

JBTS

VOLUME 6 | ISSUE 1

JOURNAL OF
BIBLICAL AND
THEOLOGICAL
STUDIES

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A Less Odious Atonement Requires a More Classical God: Engaging Farris and Hamilton on Christus Odium

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Abstract: Joshua Farris and Mark Hamilton have leveled a serious critique of the so-called Christus Odium variant of Penal Substitution in their article “This is My Beloved Son Whom I Hate?” *JBTS* (2018), wherein the Son is said to satisfy not only the justice, but specifically the hate of the Father. Farris and Hamilton raise a series of exegetical, dogmatic, and pastoral problems with it—and by extension raise issues with more modest forms of PSA. In this paper, I examine what form the doctrine might take in the context of a classical doctrine of God. First, I attempt to render an orthodox version by retrieving impassibility and analogy to reframe divine hate. I then deploy the doctrines of simplicity, inseparable operations, appropriations, and a Chalcedonian Christology to coordinate the relationship of Father and Son in the activity of satisfying that hate. If my proposal works—renders the Odium less odious—then it will show the same doctrine of God will preserve more modest versions of penal substitution from Farris and Hamilton’s critiques as well.

Key Words: atonement, analogy, impassibility, penal substitution, divine hate, inseparable operations.

Joshua Farris and Mark Hamilton have provoked this symposium by raising important questions around recent developments in Evangelical atonement theology. In their paper, “This is my Beloved Son Whom I Hate?” they single out a deleterious dogmatic development of the penal substitutionary understanding of Christ’s atoning work in Evangelical Theology (henceforth “PSA”). They have dubbed it the “Christus Odium” variant.¹ On this view, not only does the Son bear the judgment, punishment, and wrath of God on the cross, he must suffer the “hate” of the Father. On what they take to be the standard core of the doctrine, a PSA advocate affirms these 6 basic propositions:

1. Joshua R. Farris and S. Mark Hamilton, “This is My Beloved Son, Whom I Hate? A Critique of the Christus Odium Variant of Penal Substitution,” *Journal of Biblical and Theological Studies* 3, no. 2 (2018): 271–86.

1. Christ's atonement is necessary to his redemptive work.
2. Christ's death is sufficient to assuage divine retribution for all humanity.
3. Christ dies as a penal substitute for individual persons.
4. Christ is punished in our place. (One could revisit the theory and modify it by saying that Christ dies in order to absorb the retributive [penal] consequences of divine justice precipitated by human sin, being treated by God as if he were those individuals to whom the punishment were due) (i.e. the mechanism).
5. Christ's death pays a debt of punishment.
6. Christ's death is a vicarious sacrifice.²

They argue the Christus Odium variant goes further, however. Looking to popular theologians and other theological writers, we hear statements like, "God chose to violate His Son in our place. The Son stared into the mocking eyes of God; He heard the laughter of the Father's derision and felt Him depart in disgust. . . . In a mysterious instant, the Father who loved the Son from all eternity turned from Him in hatred. The Son became odious to the Father."³ Or more tamely, "If you see Jesus losing the infinite love of the Father, out of his infinite love for you, it will melt your hardness."⁴ Examining a few such statements, Farris and Hamilton have carefully synthesized and formulated four more propositions that they see Christus Odium advocates adding to the basic 6:

7. The demands of divine retributive justice \approx the exercise of divine wrath \approx the divine exhibition and human experience of divine hatred.
8. Paying the debt to retributive justice, the Son is (temporarily) hated by the Father.
9. The Son of God died on the cross, which was motivated by Fatherly hate.
10. The object of the atonement is Divine hatred.⁵

Farris and Hamilton have charged at length that this model suffers from a bevy of exegetical, doctrinal, and pastoral issues.

2. Farris and Hamilton, "My Beloved Son," 275.

3. Dan B. Allender and Tremper Longman, *In the Cry of the Soul: How Our Emotions Reveal Our Deepest Questions About God* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2015), 184–85 cited also on 272. It is worth registering that as a *theological* development, it should be clear that this is not some conscious program by theologians, but is a tendency being noted and systematized by Farris and Hamilton, culled to some degree from a grab-bag of theological writers, writing mostly in non-dogmatic contexts.

4. Timothy Keller, "If you see Jesus losing the infinite love of the father out of His infinite love for you, it will melt your hardness," Facebook, July 25, 2017, quoted in Mark Jones, "Tim Keller, the Cross, and the Love of God," The Calvinist International, July 27, 2017, <https://calvinistinternational.com/2017/07/27/tim-keller-the-cross-and-the-love-of-god/>.

5. Farris and Hamilton, "My Beloved Son," 276.

In this article, I will not be responding to Farris and Hamilton’s extensive criticisms point by point, nor offering a counter-critique their own positive proposal for atonement theology. Instead, I will be mounting something of an apology of the Christus Odium view, not as my own, but rather in role of a public defender, assigned to a dubious defendant. In that role, I want to briefly explore the way a moderating pressure is exerted on this model when we set it within the context of the classical doctrine of God affirmed by the Western tradition. Consider this the sort of theological “what if” game played by Oliver Crisp in several chapters of his *Deviant Calvinism*, whereby we work through positions we do not hold as an exercise in charitable exposition, hoping to deepen our analysis in the process.⁶ To that end, I will first examine the issue of God’s odium by reframing it in light of the doctrines of impassibility and analogy, as well as seeking to establish a scriptural pattern of identification of God’s hate with God’s retributive justice. Second, I will show the way a retrieval of the doctrines of simplicity, inseparable operations, appropriations, and the communication of operations can answer our trinitarian and Christological concerns. My aim is two-fold. First, by rendering the so-called Christus Odium view a bit less odious, I want to shore up the defenses around the more moderate versions of PSA, especially in those places where Farris and Hamilton’s challenges might be similarly applied. Take it as an *a fortiori* defense of more moderate defendants, which seems appropriate as Farris and Hamilton’s argument is something of a thin end of the wedge, laying the groundwork for a future prosecution. Second, my conviction is that “an account of God’s atoning work in Christ will only be as convincing . . . as its operative doctrine of God.”⁷ In which case, I hope the argument functions as an invitation to those holding to any form of PSA of the need to recover a classical doctrine of God.

