice and new Passover sacrifice. There is not space to deal with such exegetical questions in full detail, so I shall limit myself to two significant passages that inform my construal of the sacrificial explanation; namely, John 1:29 and Hebrews 9:7, 11-12.

> The next day [John the Baptist] saw Jesus coming toward him and declared, 'Behold the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!' (Jn. 1:29)[30]

This statement, purportedly coming from the mouth of John the Baptist, constitutes an utterly complex and fascinating piece of theological reflection by the author of the gospel. What is most significant in this passage for our purposes is the relationship between a *lamb* and the *sin of the world*; namely, that the lamb *takes away* that sin. On the one hand, if one understands this verse to indicate that Jesus is sacrificed *as a lamb* for sin, then we run into a difficulty. Among the explicitly permissible animal sacrifices for a sin sacrifice in Leviticus, the lamb is never mentioned. Indeed, if we take *yom kippur* as our relevant context, the animal that *takes away* the sin of Israel is not a lamb, but rather, a goat. But not only is the lamb the wrong type of animal to cite in the context of *yom kippur*, the goat that takes away Israel's sin is not sacrificed either. He is taken out of the camp and led into the wilderness. Thus, understanding this verse as indicating that Jesus is a sin sacrifice in the form of a lamb that takes away sin proves very difficult. On the other hand, if one understands this verse to equate Jesus with a paschal lamb, further difficulties arise, for in the Passover, the lamb which was slaughtered by the Hebrews did not serve as a sacrifice or covering for *sin*. Rather, it served as a sign to ward off the angel

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[30] I was inspired to look at this passage initially by a conversation with Allen Jones during the 2017 AAR-SBL meetings. After this, I found an excellent discussion of the passage in Jeffrey S. Siker, "Yom Kippuring Passover: Recombinant Sacrifice in Early Christianity," in *Ritual and Metaphor: Sacrifice in the Bible,* Ed. Christian A Eberhart (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011), 72-76. I part ways with Siker concerning Second Corinthians 5:21, however, since I do not think a convincing case for Paul referencing *yom kippur* can be made from this passage. Instead, it seems that Paul is alluding to similar themes found in Romans 4, 5 and 8, the most salient of which point attentive readers to Isaiah 53 (especially 53:11-12).

of death through identification with Yahweh. Thus, it seems that if we are to interpret the gospel of John charitably here, we must attribute a more complicated intention to its author behind the mixing of metaphors found in the passage; that is, an intention that in some way harmonizes the inclusion of motifs from both Passover and *yom kippur*.

What is more complicated still is that the book of Hebrews also offers reflections on Christ's role as a player in *yom kippur*; however, unlike what we find in the Gospel of John, the author of Hebrews treats Christ as the *yom kippur* priest and sacrifice rather than as the scapegoat taken into the wilderness. Consider Hebrews 9:7 and 11-12, which reads

> …but only the high priest goes into the second [tent; i.e., the Holy of Holies], and he but once a year [i.e. on *yom kippur*], and not without taking the blood that he offers for himself [i.e. from a bull] and for the sins committed unintentionally by the people [i.e. from the sacrificial goat]…But when Christ came as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation), he entered once for all into the Holy Place, not with the blood of goats and calves, but with his own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption.[31]

These brief passages from the book of Hebrews undeniably construe Christ's death as a part of the process of a *yom kippur* sacrifice; that is, the portion of that festival involving a sin-offering made on behalf of all of Israel. Thus, if we are to offer a sacrificial explanation of atonement, combining the reflections on Christ's death as a Passover sacrifice, *yom kippur* scapegoat, and *yom kippur* sin-offering/priest will bear more connections to the scriptural data in obvious ways. And this, moreover, will result in an overall increase in our account's explanatory scope and power.

But how might we reconcile the atonement theology of John with the atonement theology of Hebrews? First, one might simply refuse to reconcile the texts and sit happily with the claim that they are inconsistent. Alternatively, one might propose that the Gospel of John and the Book of Hebrews are simply offering different metaphors that

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[31] I chose this passage in particular from a guiding reference in Moffitt, "Blood, Life, and Atonement, 212fn2.

are not reconcilable if taken literally. However, since it would be a mistake to take these metaphors literally, the non-literal meanings behind them might very well be consistent.[32] A third option, however, would be to claim that the different metaphors *are* reconcilable and can be combined in such a way as to deliver an even richer metaphor, one which might constitute a better explanation than either of the metaphors taken separately. This last strategy is the one adopted here.

Is it sensible or reasonable to claim that a single event might be appropriated as different sacrificial or expulsion rites? Perhaps it is first worth answering the more abstract question of whether a single event might be appropriated to serve two very different aims. Indeed a single event *can* be appropriated in such a way, as is clear from familiar examples. For instance, suppose I am giving a lecture that I have written and distributed to my audience prior to my presentation. Suppose, further, that within my lecture, which I have promised to read word for word, is the line 'Twas brillig and the slithy toves did gyre and gimble in the wabe.'[33], and let us further suppose that the reason I have included this line in my lecture is that is serves as an example of a syntactically intelligible but semantically empty statement. This is the first purpose to which my statement has been put. But suppose that I have also included this statement in my paper as an inside joke between myself and the department chair with the goal of causing her to chortle (i.e. laugh). Such is the second purpose to which my statement has been put. But lastly, suppose a colleague who covertly works as an undercover agent has, due to her knowledge of the contents of my paper, chosen the very same line as a signal to someone else in the audience with whom she is colluding to slip out of the presentation

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[32] For example, we might take the notion of sacrifice, *sans* the frills of Passover or *yom kippur*, to be the fundamental metaphor between the two passages. Moreover, we might think of sacrifices merely as gifts and learn that Christ is offering a gift to the Father on our behalf from John and Hebrews.

