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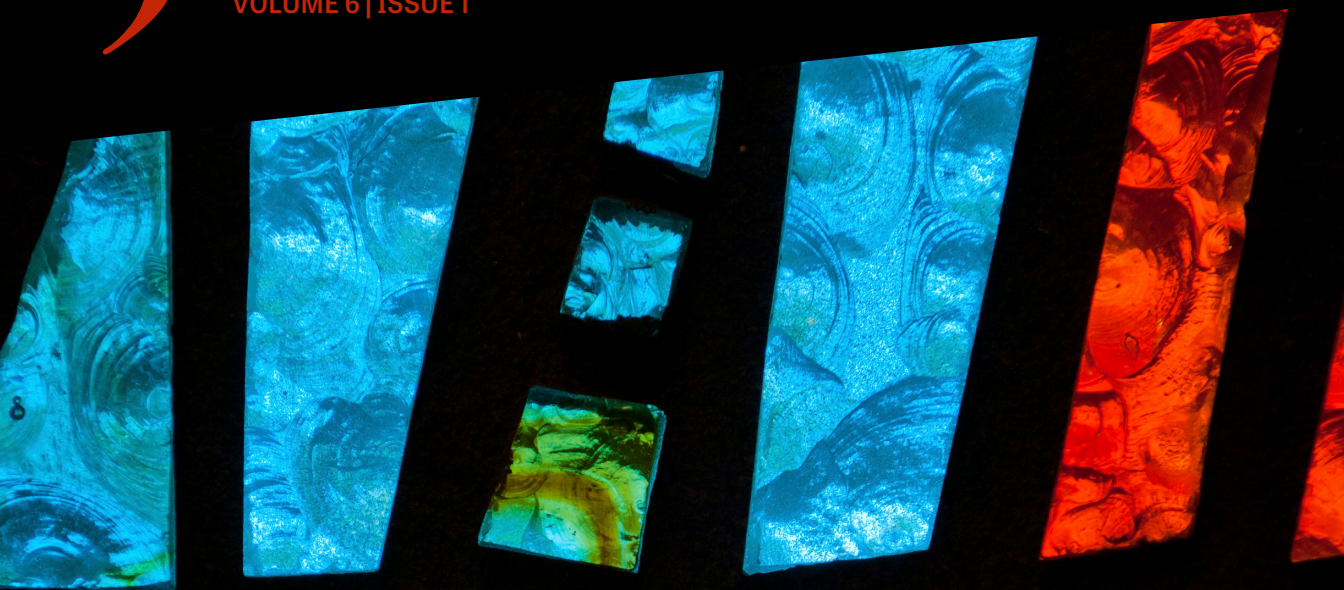

Performing the Surgery, Saving the Patient: Reduplication, Proper Christological Predication, and Critiques of Christus Odium

by Ty Kieser

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Performing the Surgery, Saving the Patient: Reduplication, Proper Christological Predication, and Critiques of Christus Odium

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Abstract: In response to the christological objections to *Christus Odium* raised by Farris and Hamilton, this article argues that *Christus Odium* cannot be ruled out on christological grounds. Further it shows that if these christological objections stand, then there would be adverse implications for other views of the atonement, including more historic and classical theories. So instead of objecting to *Christus Odium* on christological grounds, this article suggests that the discussion be relocated into the dogmatic sphere of the doctrine of God and seek to clarify the definition and nature of divine "hatred."

Key Words: Christology, Hypostatic Union, Atonement, Reduplication, Divine Justice

In two recent articles, Joshua R. Farris and S. Mark Hamilton weave a strong "cautionary tale"[1] against a view of the atonement, which they consider a sub-set of penal substitution, called "*Christus Odium*." We might analogically imagine their theological argumentation like those of surgeons excising a tumorous theory that has attached itself to the body of Christ. In most places I materially agree with Farris and Hamilton about the diagnosis of *Christus Odium*. However, I worry that their critiques not only cut out the tumor (*Christus Odium*), but may also damage a vital organ of the body (Christological predication), an organ that is necessary for the health of other actions of the body (other atonement models).[2]

Here I will argue from the foundation of conciliar Christology in order suggest that Farris and Hamilton's attempt to critique *Christus Odium* on christological grounds (i.e., denying the *possibility* of the position on the basis of the hypostatic union) "cuts" too far and has adverse consequences on more minimalistic accounts of the atonement.[3] This argument will first narrate their christological concerns,

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 (2018): 286.