What Does It Mean for God to Hate? A Classical Approach

According to the Scriptures, it is clear that the Lord does, indeed, hate some things: the practices of the pagans (Deut 12:31), their idols (Deut 16:22), robbery and wrongdoing, the opposite of justice, which he loves (Isa 61:8), the pride of Jacob and his strongholds (Amos 6:8), even poor Esau is hated, while Jacob is loved (Rom 9). Our initial question, then, is not whether God hates, but what does it mean for God to hate? Having a clear definition of terms seems crucial to understanding the claim that on the cross, God hated the Son, and how that ought to be distinguished from his

6. Oliver D. Crisp, *Deviant Calvinism: Broadening Reformed Theology* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2014). I think especially of his treatment of Eternal justification and Libertarian Calvinism as illuminating theological thought experiments with positions he admittedly does not affirm.

7. Ken Oakes, “The Divine Perfections and the Economy: The Atonement,” in *Theological Theology: Essays in Honor of John Webster*, ed. R. David Nelson, Darren Sarrisky, and Justin Stratis (New York, NY: Bloomsbury, 2015), 243.

wrath and retributive justice. This immediately raises the issue of divine emotions, or rather, with the tradition, divine affections.

On a more classical view developed by the Western tradition and summarized by that most excellent compendium of Christian Doctrine, the Westminster Shorter Catechism, God is “a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth.”⁸ God’s unchangeability, or immutability, has typically included his impassibility as a corollary.⁹ On this classic understanding, Israel’s God is not subject to passions—irrational movements of the mind or will, overwhelming his rational judgment of persons, situations, and so forth. This does not mean he is “emotionless” in the modern sense, but rather that he has no passive passions. He does have active *affections*, which are rational and moral valuations of persons and states of affairs consistent with the perfection of his own unchanging knowledge, being, and character.¹⁰ Of course, our knowledge of such affections is colored by our own finite and fallen faculties. We cannot know God in himself or ourselves and so as Bavinck instructs us, “God has to come down to the level of his creatures and accommodate to their powers of comprehension.”¹¹ In divine revelation in nature and especially Scripture, the Infinite God makes himself known by taking up the finite conceptualities, experiences, and language of creatures in order to address them.¹² From thence, it follows that our knowledge of him is accommodated as well as analogical—possessing a similarity within an even greater dissimilarity, given God’s infinity.¹³ And this includes our knowledge of

8. “Probably the best definition of God ever penned by man,” according to the unbiased opinion of Presbyterian theologian Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology, Volume 1: Theology* (repr. 1979; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1871), 367. On the definitional issue, contemporary philosopher of religion Brian Leftow says most “of classical theism’s concept of God unfolds from the claim that is the ultimate reality,” which that implies he is a *se*, simple, immaterial, not spatially extended, without accidents, immutable, impassible, eternal, necessary, omnipresent, and in possession of a perfect intellect, will, power, and goodness. Leftow, “God, concepts of,” in *The Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Taylor and Francis, 1998), accessed April 1, 2020, <https://www.rep.routledge.com/articles/thematic/god-concepts-of/v-1/sections/classical-theism>

9. “It should . . . be noted that divine impassibility is a logical consequence of divine immutability. If God is ontologically unchangeable, then, by definition, he is equally ontologically impassible, for to undergo inner emotional changes of state would render him ontologically mutable.” Thomas J. Weinandy, *Does God Suffer?* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2000), 38n22.

10. On the distinction between affections and passions, see Anastasia Scrutton, “Emotion in Augustine of Hippo and Thomas Aquinas: A Way Forward for the Impassibility Debate?” *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 7, no. 2 (April 2005), 169–177.

11. Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, vol. 2, *God and Creation*, ed. John Bolt, trans. John Vriend. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2004), 110.

12. “For who even of slight intelligence does not understand that, as nurses commonly do with infants, God is wont in a measure to ‘lisp’ in speaking to us? Thus such forms of speaking do not so much express clearly what God is like as accommodate the knowledge of him to our slight capacity. To do this he must descend far beneath his loftiness.” John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960), 1.13.1, page 121.

13. “Because between the Creator and the creature there cannot be a likeness so great that

Derek Rishmawy: *A Less Odious Atonement Requires a More Classical God* his affective life. This is all rather intuitive. As Tertullian reminds the Marcionites who object to God's wrath as an irrational passion, we must not "from things human form conjectures about things divine," but instead "[d]istinguish the substances, and assign to each its own sensations, as diverse as the substances demand." Our thoughts about God's wrath, and arguably, his hate, must be disciplined not by their corrupt form found in man's corrupt substance, but rather taken in a mode which is proper to the "incorruptibility of the divine substance."¹⁴ In other words, if we say God is angry, we have to say he "is angry after his own divine fashion" and not import sin or finitude into it.¹⁵ Likewise, with his hate.

The Post-Reformation Reformed Scholastics are a good place to look for reflection on Scriptural depictions of divine hate carried out under such strictures. Taking up the *odio dei*, Benedict Pictet says it is an affection that "denotes 1) the disapprobation of sin, 2) the purpose of punishing the sinner, 3) a withholding of those blessings that flow from his goodness."¹⁶ Edward Leigh says it is "an act of the Divine will, declining, disapproving, and punishing of evil."¹⁷ Importantly, this is similar to James Ussher's understanding of the affection of wrath or anger when attributed to God in Scripture. He says that it is:

Not any passion, perturbation, or trouble of the mind as it is in us, but this word Anger when it is attributed to God in the Scriptures signifieth three things.

[1] First, a most certain and just decree in God to punish and avenge such injuries as are offered to himself, and to his Church; and so it is understood, John 3. 36. Rom. 1. 18.

[2] Secondly, the threatening these punishments and revenges, as in Psal. 6. 1. Hos. 11. 9. Jonah 2. 9.

[3] Thirdly, the punishments themselves, which God doth execute upon ungodly men, and these are the effects of his anger, or of his decree to punish them; so it is taken in Rom. 2. 5. Mat. 3. 7. Eph. 5. 6.¹⁸

the unlikeness is not greater." *Lateran Council IV*, Canon 2, last revised January 20, 2021, <https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/basis/lateran4.asp>

14. Tertullian, *The Five Books Against Marcion*, trans. Marc Evans, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972), Bk. 2, ch. 16, 131, http://www.tertullian.org/articles/evans_marc/evans_marc_06book2_eng.htm

15. Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *Remythologizing Theology: Divine Action, Passion, and Authorship* (Cambridge University Press, 2010), 403.