[33] With anyone unfamiliar with this line, it is from the Jabberwocky poem in Lewis Carroll, *Through the Looking-Glass: and What Alice Found There,* Illustrated by Sir John Tenniel (Create Space Independent Publishing Platform, 2016).

in order to plant a bug in my office (which they know I routinely and irresponsibly leave unlocked during lectures). Thus, the event of my saying 'Twas brillig and the slithy toves did gyre and gimble in the wabe' can easily be appropriated to serve different purposes without the slightest worry of incoherence or inconsistency. Of course, this is not alone sufficient to demonstrate that Christ's death can at once function as three different sacrificial (or expulsion) rites. It *is* sufficient, however, to establish that such a theory is not an *a priori* non-starter.

2.3 A Modest Sacrificial Account of Atonement

Allow me then to begin constructing my sacrificial explanation of atonement by identifying the elements of the two rituals, *yom kippur* and Passover, as they correspond to Christ's sacrifice. First, concerning the element of ritual impurity, the sin offering is intended to cleanse a deficiency in human nature. As I think about this deficiency, it is the property of original sin, and this property possesses at least the following characteristics: (i) it is hereditary, (ii) it is essential to any created entity with a moral consciousness[34] that *if that entity sins, it and all members of its kind come to subsequently possess the property of original sin*, (iii) the cure for original sin is for some member of the kind in question to live a sinless life as representative of their kind, and (iv) it is unfitting for God, because of God's love for creation, to allow those stained by original sin to remain in such a pitiable state.

Second, concerning the *yom kippur* rites, in particular, we can identify Jesus as the priest offering the sacrifice *as a representative of all humanity*. This means that Jesus *qua* human, if he has lived a sinless life, can offer that life to cleanse humankind of its ritual impurity consequent on original sin. Thus, not only is Jesus the priest but he is also, as a

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[34] By 'entity with moral consciousness' I have in mind any being that can be held morally accountable for its actions or character.

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member of humankind, the *sacrifier* and, as the sinless life being offered, the *sacrifice*. In other words, Jesus plays three different roles simultaneously in the *yom kippur* sacrifice: sacrifice, sacrifier, and priest.

A brief note about Jesus' qualifications as a priest. In the book of Hebrews, the author considers an objection to the accuracy of construing Christ as the high priest of humanity. The objection is that the only lawful priests permitted to perform the *yom kippur* sacrifice are Levites, but Jesus does not belong to this tribe (i.e. as the reader should recall, he is a member of the tribe of Judah). Consequently, so the objection goes, Jesus is not permitted to offer a sacrifice on behalf of Israel or humanity.

The response offered to this objection is two-fold. First, contrary to what one might expect, the author of Hebrews accepts the objection as binding on Jesus' fittingness as a priest *on earth* (cf. Heb. 8:4). In other words, were Christ offering sacrifices on earth, the author of Hebrews concedes that Jesus would be in violation of the law and thereby disqualified as a priest. However, the author goes on to point out secondly that the objection is actually a red-herring, for Christ received the Melchizedek priesthood, a priesthood qualifying him for priestly duties in the *heavenly* (i.e. not earthly) temple.[35] Moreover, given that the earthly temple was thought to parallel the activities taking place within the heavenly realm, Jesus is fully qualified as a priest to offer the true *yom kippur* sacrifices in accordance with the requirements of the heavenly temple. As a result of the above digression, then, we can see that the *yom kippur* sin-offering portion of our explanation of atonement identifies the *heavenly temple* as the place of Christ's sacrifice.[36]

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[35] See Klawans, *Purity,* 128-138 where he discusses biblical literature as well *1 Enoch*, the *Testament of Levi*, the *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice*, and some rabbinic sources among others still. To be sure, there are other ways in which Jews thought of the function of the temple, but I have been convinced by Moffitt, *Atonement,* 220-229 that the author of Hebrews thinks of the relationship between the earthly temple and the heavenly temple in this way. Thus, I assume it in my sacrificial explanation of atonement above.

[36] For anyone concerned about locating a heavenly temple spatially, see Hudson, *The Metaphysics of Hyperspace.* He provides further reflections on the relevance of such metaphysics to theological topics in his more recent Hud Hudson, *The Fall and Hypertime* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

If we turn our attention to the location of the *Passover* sacrifice that the Gospel of John brings to the fore, it is not the heavenly temple, but rather, the cross itself where the sacrifice takes place. There are a few clues we possess, both textually and otherwise, that help us to understand the cross as the place where the sacrificial blood of the Passover is applied. First, there are the clues provided for us in the gospel itself: among other allusions to Passover[37], the author of the Gospel of John tells us that the wine given to Jesus in response to his petition for something to drink was given by way of hyssop, i.e. the very same plant by which the Passover lamb's blood in Exodus 12 was ritually applied to doorposts.[38] In addition, Christ's blood, at least in part, literally fell upon the cross itself. This point is not meant to hide some brilliant insight, but rather, it is to emphasize the obvious fact of the matter that *Christ's blood was applied to the cross*. Thus, if we are to see his crucifixion as a new Passover, as the author of John clearly indicates, then the cross appears to be the most plausible parallel to the doorposts found in the original Passover ritual. Lastly, although a bit more speculation is admittedly involved here, there is a plausible correlation to be drawn between the use of a *lamb* in the Hebrew scriptures and the cross in the New Testament. At the time of the original Passover, the Egyptians were well-known as worshipping the lamb, and thus, for the enslaved Hebrews, there would have been at least a moderate temptation to engage in lamb idolatry. On such a construal, then, the choice of the lamb for slaughter in the Passover was not coincidental, but rather, it was intentional. It was chosen for the Hebrews as "a test of loyalties [, …]a chance to reaffirm [their] allegiances" with Yahweh, and thereby to undermine a prominent symbol of Egyptian political power and authority.[39] Similarly,