2. In order to demonstrate this last point, I will draw from Patristic, Reformation, and modern atonement models.

3. Conciliar Christology designates the christological affirmations of the first seven ecumenical

then defend (in contrast to Farris and Hamilton) the christological possibility of *Christus Odium*, and finally conclude by suggesting a relocation of the discussion away from the locus of Christology into the spheres of the doctrine of God and terminological clarity.

The "Christological Problems"

This section will briefly present the Christological problems that Farris and Hamilton perceive to be inherent in *Christus Odium*. Their presentation and definition of *Christus Odium* is, indeed, dependent upon these christological problems. They define *Christus Odium* as a position that is constituted by the following claims (quoted as they appear in both pieces):

"This is My Beloved Son, Whom I Hate?"[4]	"Which Penalty, Whose Atonement?"[5]
The demands of divine retributive justice ≈ the exercise of divine wrath ≈ the divine exhibition and human experience of divine hatred.	Exercises of divine retribution are equivalent to the exercises of divine hatred.
Paying the debt to retributive justice, the Son is (temporarily) hated by the Father.	Paying a debt of punishment, the Son becomes the object of the Father's hatred.
The Son of God died on the cross, which was motivated by Fatherly hate.	When Christ dies on the cross, the Son of God himself dies.
The object of the atonement is Divine hatred.	

Farris and Hamilton say that these claims raise "a set of Christological concerns,"[6] which they narrate in their longest section in the 2018 article and name in the 2020 article. The ones which we will focus on here are their concerns about (1) Christ as the "object of the Father's hate" and (2) the possibility of the Son dying on the cross.

creeds and their appropriation by the patristic, medieval, and Reformation theologians. For a historical narration of this development see Brian E. Daley, *God Visible: Patristic Christology Reconsidered*, Changing Paradigms in Historical and Systematic Theology (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018).

4. This column is drawn from Farris and Hamilton, "My Beloved Son," 276.

5. This column is drawn from the beginning portion of Joshua R. Farris and S. Mark Hamilton, "Which Penalty, Whose Atonement? Revisiting Christus Odium" (paper presented at the 2019 National Meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society, San Diego, CA, November, 2019).

6. Farris and Hamilton, "My Beloved Son," 280.

They introduce the first of their christological questions by asking "who is hated"?[7] They then offer two options: Christ's human nature or his divine nature.[8] They rightly dismiss the possibility of the Father hating the divine nature without delay. They then move on to question whether it would be possible for the Father to hate the human nature of Christ. On the basis of the doctrine of the *anhypostatic* humanity of Christ (which states that Christ's humanity is not self-subsistent but rather subsists "in the person [hypostasis]" of the Son) they claim that the possibility of the Father hating the humanity of Christ without hating his divinity divides the person of Christ. Specifically, they say, "The problem for '*Christus Odium*' is that Christ's Divine and human natures are divided in a way that is not only unnatural, violating the Scriptural account of his representational work, but also violates traditional catholic Christology—something we think all should be loath to do."[9] The logic behind this concern seems to be: the Father cannot act toward Christ's human nature in a way distinct from the Father's actions toward Christ's divine nature, at pains of Nestorianism.[10]

The second question that we will note here is the claim that "The Son of God died on the cross."[11] They aver that such a claim "suggests a more fundamental belief that God himself can die, that is, cease to exist" and that "to make such a claim is to make a dangerous metaphysical misstep."[12]

Farris and Hamilton suggest that the first question yields a "fractured picture" of Christology and the second constitutes "a significant problem for the *Christus Odium* variant."[13] Contrary to these two "christological concerns," my contention is that these acts are *christological possibilities* and can only be ruled out if we relocate the discussion by clarifying the definition of "hate."