16. Benedict Pictet, *Theologie Chrétienne*, II.vii.8, cited in Richard Muller, *Post-Reformation, Reformed Dogmatics: The Rise and Development of Reformed Orthodoxy, ca. 1520 to ca. 1725*, vol. 3, *The Divine Essence and Attribute* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2003), 586.

17. Edward Leigh, *A Treatise of Divinity* (London, 1646), II.viii; cited in Muller, *Post-Reformation*, 586.

18. James Ussher, *A Body of Divinity: Or, the Sum and Substance of Christian Religion*, 8th ed.

These definitions are typical. For the scholastics, then, to speak of the wrath or hate of God is to speak of God's opposition to sin, his will to execute judgment, and the enactment of punishment itself. Indeed, commenting on Habakkuk 1:13 ("thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity"), John Owen directly equates the two, saying the "prophet here ascribes to God the greatest detestation, and such an immortal hatred of sin that he cannot look upon it, but, with a wrathful aversion of his countenance, abominates and dooms it to punishment."¹⁹ Hate seems to be simply an intensification of wrath, a more vehement form of expressing God's steady, constant, unchanging opposition to sin. Importantly, they are corollary affections to God's justice and holiness and should be in no way taken as passions disturbing the divine blessedness or immutability—God does not "move" from hate to love, in that sense, even in his exercise of wrath.²⁰ Another way of putting it is that for the Post-Reformation Scholastics, the language of wrath and hate are analogical

(London: 1702), 63.

19. John Owen, *A Dissertation on Divine Justice, Or The Claims of Vindictory Justice Asserted* (London: L.J. Higham & J. Murgatroyd, 1780), 3.1, page 39. Having written the bulk of the paper, I found this pertinent treatment by Petrus van Mastricht confirming this sort of analysis relating hate and wrath as well as the analogical interpretation given this affection: "Yet there is . . . also in God a hatred or aversion, first to sinners (Rom. 9:13), then to sin (Ps. 5:4–5). Its affection is nothing but an adverse will (Hab. 1:13; Isa. 1:15), and its effective operation, withdrawal (Isa. 59:2), punishment (Ps. 5:5–6), and all that commonly flows from the affection of hatred in men, but without disturbance or change in God. Therefore, it considers the sinner, and him alone, especially the obstinate sinner, inasmuch as in his torment and destruction, God is said to rejoice (Deut. 28:63; Prov. 1:26). It considers him on account of sin alone, because sin is repugnant to God's nature, his law, his honor (Ps. 45:7). And thus, finally, it considers the sinner to this end, to torment him (1) in general, by all his judgments (Deut. 28:15), all the way to the end (Ps. 11:5–6); in specific, (2) by horrors of conscience (Prov. 17:22); (3) by every sort of death (Gen. 3:3; Rom. 5:14); indeed (4) by the cursed death that fell on his own Son (Gal. 3:13; Rom. 8:32); and finally, (5) by the eternal condemnation of the reprobate sinner himself (Heb. 10:26–27). But because hatred in God concerns his avenging justice, in this topic it will suffice to have touched upon it." van Mastricht, *Theoretical-Practical Theology, Volume 2: Faith in the Triune God*, trans. Todd M Rester and Michael T. Spangler, ed. Joel R. Beeke, (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2019), 1.2.17.XI, page 352.

20. Owen confirms this in saying, "There is nothing that God hates but sin; and because of sin only other things are liable to his hatred. In what sense passions and affections are ascribed to God, and what he would have us to understand by such a description of his nature and attributes, is known to everybody. But of all the affections of human nature, hatred is the most restless and turbulent, and to the person who is under its influence, and who can neither divest himself of it nor give a satisfactory vent to its motions, the most tormenting and vexatious; for as it takes its rise from a disagreement with and dislike of its object, so that its object is always viewed as repugnant and offensive, no wonder that it should rouse the most vehement commotions and bitterest sensations. But God, who enjoys eternal and infinite happiness and glory, as he is far removed from any such perturbations, and placed far beyond all variableness or shadow of change, would not assume this affection so often, for our instruction, unless he meant clearly to point out to us this supreme, immutable, and constant purpose of punishing sin, — as that monster whose property it is to be the object of God's hatred, that is, of the hatred of infinite goodness, — to be natural and essential to him." Owen, *Dissertation*, IV.III, pages 122–23. For a discussion of the same issues in Calvin, see Steven J. Duby, "The Cross and the Fullness of God: Clarifying the Meaning of Divine Wrath in Penal Substitution," *Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology* 29, no. 2 (2011): 165–76.

ways of speaking of the retributive dimension of God's justice in an affective register, as a matter of his will, inclination, and action connected to his moral character. It is to speak to the personal involvement of God in his justice and to rule out any reification of a divine law or an enactment of divine justice divorced from the will and character God. To satisfy the hatred of God is to satisfy his wrath, which is an affective way of speaking about the satisfaction of his justice—at least for *some* of the post-Reformation scholastics.

Of course, there is question about whether any of this is Scriptural. Farris and Hamilton have called into question the formula “The demands of divine retributive justice \approx the exercise of divine wrath \approx the divine exhibition and human experience of divine hatred.”²¹ Well, it seems there is at least a relationship between the demands of retributive justice and the exercise of divine wrath in Scripture. Consider the LORD's words by the mouth of Ezekiel:

Therefore thus says the Lord God: Because you are more turbulent than the nations that are all around you, and have not walked in my status or obeyed by my rules, and have not even acted according to the rules of the nations that are all around you, therefore thus says the Lord God: Behold, I, even I, am against you. And I will execute judgments in your midst in the sight of the nations... Thus shall my anger spend itself, and I will vent my fury upon them and satisfy myself. And they shall know that I am the LORD—that I have spoke in my jealousy—when I spend my fury upon them. (5:7-8, 13)

‘The end is now upon you,
and I will unleash my anger against you.
I will judge you according to your conduct
and repay you for all your detestable practices.
I will not look on you with pity;
I will not spare you.
I will surely repay you for your conduct
and for the detestable practices among you. (7:3-4)

So I will pour out my wrath on them and consume them with my fiery anger, bringing down on their own heads all they have done, declares the Sovereign Lord. (22:31)

21. “What all this means is that at some point the idea of Christ's paying a debt of punishment for sin metastasized into the idea that being liable to punishment is equivalent to a payment of a debt owed to violent divine anger for sin” (Farris and Hamilton, “My Beloved Son,” 279). Curiously, as carefully as everything else is outlined, I could not actually find any place where they properly define God's wrath, anger, or retributive justice so as to clearly delineate these realities in such a way as to rule out any close identification.