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[37] E.g. Siker, "Yom Kippuring", 72-73 mentions (i) John's intentional shifting of Jesus' day of death to noon on the Day of Preparation, in keeping with the proper time of the sacrifice of the Passover lambs and (ii) how the Roman soldiers refrained from breaking the legs of Jesus in fulfillment of the prophecy in Ps. 34:20 and qualifications of a Passover sacrifice.

[38] Ibid.

[39] Loren L. Johns, *The Lamb Christology of the Apocalypse of John: an Investigation into Its Origins and Rhetorical Force*, Vol. 167 (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2014), 100-101. Thanks to Alex Arnold for pointing out this parallel, which was brought to his attention by Yoram Hazony.

the cross, as is well-known, served as a prominent symbol of *Roman* political power and authority. Thus, it is fitting that Christ's Passover sacrifice take place on a cross, a symbol subsequently undermined by his own victorious resurrection.

So now that we have identified the place and mode of Christ's Passover sacrifice, we may turn to the question of what it accomplished. In the first Passover (i.e. the Passover in Egypt), the sacrificial lambs served to ward off the angel of death, and as a result of the protection offered by those lambs[40], the Israelites were revealed to be the people of Yahweh. Consequently, the pharaoh's willful grip on the Israelites diminished enough that they were set free from the oppressive rule of Egypt. Indeed, the event of Passover inaugurated a covenant between Israel and Yahweh that would become officially recognized through the giving of the law at Sinai.[41]

How might we draw parallels between the first Passover and Christ's Passover? In the original Passover as I have described it, there are three fundamental components that can be recognized in Christ's Passover. They are the *sacrifice*, the *oppressor* from whom the people of God are freed, and the *sign of the covenant* that outwardly reveals the relationship that already exists between God and the people he has freed. These three components were, in the original Passover, the lamb, Egypt, and the giving of the Law at Sinai, respectively. In Christ's Passover, they were Jesus himself, sin and death[42], and

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[40] Of course, the protection of which I speak was not in the lamb intrinsically. Rather, it served as a sign by which the Israelite community would be identified and consequently passed over (hence, the name 'Passover').

[41] Concerning the historical fact of the matter of the Exodus and Sinai event, the above account is neutral. The Old Testament scholarship on the historicity of the receiving of *Torah* is complicated and beyond my current expertise to adequately evaluate. For those interested in reading on this area of scholarship, as a start I suggest (i) Jan Assmann and Robert Savage, *The Invention of Religion: Faith and Covenant in the Book of Exodus* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, *forthcoming*) and (ii) Jerome Yehuda Gellman, *This Was from God: A Contemporary Theology of Torah and History* (Brighton, MA: Academic Studies Press, 2016).

[42] As well as, presumably, Rome. Although I think that Rome is a subordinate oppressor to sin and death, I do not think it is possible to fully understand many gospel passages and otherwise without also bringing along an appreciation for the context of Israel as ruled by Rome (and implicitly, *not* ruled by *Yahweh*).

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the coming of the Holy Spirit.[43] Thus, in short, we can see that just as the original Passover freed Israel from Egypt, giving birth to the covenant between Israel and *Yahweh*, so too Jesus' Passover freed humankind from sin and death, which initiated a chain of events culminating in the New Covenant and the giving of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

More must be said concerning how sin and death were dealt with via sacrifice, but let us first mention the *fittingness* of construing Christ's sacrifice as a Passover sacrifice. First, in the Hebrew scriptures we find several key texts linking the Passover with covenant. In Exodus 24:8, we find Moses taking the blood of oxen at the culmination of the giving of the Law and calling it the "blood of the covenant". Moreover, this same description is placed into the mouth of Jesus at the Last Supper in Mark 14:24 and Matthew 26:28, presumably signifying that the Last Supper would be practiced to remember the freedom Christ would bring about through his Passover sacrifice. Interestingly, Luke 22:20 alters the account (i.e. an account followed by Paul in 1 Corinthians 11:25) by depicting Jesus as saying, "This cup that is poured out for you is the *new* covenant in my blood," thereby linking Christ's coming sacrifice with the inauguration of the new covenant predicted in Jeremiah 31:31-34:

> [31] The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. [32] It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt—a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, says the LORD. [33] But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. [34] No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, "Know the LORD," for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the LORD; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more.

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[43] Cf. 2 Corinthians 1:21-22: "[21] But it is God who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us, [22] by putting his seal on us and giving us his Spirit in our hearts as a first installment." Thus, I think it is undoubtedly correct that, as Tom Wright has stressed at length (see Wright, *The Day the Revolution Began*, 263-294), in virtue of Christ's Passover early Christians saw themselves as involved in a "new exodus" and a new wilderness experience, as stressed by Matthew Thiessen, "Hebrews and the End of Exodus," *Novum Testamentum* 49 (2007): 353-369.