Christological Possibilities

Rather than christological *problems*, I suggest that the two key claims of *Christus Odium* above are (minimally) *possible* for orthodox christological. This is not to defend the veracity of *Christus Odium*, but the *plausibility* of the *claims* of *Christus Odium*—claims that Farris and Hamilton reject on christological grounds. Specifically, my argument is that excluding the *possibility* of the Father acting in

7. Farris and Hamilton, "My Beloved Son," 280.

8. Interestingly their 2020 paper seems to reject this dual possibility and assume that *Christus Odium* necessitates the belief that "God somehow despised the divine nature of his beloved Son" (Farris and Hamilton, "Which Penalty, Whose Atonement?).

9. Farris and Hamilton, "My Beloved Son," 281.

10. Farris and Hamilton, "My Beloved Son," 281.

11. Farris and Hamilton, "My Beloved Son," 281; "Which Penalty, Whose Atonement."

12. Farris and Hamilton, "This is My Beloved Son," 281.

13. Farris and Hamilton, "This is My Beloved Son," 281–82.

diverse (seemingly incompatible) ways toward the incarnate Son[14] and the possibility of the Son dying on the basis of Christology not only excludes *Christus Odium* but excludes other important soteriological claims from within the tradition.

My argument (for christological plausibility of the claims that God the Son can be the object of diverse predicates in his human and divine natures, and that God the Son dies) is based on a christological strategy of "reduplication,"[15] that is, claiming that a predicate or operation belongs to Christ according to either nature but not the other.[16] For example, Christ is immortal "as God" and mortal "as man." Francis Turretin illustrates this mechanism by stating that for Christ "to be dependent and independent, finite and infinite belong to Christ in different respects; the former with respect to the human nature; the latter with respect to the divine."[17] While versions of this strategy have been critiqued in modern christological thought for its apparent contradiction (i.e., one subject who holds contradictory properties),[18] another version of it has been successfully defended by Timothy Pawl. Pawl suggests that incompatible predicates of a single subject (like immutable and mutable) are non-contradictory if we understand Christ to be a single subject who (unlike all other subjects) exists in two distinct natures. So passibility and impassibity can cohere because Christ has a nature that is passible and Christ has a nature that is impassible. This is the same subject (Christ) who bears distinct predicates in each of his two natures.[19] With this logical possibility the Reformed scholastics drew a distinction between "proper" and "improper" christological predication.[20] "Proper predication"

14. There are important qualifications of trinitarian actions upon the Son (e.g., appropriations, indivisible operations, and proper actions), but they go beyond the scope of my work in this article. See Gilles Emery, "The Personal Mode of Trinitarian Action in Saint Thomas Aquinas," *The Thomist* 69 (2005): 31–77.

15. For an extended discussion and clarification on the function of reduplication, see Michael Gorman, *Aquinas on the Metaphysics of the Hypostatic Union* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 126–57; Paul Helm, *John Calvin's Ideas* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 69–83. Historically, see this operative in Thomas Aquinas (ST III, Q. 16, A. 10) and John Owen, *Vindiciæ Evangelicæ*, The Works of John Owen, ed. William H. Goold, 24 vols. (Edinburgh: Johnston & Hunter 1850–1855), 12:66. Hereafter, WJO followed by volume name, number, and page number.

16. From my perspective this could apply to Christ in three ways: (1) as the grammatical subject of ontological predicates, (2) as the object of the acts of other persons/agents upon Christ, (3) as the agent of discrete acts. This article will focus on the first two.

17. Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, ed. James T. Dennison, trans. George Musgrave Giger, 3 vols. (Phillipsburg: P&R, 1992), II:13.vi.23.

18. Robin Le Poidevin, "Identity and the Composite Christ: An Incarnational Dilemma," *Religious Studies* 45:2 (2009): 167–86; Richard Cross, *The Metaphysics of the Incarnation: Thomas Aquinas to Duns Scotus* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 177–78; Thomas Morris, *The Logic of God Incarnate* (Cornell University Press, 1986), 48–9.