I will carry out great vengeance on them and punish them in my wrath. Then they will know that I am the Lord, when I take vengeance on them. (25:17)

In Ezekiel, then, there is a clear conceptual and linguistic collocation of the judgment and punishment of God with the wrath and anger of God. For God to punish and judge sin is for him to execute, expend, and pour out his wrath and anger.²² The operation of judgment is the operation of wrath.²³ They are two sides of the same coin, speaking of the same reality in a different idiom. Or rather, they are dimensions of the same, simple reality.²⁴ It is not hard to find this same, rough, equation throughout the prophets and Scripture as a whole. More directly pertinent to our argument, we might turn to Paul, for whom (on a traditional, Reformed reading of Romans 3:23-26) Christ is set forth as a “propitiation” (v. 25), with its relation to the notion of “appeasing” God’s wrath (1:18; 2:5, 8; 3:5), as a solution to the problem of God’s justice.²⁵ The passage is shot through with legal terminology and a legal logic whereby God can be just and the justifier of the ungodly, having properly (i.e., justly,

22. Commenting on Ezekiel 5:13, Daniel I. Block notes that “[t]here powerful phrases are strung together to portray a deity totally consumed by fury and determined to vent his anger in full measure.” There is a clear link between giving vent to his fury and Yahweh having been “appeased.” This is no purposeless venting of divine displeasure, however, but one explicitly linked to Israel’s idolatrous disobedience. It is a just desert. Daniel I. Block, *The Book of Ezekiel, Chapters 1–24*, New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1997), 210–11.

23. Using a different philosophical framework, Kevin Kinghorn and Stephen Travis have recently argued that wrath should be construed as “a pattern of action” in ways that recall scholastic language about the operation of wrath. See Kinghorn and Travis, *But What About God’s Wrath? The Compelling Story of Divine Anger* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2019), 20.

24. For a fuller, contemporary account rooting God’s wrath in God’s righteousness, see Jeremy J. Wynne, *Wrath Among the Perfections of God’s Life* (London: T & T Clark, 2010).

25. For instance, Charles Hodge, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (Philadelphia: William S. Martin, 1851), 74–85.

punitively) dealt with sin in the death of Christ.²⁶ To suffer the justice of God is to suffer the wrath of God and vice versa.²⁷

26. It is worth noting that closer attention to the exegesis of someone like Hodge begins to form a partial answer Farris and Hamilton's rather odd charge that penal substitution (of whatever sort, both odious and otherwise) is "anthropocentric in terms of its chief goal," insofar as it "does nothing toward restoring anything to God." At least, by comparison with their own reparative model which sees Christ satisfying God's rectoral justice, repairing the breach against his own honor through his obedient, supererogatory work of self-offering (Joshua Farris and Mark Hamilton, "Which Penalty? Whose Atonement? Revisiting Christus Odium," Paper presented at the 71st Annual Meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society, San Diego, CA, November 2019). This remark misses the mark in a number of ways. First, it seems to confuse the atonement's chief, immediate beneficiary (humanity receiving pardon), with the atonement's chief goal (God receiving glory). Second, as Hodge notes, while "the death of Christ answers a great number of infinitely important ends in the government of God," such as the manifestation of God's wisdom, reconciliation between Jew and Gentile, and so forth, but "the end here specially mentioned" is a radically theo-centric one, which is "to declare his righteousness" (*Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 79). Because in the past, he had "in his divine forbearance passed over former sins" (3:25), Hodge says it "became necessary that there should be this exhibition, because God had overlooked and pardoned sin from the beginning" but now in the present moment we see "the vindication of the character of God in passing by former sins, and in passing by them now" through their forgiveness (80). Even more recently, N. T. Wright, *The Letter to the Romans*, The New Interpreter Bible Commentary, vol. 10 (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2002), 472–73, says, "In particular, God has passed over . . . left unpunished, acts of sin committed in former times. God . . . had been forbearing, patient, unwitting to foreclose on the human race in general or Israel in particular . . . Whatever Paul is saying in the first half of v. 25, it must be such as to lead to the conclusion that now, at last, God has punished sins as they deserved." In just this way, God shows himself just in keeping his word to punish sin even as he redeems sinners. This is another way in which God's honor, his rectoral justice, is upheld: his failure to exercise retributive justice in the past had called his rectoral justice into question. In the execution of God's justice, the debt of punishment flowing from God's laws, lies the vindication of God's own Name, his justice as the King, lawmaker, and judge of the earth to which he has (at least) bound himself by covenant (Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, Vol 2: 222, 227). This is another reason Farris and Hamilton's attempt to press a major distinction between satisfying the moral law over and against God is overblown (n.p). It depends on a bizarre reification of the law that does not sufficiently account for God's role as author and enforcer of the law as the divine Rector over all things, such that an offense against the law is an offense against God which is simultaneously public and personal, not merely private and commercial. This is especially the case if it considered that in his role of the Rector of the whole world, his rule is aimed at the common good and end of the whole universe, which is actually God's own glory (John Owen, *Dissertation*, 17.XVI, page 261). From another angle, one possible way of overcoming the dichotomy between pure reparative and retributive theories is to recognize in Christ's obedience unto retributive death that satisfies God's retributive justice a positive will to honor God, simultaneously satisfying his rectoral justice in the sense Farris and Hamilton suggest. In fact, it is arguable the classic Reformed distinction between Christ's active and passive obedience, his law-keeping and penalty-suffering, answers both dimensions of God's justice.

27. There is also generally a challenge to the idea that the Bible anywhere expresses the thought

In this light, one can see the way a proponent of *Christus Odium* might retrieve impassibility and analogical predication, as well as this pattern of Scriptural identification between hate, wrath, and retributive punishment to explain their position. On this read, satisfying the “hate” of God is tantamount to satisfying God’s moral law, wrath, and justice and need not be seen as a radical development, but rather a less familiar way of talking about what many have been saying all along. Of course, it seems obvious that retrieving these strictures might also (and probably should) begin to chasten an advocate’s willingness to use such heavily psychologized descriptions of divine hate in the first place, but we’ll put that to the side for now.²⁸ At this point, we must turn from question of what is the divine hate, to the question of who is suffering the divine hate.

Who Does the Triune God Hate?