In this passage, I suggest that we find fodder for an argument that Christ's Passover sacrifice was conditionally necessary, and the argument goes as follows. Predictions made by God about what God will do are also promises by God. If God makes a promise, then that promise will be fulfilled (and this is in no small part due to the fact that the promise *should* be fulfilled as a matter of God's essential trustworthiness). In Jeremiah 31:31-34, God predicts that God will institute a new covenant with the people of Israel (i.e. Abraham's descendants[44]). Therefore, and as a matter of conditional necessity, God will institute a new covenant with the people of Israel.

Why, however, would we expect a new Passover sacrifice to be a part of the inauguration of the new covenant, especially when Jeremiah 31:32 explicitly says that the new covenant would not be like the covenant made at the original Passover? Here are three reasons to expect this. First, although the new covenant is indeed supposed to be *different* than the original covenant, the significant differences explicitly listed in verses 33-34 are differences in the *benefits* of that covenant rather than the sacrificial event which *marks* the covenant. Thus, a parallel sacrifice is not explicitly ruled out. Second, throughout scripture God acts in ways that seem particularly suited to the individuals or groups with whom God is interacting. For instance, God permits Samuel to appoint a king (cf. 1 Sam. 8) to Israel despite divine reservations, God accepts a bargain from Abraham (Gen. 18:16-33) to spare Sodom and Gomorrah, and God charges Jeremiah with the task of finding anyone in Jerusalem who is righteous as a means of ensuring that his judgment on Israel is just (Jer. 5:1). Each of these events is a case in which God's actions can be seen to depend in significant ways on the idiosyncrasies of particular people. Thus, God's decisions about what to do are sensitive to the needs and decisions of the people with whom he interacts, and thus, it is reasonable to think that God would

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[44] Cf. Romans 4:1-12 for Paul's argument concerning which set of Abrahamic descendants are in view in Jeremiah 31 and other new covenant passages.

choose a symbol and event at the very center of the Jewish experience to usher in the promised new covenant. Passover, it seems, is quite the strong candidate from within the Jewish worldview and is particularly fitting. Lastly, the state of affairs of having divine action tied up with actual historical contingencies, which allows for many levels of understanding in the significance of a divine action, is of great aesthetic value. As a result, we should expect that God, who undoubtedly wants to redeem humankind in a way that bestows upon the world the highest amount of value possible (i.e. moral, practical, aesthetic, etc.), would opt for a means of redemption that imbued some historical contingencies with greater significance than they would otherwise have had, all things being equal. Tying Jesus' sacrifice up with the momentous event of the Jewish Passover is on such reasoning unsurprising indeed.

In summary, then, we have good reason to affirm that it was conditionally necessary that God would inaugurate a new covenant with the house of Israel, and we have strong reason, given the context of Jeremiah's prophecy and the character of God as it is revealed in the Hebrew scriptures, to affirm the fittingness of God's inauguration of the new covenant by means of a new Passover. In other words, the construal of Jesus' atoning sacrifice as a Passover sacrifice helps us to see how his sacrifice is significantly *in accordance with the scriptures*, both old and new. Moreover, it helps us to understand the nature of the division between Jew and Gentile as one that held only for a time, a division that was necessary in order to elevate the aesthetic value of atonement as a part of the extraordinary Jewish narrative.[45]

Despite these significant advantages for a Passover-inspired account of atonement, more must be said concerning how sin and death are dealt with by Christ's

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[45] I am, of course, assuming here that the aesthetic value in play is sufficient to justify God's acting in a way that requires a distinction, albeit temporary, between Jew and Gentile. I do not know how to argue for this assumption except to say that it seems true to me intuitively.

sacrifice. For as I have construed the Passover sacrifice, its primary function is to inaugurate a covenant between a people and *Yahweh*, and as a result, Passover does not directly deal with sin and death[46]. Moreover, the sin offering of *yom kippur* only addresses the problem of the ontological deficiency in humanity consequent on original sin. Neither of these things deal with the fundamental problem of human moral guilt.

When we instead turn to the depiction of Christ as a *yom kippur* expulsion goat, however, we find something a bit more promising concerning this issue. In the ritual from Leviticus 16, the moral faults of all Israel are said to be transferred through a confessing priest onto the head of the scapegoat that would subsequently bear those sins out of the Israelite camp.[47]

Whether or not the scapegoat ritual is alone sufficient to deal with sin and death depends on the underlying nature concerning the transfer of sin to the animal. First, we might think that sin is a sort of mystical *stuff* that can literally be carried by different physical objects.[48] On this animistic view, it is obvious *how* sin is dealt with. It is dealt with as a schoolchild might deal with unwanted chalk dust on her hands; that is, by wiping it off on her nearest classmate as they leave for home at the end of the day. Despite the ease with which we could understand *how* such a mechanism might work for dealing with sin, we know that moral faults are not the sorts of things that have physical weight and can be passed from one person to another. Thus, I suggest we take an alternative interpretation of the nature of the transfer of the scapegoat's bearing of sin; namely, that the scapegoat ritual was done to vividly illustrate the reality that Yahweh would no longer

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[46] By problem of sin, here, recall that I am considering elements (i) and (iii) of my description of the problem above. That is, I am thinking of human *guilt* for having sinned and the consequences of such sinful behavior, including the deficiency of human nature consequent on original sin.

[47] Gane, *Cult and Character,* 242-3.

[48] See Stephen Finlan, *The Background and Content of Paul's Cultic Atonement Metaphors: Academia Biblica Number 19* (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2004), 86-87 for a discussion of such a view in the ancient world.

count Israel's sins against them by providing an image of that forgiveness fitting to a people who understood sin in the animistic way suggested beforehand.