19. See especially Timothy Pawl, *In Defense of Conciliar Christology: A Philosophical Essay*, Oxford Studies in Analytic Theology (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 157–62

20. See Stephen R. Holmes, "Reformed Varieties of the Communicatio Idiomatum," in *The Person of Christ*, ed. Stephen R. Holmes, and Murray A. Rae (New York: T & T Clark, 2005), 81; Thomas Joseph White, *The Incarnate Lord: A Thomistic Study in Christology* (Washington, D.C.: CUA Press, 2015), 249.

occurs when a predicate or action of Christ according to either nature is ascribed to him according to that same nature.[21] For example, "the Word was God" (John 1:1) ascribes a divine predicate to Christ (i.e., "was God") and designates him through a title of his divine nature ("the Word"). "Improper predication" occurs when a predicate or action is ascribed to Christ, yet it is only true according to a designation of the opposite nature.[22] For example, Romans 9:5 states that Christ is descended from the patriarchs (i.e., a predicate of Christ according to human nature alone) and yet designates him as "God over all" (a title that is true of him according to his divinity). On the basis of proper and improper predication, the *christological* claims of *Christus Odium* are a possibility for orthodox Christology, and to deny these claims has adverse soteriological consequences.

Proper Predication: Christ as the Object of Distinct Divine Operations

The first putative problem that we will address is that the Son is the object of diverse actions according to either nature. Farris and Hamilton argue that Christ cannot be "hated" according to his human nature because it would introduce a fissure between it and his divine nature (which is "beloved"). However, conciliar Christology holds that the mere predication of diverse predicates or actions (even seemingly contradictory ones) need not constitute such a fissure and, indeed, this mode of predication is essential to the Christology of the ecumenical creeds and Scripture itself.

It is important that we affirm, from the beginning, that Christ is one "who" (person) subsisting in two natures (two "whats"). As Gregory of Naziansus says, "the constituents of our savior are different 'whats' (ἄλλο καὶ ἄλλο) . . . but not different 'whos' (ἄλλος καὶ ἄλλος)."[23] Accordingly, whatever is true of either nature is true of the one person subsisting in both natures.[24] This allows the church, as in the Athanasian creed, to describe Christ as the object of distinct actions according to either nature:

21. Henk van den Belt et al., eds., *Synopsis Puioris Theologiae; Synopsis of a Purer Theology: Latin Text and English Translation*, vol. 2, *Disputations 24–42*, trans. Riemer A. Faber, Studies in Medieval and Reformation Traditions, Texts, and Sources 8 (Boston: Brill, 2016), 85; see also John of Damascus, "Orthodox Faith," in *Saint John of Damascus: Writings*, trans. by Frederic H. Chase Jr., FC 37 (Washington D.C.: CUA Press, 1958), III.15, 311; Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, II:13.vii.14–15.

22. van den Belt, *Synopsis of Purer Theology*, 2:87–89.

23. St. Gregory of Nazianzus, *On God and Christ: The Five Theological Orations and Two Letters to Cledonius*, trans. Lionel Wickham, Popular Patristics Series 23 (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimirs, 2002), 157; revised according to *PG* 37:180A.

24. This is most frequently seen in discussions of the communication of attributes. For a recent treatment of the communicatio in Reformation discussions, see Richard Cross, *Communicatio Idiomatum: Reformation Christological Debates*, Changing Paradigms in Historical and Systematic Theology (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019).

He is God from the essence of the Father,

begotten before time;

and he is human from the essence of his mother,

born in time;

completely God, completely human,

with a rational soul and human flesh;

equal to the Father as regards divinity,

less than the Father as regards humanity.[25]

Here we see diverse predicates (equal and less than) of the one subject and that same person is the object of diverse actions (i.e., "begotten before time" and "born in time").