Turning to the all-important Trinitarian and Christological matters, Farris and Hamilton raise a series of questions with respect to just how this momentary “hatred” of the Son by the Father is supposed to work.²⁹ On the one hand, if it is understood as an intra-trinitarian event between divine persons, that seems to split the Trinity, which is repugnant. On the other hand, if the hate is directed at the Son’s humanity (body and soul, or soul, or just body), that may threaten Nestorianism. Briefly, let us stipulate at the outset the same sort of classical doctrine of God we have been expounding so far. On that view the immutable, impassible, and *a se* God is also the perfectly simple Triune God, whose being admits of no parts, composition, or division.³⁰ In which case, we can quickly dispense with some of the more fanciful “broken Trinity” options whereby the Father and the Son are at loggerheads in the cross, yet remain united by means of the Holy Spirit functioning as a divine bungee cord holding them together.³¹ Of necessity, that puts us somewhere in the

that Jesus bore the wrath of God or was in any way suffering the punishment of God. Two texts that are often overlooked in this regard, which *prima facie*, can be read to the contrary. First, there are Jesus’s words in the Garden, “My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will” (Matt 26:39). This is arguably the cup of God’s wrath, the bowl from God’s hand that sets men to stagger (Ps 60:3; 75:8; Isa 51:17, 22, 23; Jer 25; Ezek. 23:33 15; Obadiah 16). Second, Romans 8:3 says he made Christ an offering for sin and “condemned sin in the flesh.” Whatever happened in the flesh of Christ, it was a condemnation of sin. This is the legal action of God, performed in and upon Christ, the Son in the flesh he assumed.

28. Skillfully avoiding the Scylla of depersonalizing wrath and the Charybdis of undue “anthropopathization” of wrath, see Thomas McCall, *Forsaken: The Trinity and the Cross, and Why it Matters* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2012), 79–90.

29. Farris and Hamilton, “My Beloved Son,” 280–83

30. Steven J. Duby, *Divine Simplicity: A Dogmatic Account* (London: T & T Clark, 2016).

31. Jürgen Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom: The Doctrine of God*, trans. Margaret Kohl (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1993), 82: “The Holy Spirit is therefore the link in the separation. He is the link joining the bond between the Father and the Son, with their separation.” Or Graham Cole, who more modestly suggests as a theologoumenon that possibly it was the Spirit who “kept the

Derek Rishmawy: *A Less Odious Atonement Requires a More Classical God* neighborhood of a “Chalcedonian” solution, with God’s “hate” being exercised in or upon the divine Son’s human nature. In order to work this out, we must briefly set out several classical trinitarian and Christological desiderata.

First, the doctrine of God we have been assuming so far goes hand-in-hand with affirming the inseparability of trinitarian operations *ad extra*. As Augustine succinctly put it, “just as the Father and the Son and Holy Spirit are inseparable, so they work inseparably,” in the economy of creation and redemption.³² In which case, any work the Father works, the Son and Spirit are working as well, per the unity and simplicity of the divine nature.³³ With this in mind, affirming the inseparability axiom means any exercise of divine wrath or hate will not only be that of the Father, but also of the Son and the Spirit, of necessity.

Second, we should attend to related developments of the doctrine of inseparability via reflection on the triune character of divine agency, trinitarian appropriations, and the *terminus operationis*, present in Augustine and the Cappodocians, but refined especially by Thomas and later Reformed theologians such as John Owen. Essentially, while every economic act of the Trinity is undivided, the action is not flat, or unipersonal. Instead, just as the persons subsist in the one divine essence in modally distinct ways, just so their agency from the one divine essence in the economy reflects a trinitarian taxis—an order whereby the persons are distinguishable, though not divisible—in the one work in a way fitted to their eternal trinitarian taxis.³⁴ As Gregory of Nyssa says, “there is one motion . . . which proceeds from the Father, through the Son, to the Spirit.”³⁵ Each indivisible work proceeds “from” the Father, “through” the Son, “in” the Spirit”, or originates with the Father, is executed through the Son, and perfected by the Spirit.³⁶

triune Godhead from imploding—as it were—when the barrier of sin went up between the Father and the Son.” Cole, *He Who Gives Life: The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2007), 167.

32. Augustine, *The Trinity*, trans. Edmund Hill, ed. John E. Rotelle (New York: New York City Press, 1991), 1.7. pages 70–71.

33. Adonis Vidu, “The Place of the Cross Among the Inseparable Operations of the Trinity,” in *Locating Atonement: Explorations in Constructive Dogmatics*, ed. Oliver Crisp and Fred Sanders (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015), 21–42.

34. John Webster, “Trinity and Creation,” *International Journal of Systematic Theology*, vol. 12, no. 1 (2010): 4–19, esp. 16–17; see also, Gilles Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, trans. Francesca Alan Murphy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 349, “The three persons act inseparably, in virtue of their common divine nature, and the whole Trinity is the source of their works. But each person acts within the distinct mode of his relationship to the other persons within the common actions.”

35. Gregory of Nyssa, “An Answer to Ablabius: That We Should Not Think of Saying There Are Three Gods,” in *Christology of the Later Fathers*, ed. Edward R. Hardy (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1954), 262.

36. Basil the Great, *On the Holy Spirit*, trans. Stephen Hildebrand (New York: St. Vladimir’s Press, 2011), 16, 37–40; Calvin, *Institutes*. I.13.20, page 144; Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 349–56.

Third, the tradition has typically spoken of the idea of appropriations—the idea that some names, attributes, or activities of the Trinity *ad extra* can be particularly appropriated or assigned to persons of the Trinity because of the language of Scripture, or because there is a notional affinity fitting to the person and revelatory of their personal property in the eternal taxis.³⁷ As John Webster clarifies,

... of each divine work we need to say (a) that it is absolutely the work of the undivided godhead; (b) that each person of the godhead performs that work in a distinct way, following the manner and order of that person's hypostatic existence; and (c) that particular works may be assigned eminently to one person, without rescinding absolute attribution to the undivided Trinity and without denying that the other two persons also participate in that work in the distinct modes proper to them.³⁸

As *fons*, for instance, creation is fittingly appropriated to Father, though he creates through the Son and the Spirit. Relevant to our purposes, it is worth noting that Post-Reformation scholastics such as Petrus Van Mastricht regularly attributed the activity of judgment to the Father, “insofar as in the economy the Father is the governor, lawgiver, judge, and avenger of laws, and in addition insofar as he is the benevolent caretaker of the whole household,” even if it is the one judgment of the Godhead.³⁹

Extending the doctrine of appropriations, the tradition also saw that some works *terminate* upon particular persons in ways that are fitting to their trinitarian relations—i.e., the missions of Christ and the Spirit from the Father are fitting extensions *ad extra* of their processions *ad intra*.⁴⁰ Thomas explicitly affirms a distinction between the principle of the action, the divine nature itself, and the term of the action in the unique person of the Son in the incarnation.⁴¹ Here the Father, Son, and Spirit are at work, so to speak—there is only one “*opera dei essentialia*”—yet only the Son

37. Richard A. Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics: The Rise and Development of Reformed Orthodoxy, ca. 1520 to ca. 1725*, vol. 4, *the Triunity of God* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003), 267–74.