To apply this interpretation of the *yom kippur* expulsion ritual to Christ, we arrive at the following: Christ does not literally take upon himself our moral guilt and carry it away; however, his cross and resurrection do vividly illustrate his forgiveness of our sin. Thus, it is divine forgiveness, rather than a parallel expulsion rite, that fundamentally addresses the problem of human guilt.

As a result of the above reflections, we have two different minimal sacrificial explanations of atonement that seek to answer the question of *why Christ had to die*. First, they *agree* with each other concerning Christ's role as a *yom kippur* sin-offering participant, that he was the priest, sacrifier, and sacrifice offered to heal human nature's deficiency consequent on original sin. Second, they agree that Christ's death on the cross and subsequent resurrection, ascension and exaltation constitute a conditionally necessary fulfillment of God's promise to inaugurate a new covenant with the people of God by means of a *fitting* Passover sacrifice. Despite these two significant points of agreement, they *disagree* with each other concerning the purpose of the *yom kippur* scapegoat ritual as applied to Christ. On the animistic account, sin is a substance that is literally born by Christ out of the world (or holy place).[49] On my preferred interpretation, however, sin is not fundamentally dealt with by a Christological parallel to the scapegoat ritual. Rather, the ritual parallels encourage us to see Christ's cross as an illustration of God's maximally loving forgiveness and the extent to which God desires reconciliation with us. If we are to understand how *sin* is dealt with, however, such a sacrificial account must avail itself of theological supplementation elsewhere. Let us, then, turn to my expanded sacrificial

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[49] And of course, further models could be distinguished on the basis of *where* Christ takes the sin he bears.

model in the hope of seeing how the other components of the problem of sin might be dealt with without committing to an animistic account of the scapegoat ritual.

3. The Expanded Sacrificial Model

In the previous section, I developed two sacrificial explanations of atonement that illuminated how the event of Christ's death, resurrection, ascension, and exaltation addressed various components of the problem of sin as explicated at the end of §2. Recall once more the components of the problem of sin:

1. Human guilt, including both (i) internal and external components of sinful actions and (ii) our initial and ongoing relationships to those actions.
2. Human divisions, including (i) generally those divisions we use to justify disunion between each other and (ii) specifically the division between Jews and Gentiles as used for God's purposes of redemption.
3. Some sort of deficiency in human nature. What is the nature of this deficiency (i.e. a disease inherited from Adam or original guilt? Is it an ontological deficiency?) and what is the nature of union with Christ, which, by hypothesis, is meant to address it?

According to the *animistic sacrificial model* (ASM)*,* the problem of human guilt, insofar as that guilt brings about a negative substance called 'sin' that can be transferred to and banished from the holy places by a scapegoat, is addressed with respect to its external components. It is addressed because among the consequences of sinful actions is the coming to be of the substance of sin, a mess of sorts that can be removed in a way not dissimilar to cleaning up spilled milk.

My preferred model, which I call the *illustrative sacrificial model* (ISM), does not address the external component of human guilt (at least, not directly). That is, ISM does not by itself remove the negative consequences or negative value introduced into the world by sin. However, the *expanded sacrificial model* (ESM) builds upon the foundation of

ISM, and thus, it avails itself of other, non-cultic, theological bricks and mortar to fully address the problem of sin.

Thus, in addition to the elements of the problem of sin addressed by ISM—i.e. (2ii) and (3)—ESM must address the whole problem of human guilt and the first part of the problem of human divisions—i.e. (1) and (2i). As I make clear below, ESM addresses these additional problems by employing a particular understanding of divine forgiveness—which I called a Wolterstorffian definition of forgiveness in chapter 2— which ties in with the problem of the deficiency of human nature in an important way. ESM also addresses these additional problems by interweaving a strand of moral exemplarism into the event of Christ's death and introducing the concept of the *defeat* of evil (i.e. whether evil that is moral, aesthetic or otherwise).[50] We begin by unpacking divine forgiveness and defeat as they relate to the problem of human guilt.

As stated above, the external component of human moral guilt is the disvalue brought into the world by an agent's immoral actions. First, the *fact* that an agent has transgressed a moral imperative is itself disvaluable. Second, depending on the nature of the immoral act in question, various disvaluable states of affairs emerge. These may include the unnatural end of a person's life (i.e. murder), the straining or breaking of a relationship between two persons, or any number of other bad things. How might forgiveness help balance-off such evils?

First, an instance of forgiveness, either between two human agents or a divine and a human agent, is intrinsically valuable. Second, the act of forgiveness itself communicates a desire of both parties (i.e. wrongdoer and wronged) to pursue some sort of reconciliation, even if only partial reconciliation, and if that reconciliation is achieved,

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[50] As I use the term 'evil', it means "all the minuses of life" rather than something morally loaded (cf. Marilyn McCord Adams, *Horrendous Evils and the Goodness of God* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1999), 2). Thus, something as benign as *the failure of a flower to bloom* is an evil on my account.

the bad consequence of a broken relationship is partly removed. Third, the *satisfaction* of the desire of the two parties to be reconciled is also intrinsically valuable. And lastly, the relationship of gratitude (on the part of the wrongdoer) and generosity (on the part of the wronged) between the two parties accrues increasing value over time as both parties reflect on the moment of forgiveness and experience gratitude and generosity afresh.[51]

The above reflections explain how the positive value introduced into the world by forgiveness might ultimately balance-off the disvalue of evil brought about by sinful behavior. The notion of balancing-off is straightforwardly "arithmetic", such that a sum total of disvalue n is balanced-off by positive value whenever the sum total of positive value is equal to or greater than n. As a result, whenever disvalue is balanced-off in this way, we can accurately say that the world is at least *not bad* on the whole.[52]

Of course, to balance-off evil does not *defeat* evil. An evil is defeated only if (a) it is a part of a greater whole the goodness of which is *significantly* enhanced in virtue of the presence of the evil and (b) no less disvaluable alternative to that evil can possibly result in as good an overall state of affairs.[53] The relation of defeat is most easily seen in works of art, such as paintings, where an ugly dark patch helps to highlight the beauty of other parts of the work. Indeed, in musical composition intentional moments of clashing dissonance function in much the same way.