This is true of human actions toward Christ—Christ is "seen with [human] eyes" and "touched" with human hands (1 John 1) according to his human nature (since his divine nature is invisible and incorporeal)—yet, this is also true of divine actions toward Christ. For example, Christ has "life in himself" (John 5:26) and is the "author of life" (according to his divine nature) yet is "raised from the dead" (Acts 3:15) according to his human nature. Christ is inherently the "radiance of God's glory" (Heb 1:3) in his divine nature, yet is glorified by the Father (John 17:5) in his human nature.

In order to illustrate the diverse predicates of Christ, we can turn to a historic christological analogy. While all analogies are merely partial, imperfect representations of the *sui generis* hypostatic union, several analogies have been offered throughout the tradition.[26] One historically prominent illustration of reduplication and

25. Likewise, Constantinople II affirms the double nativity of Christ (begotten from eternity, born in time). Norman P. Tanner, ed., *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1990), 114.

26. On the very imperfect nature of christological analogies, see Donald Fairbairn, *Grace and Christology in the Early Church*, Oxford Early Christian Studies (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 118. One of the most prominent is the body/soul analogy (Thomas G. Weinandy, "The Soul/Body Analogy and the Incarnation: Cyril of Alexandria," *Coptic Church Review* 17 [1996]: 59–66). While many thinkers historically used it to indicate the unity of action, it seems that the Reformed tradition often used it to distinguish between the immediate effects of the operations of the soul (for example, thinking) and the operations of the body (for example, digesting); see Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1981), 2:394–95; John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeil, trans. Ford Lewis Battles (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1960), II.14.1; Turretin, *Institutes*, II:13.viii.1; WJO, *Pneumatologia*, 3:101, 420.

diverse predication is the image of a single fire-sword—i.e., a burning iron sword.[27] A fire-sword subsists first, and primarily, in an iron nature that then assumes a fire nature into subsistence with itself without giving up any of its iron-ness. Upon this composition of the fire-sword, it has two distinct natures with distinct capacities, to burn and to cut; to be extinguished and to be sharpened. If the blacksmith douses the sword with water, we can say that the single sword was "extinguished" because the fire nature of the sword was put out (even though iron is in-extinguishable).

This mode of predicating discrete actions and attributes of Christ according to either nature is not only christologically plausible, but soteriologically essential. For example, Jonathan Edwards says,

> If Christ had remained only in the divine nature, he would not have been in a capacity to have purchased our salvation. . . . For Christ merely as God was not capable either of that obedience or suffering that was needful. The divine nature is not capable of suffering, . . . neither is it capable of obedience to that law that was given to man. . . . Man's law could not be answered but by being obeyed by man.[28]

Edwards's claim on the necessity of obedience (which is only possible for Christ *as a human*) for salvation is shared not only across the Reformed tradition,[29] but also among those who reject the imputation language of Edwards and instead suggest that Christ fulfills the plan for human Israel by retracing the failures "of Adam, a recapitulation or rerunning of the divine program for" humanity.[30] The theme of recapitulation has historic precedent in Irenaeus's soteriology as well, whereby the Son of God take upon everyone essential to humanity in order to restore humanity back to God.[31]

To put it simply: if it is not possible for the One who is beloved in his divine nature to be "hated" (whatever that means) in his human nature *for christological*

27. John of Damascus, "Orthodox Faith," III.15, 308; Maximus, "Disputatio," (*PG* 91:337D–340A). WJO, *Christologia*, 1:230.

28. Jonathan Edwards, *A History of the Work of Redemption*, ed. John Frederick Wilson; The Works of Jonathan Edwards (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 9:295–96. See also, Calvin, *Institutes*, III.xi.9. Meritorious obedience as a soteriological category certainly precedes the Reformed tradition (Marilyn McCord Adams, *What Sort of Human Nature? Medieval Philosophy and the Systematics of Christology*, The Aquinas Lectures [Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1999], 96; Adonis Vidu, *Atonement, Law, and Justice: The Cross in Historical and Cultural Contexts* [Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2014], 83–85), but it is particularly meaningful for the Reformed tradition.

29. D. Glenn Butner, *The Son Who Learned Obedience: A Theological Case Against the Eternal Submission of the Son* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2018), 104: calls this claim "widespread" in the Reformed tradition.