38. Webster, “Trinity and Creation,” 16.

39. Petrus van Mastricht, *Theoretical-Practical Theology*, 1.2.25.II.B.1, page 528. Thanks to Scott Swain for suggesting this reference. Compare also Pictet: “The Father in the work of salvation is considered as the supreme Judge, who directs all things, who requires satisfaction, who receives it from the one he sent to procure it, and who, to sum up all in a word, maintains the majesty of the Godhead, for which reason he is sometimes called God in contradistinction from the other persons,” *Theol. Chr.*, II.xiv.1 cited in Muller, *Post-Reformation*, 4:270.

40. In B. Hoon Woo, *The Promise of the Trinity: The Covenant of Redemption in the Theologies of Witsius, Owen, Dickson, Goodwin, and Cocceius* (Gottingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2018), see especially 91–108 for a lucid discussion of the *terminus operationis*. Thanks to Mark Jones for this reference.

41. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* IIIa, q. 3, a. 4, co and r.1. Kyle Claunch has similarly discerned an operative distinction between the “principle” and the “subject” of a divine act in the way Augustine and Owen speak of the matter. Kyle Claunch, “What God Hath Done Together: Defending the Historic Doctrine of the Inseparable Operations of the Trinity,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 56, no. 4 (2013):781–800, especially. 797.

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becomes incarnate by assuming human nature to himself.⁴² Or again, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit sanctify believers, but it is the Spirit who indwells them as the *terminus operationis*. In this way, we see another way of distinguishing persons and distinct personal acts, which are nevertheless not violations of the inseparable activity of the one God.

Finally, we come to think in more directly Chalcedonian terms with Reformed teaching on the communication of operations, or “the ‘sharing’ of the two operations of the two natures of Christ in the Savior’s mediatorial work.”⁴³ Looking to Scripture’s confession that Jesus Christ is the one mediator between God and man (1 Tim 2:5), the Reformed tradition affirmed that Jesus is our mediator *as* God and man: the atoning efficacy of Christ’s death has always been dependent on Christ’s having been our mediator according to both natures. As Francis Turretin has it, “each nature contributing what is its own—the human indeed the substance of the work (or passion); the divine, its infinite value and price.”⁴⁴ This judgment depends on Chalcedon’s affirmation that the assumption of human nature by the particular person of the Son happened “*inconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably*” and “the distinction of natures being by no means taken away by the union, but rather the property of each nature being preserved, and concurring in one Person and one Subsistence, not parted or divided into two persons, but one and the same Son, and only begotten, God the Word, the Lord Jesus Christ.”⁴⁵ Furthermore, the Son’s humanity is enhypostatic and anhypostatic, having no independent existence apart

42. See the classic introduction of Augustine, *The Trinity*, 1.2.7, pages 70–71: “The purpose of all the Catholic commentators I have been able to read on the divine books of both testaments, who have written before me on the trinity which God is, has been to teach that according to the scriptures Father and Son and Holy Spirit in the inseparable equality of one substance present a divine unity; and therefore there are not three gods but one God. . . . It was not, however, this same three (their teaching continues) that was born of the virgin Mary, crucified and buried under Pontius Pilate, rose again on the third day and ascended into heaven, but the Son alone. Nor was it this same three that came down upon Jesus in the form of a dove at his baptism, or came down on the day of Pentecost after the Lord’s ascension, with a roaring sound from heaven as though a violent gust were rushing down, and in divided tongues as of fire, but the Holy spirit alone. Nor was it this same three that spoke from heaven, You are my Son, either at his baptism by John 1:11) or on the mountain when the three disciples were with him (Mt. 17:5), nor when the resounding voice was heard, I have both glorified it (my name) and will glorify // again (Jn 12:28), but it was the Father’s voice alone addressing the Son; although just as Father and Son and Holy spirit are inseparable, so do they work inseparably.”

43. Steve J. Duby, “Atonement, Impassibility, and the *Communicatio Operationem*,” *International Journal of Systematic Theology*, vol. 17, no. 3 (2015): 286.

44. Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, ed. James Dennison Jr., trans. by George Musgrave Giger (Philipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1992–1997), 14, Q. II, V, page 380. Or again, Wilhelmus à Brakel says, “It was an infinite person who suffered according to his human nature, and thus his suffering was of infinite efficacy and value, ‘having obtained eternal redemption for us’ (Heb. 9:12).” Brakel, *The Christian’s Reasonable Service*, vol. 1, *God, Man, and Christ*, trans. Bartel Elshout, (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 1992), 482.

45. The Definition of Chalcedon, Oct. 22, 451, in *The Creeds of Christendom with a History and Critical Notes*, vol. 2, *The Greek and Latin Creeds, with Translations*, ed. Philip Schaff (Harper & Row, 1877). <https://ccel.org/ccel/schaff/creeds2/creeds2.iv.i.iii.html>.

from the Word and the Word himself being the only subject of Jesus's activities.⁴⁶ This grounds the doctrine of the *communicatio operationem* whereby we might truly confess according to Scripture that in the death of the Son "God purchased the church with his blood" (Acts 20:28).⁴⁷ Because of this the Son acting in and through his human nature it is still *the Son* acting. When looking to the cross, then, we must be able to say the divine Son suffered these things because Jesus *is* the divine Son. But we also have to say the Son suffered according to, or by virtue of, his human nature.⁴⁸ For according to our prior affirmations, by his divine nature he is impassible. In sum, if we speak of the Son suffering death, the consequences of sin or judgment, or God's abandonment, or even hate, we speak truly of the suffering of the Son, but we inevitably are speaking according to his human nature.