The value of the biblical narrative into which instances of forgiveness can be incorporated is an example of such a defeat relation. Given that evil exists and there are wrongdoers to be forgiven, any act of forgiveness takes on new meaning as a moment of

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[51] I mentioned this sort of value briefly in chapter 1. See Collins, "The Connection-Building Theodicy" for a discussion of various manifestations of this sort of value relation.

[52] We find the notion of balancing-off, as well as defeat, in Adams, *Horrendous Evils and the Goodness of God*, 21. She gets it from Roderick Chisholm, "The Defeat of Good and Evil" In *The Problem of Evil*, Eds. Marilyn McCord Adams and Robert Adams (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 53-68.

[53] What I would say more carefully is that the evil in question, or an evil near to it in terms of disvalue, is necessary for the great goodness of the whole. My reasons for saying this have to do with issues of metaphysical vagueness and the problem of evil as articulated in Van Inwagen, *The Problem of Evil*.

imitating God (not to mention obeying God) as he has first forgiven us. Thus, the evil which is a necessary precondition of an act of forgiveness yields a state of affairs of great narratival value; that is, a type of aesthetic value that is not negligible when trying to understand the competing relationships between good, evil and God's providence.

In all the above ways, then, forgiveness addresses the *external component* of the problem of human guilt; that is, by balancing-off the disvalue of the wrongs committed and defeating the evil of such wrongs by incorporating them into an overall greatly valuable narrative. But what of the relationship wrongdoers bear to their past actions; that is, the relationship of having *wronged* someone?

Forgiveness, as I understand it, is particularly well suited to address this issue (i.e. (1ii) of the problem of sin) as well. There is a clear sense in which once someone has committed a wrong, it will always be true that they, i.e. that very same person, committed the wrong. This first sense in which someone is *the same person* at one moment and another is a metaphysical one. However, there is another sense in which a person truly can cease to be *the same person* that committed a wrong, even when metaphysically speaking they *are* identical to the individual in question. This second sense of *sameness of person* is a psychological and characterological one, and it is possible for someone to be the same person in the metaphysical sense but not this psychological one.[54] One way in which this might happen is when someone has a character at one time in the past which makes it possible for that person to perform an action (e.g. theft), but then through enduring a series of purgative life experiences undergoes a change in character, such that the resulting new character does not permit that same person (metaphysically speaking) to perform the same action they could in the past.

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[54] See Eleonore Stump, "Persons: Identification and Freedom," *Philosophical Topics* 24 (1996): 183-214 for an explication of the concepts I had in mind.

The distinction between a metaphysically-the-same person and a psychologically-the-same person easily maps onto another distinction between a person's *moral* history and *personal* history.[55] A personal history is just the exhaustive collection of past facts concerning oneself. A moral history is "that ensemble of things [someone has done] that contribute to determining [their] moral condition."[56] We intuitively employ this distinction whenever we excuse someone for bad behavior that we realize was due to misinformation.[57] For instance, if my neighbor trips me and causes me to sprain my ankle, I only count that action as part of her moral history if I know she *intended* to trip me. But if I know that the tripping was utterly inadvertent on her part, I do not count it as part of her moral history, but rather, merely as part of her personal history. After all, she *did* trip me. It just wasn't an action that issued forth from her moral character.

Forgiveness is best understood, roughly, as a change from one disposition to another. That is, it is the change from being disposed to treat a wrongdoer's action as part of their moral history to instead treating their action as merely a part of their personal history.[58] Such a change when done in a loving way, however, is not straightforwardly unilateral. Rather, on my account, such a change in dispositions rationally requires first a change on the part of the wrongdoer, such as sincere repentance. The reason for this requirement is not some sort of worry about retributive justice so much as a desire to treat the wrongdoer in a way that is consistent with loving the wrongdoer; namely, by treating them in a way that is most likely to bring about their ultimate good or flourishing.

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[55] For the most recent description of this distinction, see Nicholas Wolterstorff, "Is it Possible and Sometimes Desirable for States to Forgive?" *Journal of Religious Ethics* 41.3 (2013): 418-422.

[56] *Ibid.,* 421.

[57] *Ibid.,* 422.

[58] *Ibid.,* 421. Recall that technically speaking, forgiveness involves treating something which belonged to a person's *bad moral history* as instead belonging to their non-moral personal history. One's moral history consists of two subsets, a good and a bad moral history, and a moral history is a subset of one's personal history. Thus, we need to preclude our definition of forgiveness, when worked out in its technical detail, from counting a move from treating an action as part of someone's bad moral history to part of their good moral history as an instance of forgiveness.