30. James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, Word Biblical Commentary 38A (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1988), 297; likewise, N. T. Wright, "The Letter to the Romans: Introduction, Commentary, and Reflections," in *The New Interpreter's Bible: A Commentary in Twelve Volumes*, ed. Leander E. Keck, vol. 10 (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 2002), 10:529.

31. See Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, ANF 1:448–56; Thomas F. Torrance, *The Trinitarian Faith: The Evangelical Theology of the Ancient Catholic Faith*, 2nd ed. (New York: T & T Clark, 2016), 162

reasons, then it is not possible for the one who has life in himself to be raised to life and it is not possible for the one who eternally breathes the Spirit be anointed by the Spirit. The problem with Christus Odium then is not the christological introduction of a fissure between Christ's two natures.

Improper Predication: "God the Son Dies"

The above argues for the possibility of diverse predicates to be attributable to Christ according to either nature. Farris and Hamilton's next objection goes beyond diverse predication of Christ, and focuses on a capacity or attribute in one nature being true of Christ when he is designated by a title of the other. Rather than suggesting that such a claim is metaphysically dubious,[32] I suggest that this claim is part and parcel of affirming the atoning act of God in Christ on our behalf.

Farris and Hamilton first (rightly) claim that it is not possible for God the Son to die (according to his divine nature) when operating within the bounds of "catholic Christianity"[33] and biblical Christology (1 Tim 6:16). Yet they follow this claim up with two curious theological moves: (1) they define "death" as the cessation of existence and (2) they deny the union of God the Son with the body of Christ in the tomb. Both of these moves do not follow "catholic Christianity." However, if we do follow the tradition, then we will see that it is both christologically possible for "God the Son to die" (with appropriate specifications/qualifications) and soteriologically significant that this he did indeed do so.

Death for the vast majority of the Christian tradition has simply been the separation of the soul from the body.[34] For example, Gregory of Nyssa defines death as the "severance of the union of the soul and body" and then states that resurrection necessarily includes the "return, after they have been dissolved, of those elements [i.e., soul and body] that had been before linked."[35] Regardless of how one defines "soul" here, so long as there is some sort of an affirmation of the intermediate state, then this definition of death suffices.[36] Even if they intend "somatic death" to mean the cessation of bodily/neurological activity,[37] we are not discussing the "cessation of existence."[38]

32. Farris and Hamilton, "Which Penalty, Whose Atonement," 7.

33. Farris and Hamilton, "My Beloved Son," 281.

34. Augustine, *The City of God XI–XXII*, trans. William Babcock (Hyde Park, NY: New City, 2013), XIII.2, XIII.6.

35. St. Gregory of Nyssa, "Great Catechism," *Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers,* trans. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, series 2, vol. 5 (Grand Rapids, MI: WM. B. Eerdmans, 1980) 5:489.

36. The affirmation of an intermediate state seems likely for these authors, see Joshua R. Farris, *The Soul of Theological Anthropology: A Cartesian Exploration* (New York: Routledge, 2017).

37. Farris and Hamilton, "My Beloved Son," 282.

38. There is debate in the tradition, however, on the *nature* of the soul's existence after death. Melissa Eitenmiller, "On the Separated Soul according to St. Thomas Aquinas," *Nova et Vetera* 17, no. 1 (Winter 2019): 57–91.

Upon this definition of death, the breadth of the Catholic and Protestant traditions affirm that God the Son remains united to his human body. For example, John of Damascus says,

> And so, even though as man He did die and His sacred soul was separated from His immaculate body, the divinity remained unseparated from both—the soul . . . and the body. Thus, the one Person was not divided into two persons. For from the beginning both had existence in the same way in the Person of the Word, and when they were separated from each other in death, each one of them remained in the possession of the one Person of the Word.[39]

Likewise, Owen says that "in his death the union of his natures in his person was not in the least impeached"[40] because the Father promised not to abandon his Holy One in death (Ps 16:10; Acts 2:31).