Admittedly, this generates some paradoxical affirmations. Calvin's comments in *The Institutes* are instructive here. On the one hand he clearly affirms, "Yet we do not suggest that God was ever inimical or angry toward him. How could he be angry toward his beloved Son, "in whom his heart reposed" [cf. Matt. 3:17]? How could Christ by his intercession appease the Father towards others, if he were himself hateful to God?" At the same time he goes on to affirm that Christ "bore the weight of divine severity, since he was 'stricken and afflicted' [Isa. 53:5] by God's hand, and experienced all the signs of a wrathful and avenging God."⁴⁹ Calvin also clarifies that

46. DUBY, "Atonement," 291–92; see also, Stephen Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate: The Doctrine of Christ* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016), 316–28.

47. This is standard, Reformed reading since Calvin: "But because the speech which Paul useth seemeth to be somewhat hard, we must see in what sense he saith that God purchased the Church with his blood. For nothing is more absurd than to feign or imagine God to be mortal or to have a body. But in this speech he commendeth the unity of person in Christ; for because there be distinct natures in Christ, the Scripture doth sometimes recite that apart by itself which is proper to either. But when it setteth God before us made manifest in the flesh, it doth not separate the human nature from the Godhead. Notwithstanding, because again two natures are so united in Christ, that they make one person, that is improperly translated sometimes unto the one, which doth truly and in deed belong to the other, as in this place Paul doth attribute blood to God; because the man Jesus Christ, who shed his blood for us, was also God. This manner of speaking is called, of the old writers, *communicatio idiomatum*, because the property of the one nature is applied to the other. And I said that by this means is manifestly expressed one person of Christ, lest we imagine him to be double, which Nestorius did in times past attempt; and yet for all this we must not imagine a confusion of the two natures which Eutychus went about to bring in, or which the Spanish dog, Servetus, hath at this time invented, who maketh the Godhead of Christ nothing else but a form or image of the human nature, which he dreameth to have always shined in God." Calvin, *Commentary upon the Acts of the Apostles*, vol. II, ed. H. Beveridge (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2005), 256–57.

48. For the value of the language of speaking "in virtue of", see Daniel Treier, "Incarnation," in *Christian Dogmatics: Reformed Theology for the Church Catholic* ed. Michael Allen and Scott R. Swain (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2016), 216–42.

49. Calvin, *Institutes*, II.16.11. Tim Keller draws attention to this balance in Calvin himself. Keller, "Calvin on 'He Descended Into Hell'" Reformedish (blog), July 31, 2017, <https://derekkrishmaw.com/2017/07/31/calvin-on-he-descended-into-hell-guest-post-by-tim-keller/>. See also Paul Dafydd Jones, "The Fury of Love: Calvin on the Atonement," in *T & T Clark Companion to Atonement*, ed. Adam J. Johnson (London: T & T Clark, 2017), 213–35, who speaks to duality of both Christ's inherent worthiness in God's sight and his suffering under the weight of divine

he suffered that severity of judgment in both body, but especially soul: “Christ’s body was given as our price of our redemption, but . . . he paid a greater and more excellent price in suffering in his soul the terrible torments of a condemned and forsaken man.”⁵⁰ This is especially evident in the torment and agony he endures in the Garden (sweating blood) and his words from the cross.⁵¹ Calvin says this would have been shamefully weak if Christ was tortured “by the dread of common death.”⁵² Indeed, it was precisely in the face of this that Christ honors God most in conquering the fear of the execution of this awful wrath he was enduring, trusting him and obeying him in the middle of its “acute agony.”⁵³ There is a dual affirmation here of the absolute love of God for the Son while at the same time, he suffers the operation, the activity, and experience of God’s terrible judgment and wrath in his human body and soul.⁵⁴

severity against sin, especially 220–24.

50. *Institutes*, II.16.10. In the same section he avers, “If Christ had died only a bodily death it would have been ineffectual. No—it was expedient at the same time for him to undergo the severity of God’s vengeance, to appease his wrath and satisfy his just judgment.”

51. It is worth noting that this need not be taken to indicate that Christ’s atoning sufferings were restricted to his time in the garden, or the cross itself. Herman Witsius argues extensively against a contemporary opinion that only the sufferings in the garden and the cross itself were part of Christ’s satisfaction. Instead, he argues for the position of Heidelberg Catechism Q. 37, that Christ’s satisfactory sufferings occurred “during his whole life on earth, but especially at the end, Christ sustained in body and soul the wrath of God against the sin of the whole human race.” Importantly, he sees all of those sufferings as an expression of God’s wrath, though just as God shows forbearance to sinners in this life, so throughout his life Christ experienced relief from the pains of the burden of sin, a sense of God’s favor alongside the judgment, until the time came for him to drink the fullness of the cup of wrath. Herman Witsius, *The Economy of the Covenants Between God and Man*, in 2 vols., trans. William Crookshank (Repr. 1822; Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2010), Bk. II, Chap. VI. Vol. 1, pages 210–234. The whole section goes a long way towards answering the series of questions posed by Farris and Hamilton about timing and intensity of Christ’s endurance of the “hate” or “wrath” of God (Farris and Hamilton, “My Beloved Son,” 281–82).

52. *Institutes*, II.xvi.12. I take this to be particularly perceptive of Calvin. Consider, for example, the death of the Maccabean martyrs who were reported to go to their fate boldly (2 Maccabees 7), or historical examples of physical bravery such as St. Polycarp of Smyrna, or Ridley and Latimer. Christ’s anxiety and anguish in the Garden indicate an anticipation of some experience far worse than beatings and physical death, cruel as they were. Incidentally, this seems to confirm all the more that Francis Turretin’s scholastic formulation of the “punishment of desertion” Christ experienced (*Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 2:14. Q. 11, XXII, pages 434–35) can be read as consistent with Calvin’s own view of what was going on. In which case, “losing the infinite love of the Father” (Keller) can easily be seen as a preacher’s colloquial translation of a point going back at least to Calvin.

53. Terretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, II.xvi.12, page 519. Commenting on John 10:17, “for this reason the Father loves me,” he further writes, “There is, indeed, another and a higher reason why the Father loveth the Son; for it was not in vain that a voice was heard from heaven, This is my beloved Son, in whom the good-pleasure of God dwells, (Matt. 3:17; 17:5.) But as he was made man on our account, and as the Father delighted in him, in order that he might reconcile us to himself, we need not wonder if he declares it to be the reason why the Father loveth him, that our salvation is dearer to him than his own life.” John Calvin, *Commentary on the Gospel according to John*, trans. W. Pringle (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2010), 409.