Thus, if I love my enemy, then I am willing to forgive them, and I will endeavor to bring them to the point of repentance, at which point forgiveness becomes *good for* them.[59] Thus, once forgiveness comes about, the problem of one's relationship to one's past sins is dealt with by properly moving them from the category of one's moral history to merely a part of one's personal history.[60]

But now, *how* are we, as sinners, to move to this point of no longer being *the same person* (psychologically speaking) that we once were? It is in response to this that we enter the domain of sanctification, i.e. the process of becoming more Christ-like. First, we are sanctified by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, a gift given in response to faith that includes a change in the dispositions of the human agent consistent with a respect for that person's free agency.[61] Second, human agents are naturally moved by stories of heroic individuals; that is, moved in such a way that they seek to *emulate* those they admire. The narrative of Christ's sacrifice for the sins of the world is admirable in the extreme and has moved Christians for two millennia to accomplish their own admirable feats,

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[59] The reason we need to bring a wrongdoer to a point of repentance (and not forgive them prior to this) is grounded in love of that person. For if forgiveness is to treat an act as if it is part of a person's personal history rather than their moral history, we might do them more harm than good in forgiving them without repentance. For instance, if I do not hold you accountable, and holding you accountable for wronging me is what helps you to become a better person, then insofar as I desire your flourishing, I will hold you accountable for an action as if it is a part of your moral history.

[60] Parsing the forgiveness involved with justification and the slightly different ongoing forgiveness involved with sanctification is an important side issue. In justification, as I very tentatively think about it, we are forgiven for the sin of willing contrary to God's will. When we cease to will contrary to God's will, we are given the capacity to move toward Christ-likeness by being given a higher-order desire to desire what God desires (cf. Stump, *Aquinas*, chs. 12 and 15). At this point of forgiveness, we are also incorporated into the literal body of Christ, what one might call Redeemed Humanity following Crisp, *The Word Enfleshed*. The remaining sanctificatory work progresses cooperatively but in a way that is epistemically guaranteed (see Jonathan C. Rutledge, "An Epistemological Corrective to Doctrines of Assurance" *European Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 9.1 (2017): 163-177) to result in a sufficiently Christ-like person who can rightly inhabit the new heavens and new earth (see Middleton, *A New Heaven and a New Earth*).

[61] Working out the details of this process is complicated. As a taster, the idea is that at the moment of faith, we have given our consent to be changed by God. However, there are various ways in which it is *good for us* to be more involved in the incremental change in moral dispositions, and thus, God does not change us *all at once*. I cannot give an answer as to what the maximal amount of characterological alterations is before either the person altered is no longer the same person, metaphysically or psychologically speaking, as they were prior to the alteration. However, there seem to be clearly objectionable cases (e.g. instant glorification) the objectionability of which explains why Christians are not morally perfect from the point of justification onward. For interesting reflections on these questions, see (i) Timpe, *Free Will in Philosophical Theology* and (ii) Jerry L. Walls, *Purgatory: The Logic of Total Transformation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

including but not limited to noble martyrdoms.[62] Thus, the simple telling of the narrative of Christ has an important role to play in sanctification as well. Third, the healing of human nature by the *yom kippur* sacrifice of Christ, as I explicated it in §2.3, removes an important obstacle to divine forgiveness; namely, by removing an obstacle to which someone might otherwise legitimately point as a reason for not deserving forgiveness. Allow me to explain.

There are cases where the wronged party wishes to extend forgiveness to the wrongdoer but the wrongdoer resists the offer of forgiveness because he does not believe that he yet *deserves* forgiveness (or at least, not full forgiveness). For example, if you steal £10 from me but later regret your action and ask forgiveness, I may, in response to your sincere contrition, shrug it off and tell you not to worry about paying me back. To treat you in this way is to treat your acquisition of £10 from me as if it were an excusable act (though of course I will know it was not actually excusable) and thus, as a part of your personal history rather than also a part of your moral history. But of course, you might insist that I *not* treat you this way and instead insist that you be allowed to pay me back. In other words, you might not be able to accept forgiveness (i.e. by recognizing the appropriateness of the new relationship between wrongdoer and wronged) until you've removed the bad consequence (i.e. my £10 deficit) from the world.[63]

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[62] The preaching of the gospel and ritual of eucharist function in similar ways. See Eleonore Stump, "Atonement and Eucharist" In *Locating Atonement: Explorations in Constructive Dogmatics,* Eds. Oliver D. Crisp and Fred Sanders (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic Publishing, 2015), 209-225. Also, for easily the best discussion of how admiration of exemplars might turn us into morally better individuals, read Zagzebski, *Exemplarist Moral Theory.*

[63] Someone opting for a unilateral account of loving forgiveness might say that the forgiven individual cannot rest or repose *in the forgiveness* until they have paid back what was stolen. However, this will only work in cases where the explanation the wrongdoer requires for why the wronged party accepts repayment permits them to say, "I will accept the payment because it makes you feel better but not because you have wronged me and really ought to have given me my £10 back." The wrongdoer might *not* accept this rationale because they want to make up *for the wrong they did.* They are not interested in merely gifting you £10, which would be the case if the action were being treated as part of their merely personal history. Thus, as I am stipulating this case, it is exactly *making one's forgiveness conditional on repayment* that the wrongdoer needs (psychologically) before they are ready to be in full relationship with the one they've wronged. That's why in this instance loving forgiveness is inescapably bilateral.

In such cases, what is the most loving approach for the wronged party, who is already offering forgiveness to the wrongdoer, to employ? The desire to reverse the bad consequences of an action is a good desire to have, and thus, it seems, all things being equal, best to *allow* the wrongdoer the chance to satisfy that good desire. However, suppose the situation is a bit more complicated such that the wrongdoer wishes to repay the wronged party, but the wrongdoer *cannot* do so. In such a case, the wrongdoer might seek help from another person to pay on their behalf. For instance, if a child owes me £10 but has a parent who can repay me, it might be permissible for the child's parents to pay on behalf of their child.