If God the Son remains united to his body, then there is certainly a sense in which we can strongly affirm that "God the Son died." We can do this by means of improper predication. That is, God the Son is a title of Christ that is true of him according to his divine nature and the ability to "die" is a property of Christ according to his human nature. Because God the Son remains united to the soul *and the body* of his human nature, then we can rightly say "the soul of God the Son (i.e., the soul that is hypostatically united to him) is separated from the body of God the Son (i.e., the body that is hypostatically united to him)"—which is just longhand for "God the Son died."

Indeed, this mode of predication seems to be the same kind of understanding present in 1 Corinthians 2:8 where the "Lord of Glory" is "crucified." This does not entail that the omnipresent divine nature is spatially located on a piece of wood.[41] Instead, it evidences the way we can name the person according to one nature and predicate a property or action of his according to another is valid but "improper."

With the above clarifications, we can certainly (albeit improperly) affirm that "God the Son dies." There is precedent for this claim even in the creeds: the Son was "crucified, and *died*, and was *buried*." Here, God the Son is the subject of the predicates "died" and "was buried"—predicates that are true of Christ when his soul and body are separated and that body is laid to rest in Joseph's tomb. Likewise, this claim permeates our worship. Isaac Watts sung, "When I survey the wondrous cross; on which *the Prince of glory died*." Likewise, Charles Wesley extolled the church to behold the "Amazing love" of God and wondered "how can it be that Thou, *my God, shouldst die for me*?"

39. John of Damascus, "Orthodox Faith," III.27, 332; Thomas Aquinas, *ST* III, Q. 50, A. 2. s.c.

40. WJO, *Pneumatologia*, 3:180

41. Chalcedon encourages the Christian to "consider what nature it was that hung, pierced with nails, on the wood of the cross." Tanner, *Decrees*, 81.

The claim that "God dies" is not only biblically and creedally significant but also soteriologically significant. It is because God the Son "tastes death for everyone" (Heb 2:9) that through him God might give us victory "over sin and death" (1 Cor 15:57). Cyril of Alexandria summarizes the importance of God the Son dying:

> For God was in humanity. He who was above all creation was in our human condition. . . . The immaterial one could be touched; he who is free in his own nature came in the form of a slave; he who blesses all creation became accused. . . . Life itself came in the appearance of death. All this followed because the body which tasted death belongs to no other but him who is the Son by nature.[42]

Likewise, Anselm (upon whom Farris and Hamilton depend) affirms the logic of this position, that "dying" is God's activity and is therefore predicatable of God: "If, therefore, . . . the heavenly city should have its full complement made up by members of the human race, and this cannot be the case if the recompense of which we have spoken is not paid, which no one can pay except God, and no one ought to pay except man: it is necessary that a God-Man should pay it."[43]

This subsection has argued that the second constitute claim of *Christus Odium* (i.e., that God the Son died) is not a christological problem. When added to the previous subsection, we can see that these "christological problems" are not all that problematic. What is more, if we define these claims as problematic, then we not only cut off the possibility of *Christus Odium* but also the soteriological significance built upon these christological claims.

Conclusion: Relocating the Discussion

This paper has argued that Farris and Hamilton's rejection of *Christus Odium* on christological grounds neglects the plausibility of these claims within conciliar Christology and is too severe if we are to retain multiple soteriological conventions. So if the above claims are *christologically* plausible and that formal plausibility is soteriologically significant (i.e., to cut off that possibility through Christology would be to cut off several traditional soteriological claims), are we resigned to affirm *Christus Odium*? I suggest that the best way to remove the tumor without wounding the vital christological organs nearby would be to relocating the discussion into the locus of the doctrine of God—specifically by gaining terminological clarity on the meaning of divine "hate." Such a relocation could deal with many of the concerns that Farris and Hamilton (and I) have with certain versions of *Christus Odium*, while

42. Cyril of Alexandria, *On the Unity of Christ*, ed. John Anthony McGuckin (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimirs Seminary Press, 2015), 61.