54. One more witness to an approach like this comes from Shedd. Drawing a distinction between the operation and emotion of wrath, he argues that though, “the Father ‘smote,’ ‘wounded’,

If Calvin seems to be speaking in paradoxes, it is just because he seeks to honor the mystery of an atonement that would require the mystery of the Incarnation.

With these doctrinal threads briefly laid out, we can begin to weave them together and suggest that a “Christus Odium” defender could defend the orthodoxy of the proposal by saying something along the lines of:

When we say that on the cross “the Father hated the Son” we confess an operation and execution of judgement and hate that must be conceived along the constrained, analogical lines consistent with divine perfection. We also confess it is the hate of the one, undivided, Triune God, Father, Son, and Spirit, per divine simplicity and the inseparable operations axiom. And yet, again, that triune agency is not flat. The operation of judgment or hate is particularly appropriated to the person of the Father, even though it is also the avenging hate of Son and Spirit, as it is that of the Godhead. Furthermore, while the act of making satisfaction via the work of the Redeemer is the one work of God, per considerations regarding appropriation, the term of operation, and the communication of operations, we can say it is particularly the divine Son who is the subject of this act and so can be said to suffer the judgment/hate of God the Father in the cross in his human suffering in body and soul. In that sense, one might say that on the cross the Son endured the hate of the Father. Even still, while he endured that hate, he was nevertheless beloved and well-pleasing to the Father.

Conclusion

At this point, several questions remain. First, in order to demonstrate this formulation is not merely special pleading, it would be helpful to think through other of what Thomas Weinandy has called Christ’s “saving acts.” These are “the human acts of the Father’s Son, human acts performed in communion with the Holy Spirit”, where this sort of fancy trinitarian and Christological footwork is necessary.⁵⁵ Second,

and ‘bruised’ the Son, he felt no emotional anger toward the person of the Son. The emotional wrath of God is revealed only against personal unrighteousness, and Christ was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners. The Father smote his ‘beloved Son, in whom he was well pleased’ (Matt. 3:17). At the very instant when the Father forsook the Son, he loved him emotionally and personally with the same infinite affection with which he had loved him ‘before the world was.’ When it is said that Christ experienced the ‘wrath of God,’ the meaning is that he experienced the judicial suffering caused by God. The ‘wrath’ of God in this instance is not a divine emotion, but a divine act by which God the Father caused pain in Jesus Christ for a particular purpose. This purpose is judicial and penal, and therefore make be called an act of wrath. ‘The wrath of God is his will to punish’ (Anselm, *Why the God-Man* 1.6). In Rom. 13:4 the infliction of suffering by the magistrate upon the criminal is denominated an act of ‘wrath’: ‘He is the minister of wrath.’ But the magistrate has no emotional anger toward the criminal.” W. G. T. Shedd, *Dogmatic Theology*, 3rd ed., ed. Alan W. Gomes (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 2003), 718–19.

55. Thomas G. Weinandy, *Jesus Becoming Jesus: A Theological Interpretation of the Synoptic Gospels* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2018), xvii–xx. I’m thinking

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we inevitably need to touch on issues of Christ's vicarious representation and the imputation of humanity's sin to Christ.⁵⁶ What account of Christ's role as our mediator enables him to stand in our stead as a Surety?

We might also ask whether the position just articulated is even the *Christus Odium* view Farris and Hamilton have set their sights on. I concede it modifies it in several important respects. As I noted, my point is not to promote the *Christus Odium* view as it comes across in some of the more aggressive quotes Farris and Hamilton have culled. Pastors and preachers ought to be aware that things can be misconstrued in doctrinally and spiritually harmful ways. Taking care to stick more closely to the formulations of Scripture—that tends to be far more modest—in our preaching and popular contexts is wise. Avoiding an overly-psychologized conception of wrath and recognizing its relationship to satisfying the claims of justice can help avoid painful psychological triggers for church members dealing with trauma.⁵⁷ In fact, this is what we have seen retrieving these classical categories allows *Christus Odium* advocates to do. And if they can have this sort of benefit on the most odious form of the doctrine, it is even more surely the case with the moderate forms of penal substitution more broadly held. In which case, Farris and Hamilton's worries present Evangelicals with little impetus to cast aside our atonement theology for another doctrinal formulation and every reason to recover a classical doctrine of God instead.

Indeed, this is not only a project for the academic in the seminary classroom, but pastor in the parish. It is true, the pulpit is not the lectern. Nevertheless, throughout Christian history pastors have been the public theologians in their local congregations.⁵⁸ Gregory's *Theological Orations on God and Christ* come to us from his pulpit ministry. The same is true of Thomas Watson's *Body of Divinity*. Pastors are called to do many things, but teaching and preaching sound doctrine are chief among their duties (1 Tim 4:13-16). They are called to teach the "whole counsel of God" (Acts 20:27), not only its full redemptive-historical, but dogmatic sweep. Evangelicals are known of their emphatic focus on preaching the cross of Christ,

specifically of acts such as the Son's being conceived in the womb of Mary, or performing miracles, or casting out demons "by the Holy Spirit," all of which might serve as useful proving grounds for these principles.

56. On which, see the useful survey of options around punishment, imputation, and representation in William Lane Craig, *The Atonement* (Cambridge University Press, 2018), 53–83.

57. Incidentally, exploring the cross in relation to justice—especially retributive justice—is a helpful apologetic commendation of the doctrine in the current climate as well. Though, this is an angle that just might tell against any sort of reparative accounts that pits itself against a penal account as an alternative instead of as a complement. It seems those accounts specifically miss the benefit of penal substitution to claim the matter of "sins" as well as "sin" is dealt with. The claim of retribution or "vindicatory" justice is precisely the vindication of God's righteousness, which includes the affirmation of the victims of injustice throughout history (Ps 96; Jer 5:27–29; Mic 2:1–3). For a contemporary example, see Fleming Rutledge, *The Crucifixion: Understanding the Death of Jesus Christ* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2015), 106–45.

58. Kevin Vanhoozer and Owen Strachan, *The Pastor as Public Theologian: Reclaiming a Lost Vision* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2015).

displaying Christ crucified before the spiritual eyes of its congregations (Gal 3:1). And rightly so. But unless it is set against the doctrinal backdrop of the triune God at work in the cross, the picture becomes muddled through myopic distortion.⁵⁹

59. On this sort of “emphatic Evangelicalism,” see Fred Sanders, *The Deep Things of God: How the Trinity Changes Everything* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 14–20.