The case of original sin is analogous. No mere human is capable of repairing the damage done by the first sin, for the qualification for offering this reparative sacrifice is a life of perfect obedience (cf. Heb. 4:15 & 5:8-10.) And since no mere human could do this, God came as a man to live such a life and offer that life as the necessary reparation for the deficiency in human nature. As a result, God returns human nature to its pure state, thereby removing a fundamental obstacle to divine-human reconciliation. And as a result, no human person can resist God's offer of forgiveness by insisting that they first fix the ontological problem of original sin. In this way, ESM is particularly well-suited to address the problems of human guilt consequent on sin.

One element of the problem of sin remains to be addressed by the ESM; namely, divisions between human groups (i.e. element (2i) of the problem of sin). In addressing this issue we again find Christian forgiveness at the heart of the solution. To be sure, there are important differences between divine-human forgiveness, interpersonal forgiveness, and intergroup forgiveness, the latter of which is most relevant here. Nevertheless, what we have said to this point provides a sufficient number of tools with which Christian theology might address the problem of human division.

First, if Christian theology is aimed at reconciliation between all *individual* persons, eschatologically speaking, then the problem of human *group* division will have been addressed. For if no two individuals in the new heavens and earth experience problematic disunion between one another, then neither does any *group* composed of such unified individuals.[64] Secondly, it is worth pointing out that intergroup forgiveness has sometimes succeeded in transcending some of our most intransigent racial divisions. We have seen this in such cases as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa under the guidance of Archbishop Desmond Tutu (1995). During this commission, perpetrators were granted amnesty for their crimes so long as they disclosed in full the ways in which they had wronged their victims, providing a way for victims to learn of the identities of their perpetrators and possibly receive some sort of compensation.[65] Indeed, the healing of racial and political wounds as a result of these events likely strikes most people as unbelievable. And while admittedly the results fell far short of perfection, insofar as marks of division and interpersonal conflict have clearly remained to some degree, they were nevertheless able to heal some major *group* divisions and successfully transition South Africa into a democracy without the radical bloodshed predicted by commentators. They were able to do this by implementing a sort of forgiveness, or pardon, by which the community would hope for healing; that is, by treating their morally horrific recent history as part of their merely personal rather than moral history.[66]

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[64] This is not to say that there will not remain any worrisome human divisions in the eschaton, nor worrisome cases of interpersonal disunion. The word 'all', then, should be understood as a tacitly restricted quantifier. One obvious such division is the one between the denizens of heaven and of hell. Explaining how this division might exist and remain consistent with the love and sovereignty of God is a question that I cannot address here. For reflections on this issue that I have found helpful, however, see the first three chapters of Kvanvig, *Destiny and Deliberations* or his earlier work: Kvanvig, *The Problem of Hell*.

[65] Marshall, *Beyond,* 280-281. Interestingly, since what is good for the flourishing of a community may not match up with what is good for the flourishing of every individual, corporate forgiveness of this sort, even when loving, may carry a degree of unilaterality. This is one significant different between interpersonal and corporate forgiveness on my account. For what continues to be one of the most significant reflections on the power of forgiveness, especially for cultural reconciliation, see Miroslav Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1996).

[66] For a fascinating discussion of this TRC that incorporates the testimony of a wide range of people directly effected in South Africa, see Antjie Krog, *The Country of My Skull* (London: Random House Publishers, 1998).

Consequently, on even the broad scale, forgiveness between groups aided by the modes of sanctification mentioned above can offer a promising solution to the problem of human group divisions. And thus ends the construction of the expanded sacrificial explanation of atonement.

4. Conclusion

In this chapter, we began by looking at three ways in which one might evaluate an explanation for the atonement, that is, an explanation of *why Christ had to die*. These different dimensions of evaluation were the degree to which a putative explanation (i) alleviated one's subjective befuddlement, (ii) fit with scripture, and (iii) succeeded in balancing various theoretical virtues, such as simplicity, explanatory scope, and power. As it stands, the ESM scores highly in terms of the fit-with-scripture criterion. And although ESM is by no means as theoretically simple as many explanations of atonement (e.g. traditional penal substitution), it attempts to locate a compromise between the explanatory scope of certain narratival accounts of atonement[67] and the simplicity of familiar atonement models.[68] Indeed, the danger of the simple model is to be so simple as to render much of scripture irrelevant to a statement of the model (i.e. to score poorly with respect to evaluation criterion (ii)), and the corresponding danger of the more explanatorily comprehensive narratival model is to bring about information overload for those most interested in understanding the actual results of the theory (i.e. to score poorly with respect to evaluation criterion (i)).

In the remainder of the chapter, we looked at the witness of scripture regarding the nature of sacrifice and clarified how the problem of sin might be addressed by

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[67] E.g. Wright, *The Day the Revolution Began*.

[68] One of the primary drawbacks of the narratival accounts I have in mind is that in expanding the explanatory scope more and more, the first dimension of evaluation (i.e. alleviating befuddlement) suffers. Thus, the most helpful explanation of atonement, it seems, must (i.e. as a matter of the sort of cognizers we human beings are) give up some explanatory scope if it is to be helpful to most people.

construing Christ's death as both a Passover and a *yom kippur* sacrifice. Thus, we uncovered a scriptural metaphor that up to this point has been vastly underutilized by theologians in constructing explanations of atonement. The resulting expanded sacrificial model of forgiveness and atonement constitutes a significant step forward in the goal of more fully understanding the significance of Christ's death.

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