43. Anselm, "Why God Became Man," in *The Major Works*, ed. Brian Davies and G. R. Evans (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 320.

still affirming the christological claims above. If the discussion is relocated to the sphere of divine hatred we might ask the following questions:

(A) What would it mean for God to "hate" in regards to divine impassible/passibility? Does hatred require a passible God? Might it be possible to use divine "hatred" in a way that is similar to divine "regret" or "grief" on a classical view of God?

(B) How do divine hatred and "pleasure in punishment" relate? Farris and Hamilton seem to think that a denial of the latter constitutes a denial of the former. However, (by way of objection) I can candidly admit that I *hate*(!) mice and yet, each time I hear a mouse trap snap and the demise of those infuriating creatures, I feel absolutely zero pleasure.

(C) If *Christus Odium* can answer A and B in a way that constellates divine affections and "hatred" under a classical doctrine of God, how would that relate to Farris and Hamilton's affirmation that "the effects of the Father's seeking restitution or pouring out his wrath [are] transferred from one class of people to a person"?[44] Could "hatred" be another way of speaking about this reality?

Finally, (D) might a more nuanced version *Christus Odium* define "hatred" and apply it to Christ in a way similar to John Owen's concession below? He wonders:

> "But it will be said that if our sins, as to the guilt of them, were imputed unto Christ, then God must hate Christ; for he hateth the guilty. I know not well how I come to mention these things, which indeed I look upon as cavils, ... But seeing it is mentioned, it may be spoken unto; and,—First, It is certain that the Lord Christ's taking on him the guilt of our sins was a high act of obedience unto God, Heb. 10:5, 6; and for which the "Father loved him," John 10:17, 18. There was, therefore, no reason why God should hate Christ for his taking on him our debt, and the payment of it, in an act of the highest obedience unto his will. Secondly, God in this matter is considered as a rector, ruler, and judge. Now, it is not required of the severest judge, that, as a judge, he should hate the guilty person . . . . As such, he hath no more to do but consider the guilt, and pronounce the sentence of punishment. But, Thirdly, Suppose a person, out of an heroic generosity of mind, should become an Αντίψυχος for another, for his friend, for a good man, so as to answer for him with his life, as Judah undertook to be for Benjamin as to his liberty,—which, when a man hath lost, he is civilly dead, and "capite diminutus,"—would the most cruel tyrant under heaven, that should take away his life, in that case hate him? would he not rather admire his worth and virtue? As such a one it was that Christ suffered, and no otherwise. Fourthly, All the force of this exception depends on the ambiguity of the word hate; for it may signify either an aversation or detestation of mind, or only a will of punishing, as in God mostly it doth. In the first sense, there was no ground why God should hate

44. Farris and Hamilton, "My Beloved Son," 278.

> Christ on this imputation of guilt unto him, ... But for a will of punishing in God, where sin is imputed, none can deny it."[45]

Owen's response to those who ask if the Father hated the Son strikes me as a helpful one. Even before answering the question he calls it "cavil" (i.e., a frivolous objection)—"why would one ever want to make such a claim" might be a valid translation of the subtext. When he does address the concern, he covers his christological bases and clarifies the nature of judgment. The difficulty he sees is in the ambiguity of the definition of "hate"—saying, in one sense it is utterly inappropriate, yet in another sense (i.e., when it is synonymous with the will to judge/punish justly) then it is plausible.[46] What Owen illustrates here is the possibility of relocating the discussion of *Christus Odium* into the realm of definitional clarity (rather than Christology). Upon this relocation, we can then discuss whether such a claim and such a definition are theological valuable.

The goal of this response has been to provide a counter-"cautionary tale." That is, it warns that if Farris and Hamilton "cut out" the christological possibilities above along with *Christus Odium*, then the body may lose important organ function in surgery. While I commend their desire to defend the love of God in Christ, I worry that their exclusion of Christus Odium on christological grounds cuts away valuable theological goods. Consequently, I suggest that a reengagement of *Christus Odium* on terminological grounds has much more precision and avoids risk to the major christological muscles of atonement models.

45. WJO, *Justification*, 5:203–04.

46. God's "hatred" of Esau may be illustrative here. God hated him (Rom 9:13) but blesses him.